

Ban Smoking in Public Places

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WHO's Alarming Study:

The following statistics released by WHO to highlight the harmful consequences of tobacco should make us - the Sikhs proud of the farsightedness of Guru Gobind Singhji, who by his "*hukam*" strictly forbade the consumption of this poisonous substance and protected us from its evil consequences on the health of our several generations since the historic event on the Vaisakhi Day in 1699.

- i) Each year tobacco causes 3.5 million deaths, i.e. about 10,000 deaths per day.
- ii) One million of these deaths occur in developing countries, and these deaths are *preventable* especially in non-smokers like children.
- iii) One out of every two long-term smokers will be killed by tobacco.
- iv) 4 million people died in 1998 from tobacco related diseases - one death every 8 seconds, and if this trend continues it will be one death every 3 seconds by the year, 2030.
- v) From 1950 to the year 2000, tobacco will kill more than 60 million people in developed countries - **more than the number killed in World War II.**
- vi) Tobacco and smoke affects all smokers and non-smokers. It is everybody's problem and is a major public health problem.
- vii) One in twelve deaths in 1990 resulted from tobacco use and, by 2020, tobacco will cause as many as one in seven. 70% of these deaths will be in developing countries. Millions more suffer from disabling lung or heart disease on account of this pernicious and highly addictive scourge of smoking.

Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director General, World Health Organisation has, very ably, released the selected statistics in the World Health Report, 1999, emphasising on Tobacco-free initiative.

We, the Sikhs, should always remember, with eternal gratitude, for the gracious kindness of Guru Gobind Singh in inculcating the discipline of the Sikh *Rehat Maryada*, and should take every possible step so that our younger generation do not go astray.



References

WHO's Publications:

1. *Leave the Pack behind*
2. World Health Report, 1999.