

Harm of Tobacco Consumption

Why in news?

Large corporate enterprises themselves are making efforts to reduce the harm of tobacco consumption.

What are the impacts of tobacco consumption?

India, the world's second largest producer of tobacco, produces about 800 million kg annually.

- **Human health-** The second Global Adult Tobacco Survey estimated that 28.6% of all adults in India used tobacco in 2016-2017, second only to China.
- In 2021, smoking killed about 8 million people.
- **Environment-** According to the WHO, 600 million trees are chopped down annually to make cigarettes, 84 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions are released into the atmosphere, and 22 billion litres of water are used to make cigarettes.
- Cigarette butts, packaging, plastic pouches of smokeless tobacco and batteries associated with e-cigarettes pollute our environment.
- **Employment-** As per Central Tobacco Research Institute, about 6 million farmers and 20 million farm labourers work in tobacco farming across 15 States.
- Although farming of tobacco only contributes to 1% of GDP as, the direct health expenditure on treating tobacco-related diseases alone accounts for 5.3% of total health spending in India in a year.

What efforts have been taken to tackle the ill effects of the tobacco?

- **Awareness campaigns-** Most efforts to counter the tobacco epidemic have been directed at creating awareness about the ill-effects of tobacco.
- In 1987, the World Health Organization (WHO) marked 'World No Tobacco Day' to bring attention to the ill-effects of tobacco.
- Poisoning our planet is the theme this year, in an effort to highlight the ill-effects of tobacco on the environment.
- **Carbon credits-** The forestry community has devised solutions and instruments to incentivise the reduction of deforestation through the use of carbon credits.
- With the surge in new commitments to zero carbon, companies are putting pressure on their supply chains to transition to sustainable practices and reduce deforestation.
- **Efforts of companies-** Companies like Unilever, Amazon, Nestlé, Alibaba, and Mahindra Group are poised to invest an estimated \$50 billion in nature-based solutions such as carbon sinks.
- There is a rise in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) managers.

- By transitioning to safer nicotine delivery systems, and moving away from tobacco, cigarette companies are potentially lowering the risk of their customers dying from cancer.
- Educating potential consumers to not consume tobacco, supporting consumers in their journey to quit, and incentivising industry to help consumers is the need of the hour.

References

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/of-lungs-trees-and-sin-stocks/article65476006.ece>

