

Tobacco deaths more than road accidents in Delhi every year

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It is a bitter truth that more number of people get killed by consuming tobacco compared to people killed in road accidents every year. If a person dies in road accident, it immediately gets noticed. The media and people usually end up blaming the Government, traffic police and other concerned for the accident, but a person killed by tobacco goes unnoticed.

In 2018, Delhi witnessed 1,604 deaths and 5,831 injuries by road accidents whereas 19,000 people die every year due to tobacco-related diseases and lakhs of people get seriously ill consuming tobacco.

As per the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 1.5 lakh died in road accidents in 2018 in India, whereas 13.5 lakh people die every year due to tobacco-related disease in India.

It is to be mentioned that 68.4 lakh people were fined for violating traffic rules in Delhi with 1604 deaths and 5831 injuries. Nearly 52,000 people were fined for violating COTPA (The Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act) with 19000 people dying every year in Delhi. Dr Harit Chaturvedi, Chairman, Max Oncology, said, "Due to acute nature of deaths in road accidents, these attract immediate attention while tobacco related deaths hardly get attention despite of having much greater volume. Police can save more lives than all doctors put together treating the patients impacted by tobacco. As the adage goes, prevention is better than cure."

The prevalence of tobacco use has significantly reduced in states where enforcement of tobacco control laws is sustained.

Dr Somil Rastogi, Senior Project Manager, Sambandh Health Foundation (SHF) said, "Delhi Police has done commendable work by enforcing COTPA. We have also given a request letter to the Health Department regarding the Advisory sent by the Centre Government to states to authorize Police Head Constables to fine for COTPA violations. This will give more hands to Delhi Police to effectively enforce COTPA."

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