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TOBACCO MENACE IN INDIA

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "**TOBACCO MENACE IN INDIA**". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "**SOCIAL ISSUES**" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

Why in the News?

World No Tobacco Day 2024 is celebrated annually on May 31st. This year's theme is "**Youth step in and speak out #TobaccoExposed.**" This theme emphasises empowering young people globally to call on governments to protect them from aggressive tobacco marketing strategies. India ranks second globally in terms of tobacco consumption after China, with approximately 26 crore people estimated to be tobacco users during the 2016-2017 period.

HARMFUL IMPACT OF TOBACCO AS A CROP

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- **Deforestation and Land Degradation:** Tobacco cultivation results in extensive deforestation, with around 50 million trees being felled annually for curing tobacco leaves. This practice depletes the soil, making it unsuitable for other crops. The plant significantly contributes to deforestation, with up to 5.4 kg of wood needed to process just 1 kg of tobacco.
- **Soil Erosion and Degradation:** Intensive use of agrochemicals in tobacco farming leads to significant soil erosion and degradation, reducing soil fertility and structure.
- **Water Pollution:** Using pesticides and fertilizers in tobacco farming and processing heavily pollutes water sources, negatively impacting aquatic ecosystems.
- **Air Pollution:** Harmful gases, including carbon dioxide, are released during tobacco cultivation and processing, contributing to climate change and air pollution.
- **Resource Use and Waste Generation:** Tobacco production demands substantial resources such as water, energy, and chemicals, which result in considerable waste and environmental harm.

HEALTH IMPACTS

- **Occupational Risks:** Tobacco farmers and workers face exposure to hazardous chemicals, leading to health issues like green tobacco sickness (GTS), which manifests as headaches, nausea, and other symptoms.

- **Respiratory and Skin Diseases:** Exposure to toxic substances and pesticides in tobacco farming and processing can cause respiratory and skin diseases.
- **Cancer and Other Health Issues:** Tobacco use is a leading risk factor for various cancers and other health issues, including lung disease, cardiovascular disease, and stroke.

STATUS OF TOBACCO IN INDIA

PREVALENCE OF TOBACCO USE

- **Estimated Number of Users:** In India, the estimated number of tobacco users stands at 274.9 million. This includes 163.7 million people who use only smokeless tobacco, 68.9 million who are solely smokers, and 42.3 million who use both smoking and smokeless tobacco.
- **Prevalence among Adults:** Over one-third of Indian adults, approximately 35%, use tobacco in some form. Among them, 21% use only smokeless tobacco, 9% are exclusive smokers, and 5% use both types of tobacco products.
- **Regional Variations:** The prevalence of tobacco use varies widely across different states and union territories. For instance, the state of Mizoram has a tobacco use rate as high as 67%, whereas Goa has a much lower rate at 9%.

PRODUCTION AND AREA UNDER CULTIVATION

- **Area Under Cultivation:** India dedicates about 0.45 million hectares to tobacco cultivation, representing approximately 10% of the global land area used for growing tobacco.
- **Production Volume:** In the fiscal year 2022, India produced over 189 million kilograms of flue-cured tobacco.

MAJOR TOBACCO-PRODUCING STATES

- **Top States:** The primary states involved in tobacco production include Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Telangana, and Bihar. Specifically, **Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh** contribute approximately 45%, 20%, and 15% to India's total tobacco production, respectively.

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

- **Employment:** The tobacco industry is a significant source of employment in India, **employing around 36 million people** in farming, processing, manufacturing, and exporting activities.
- **Economic Contribution:** Tobacco considerably contributes to India's economy, generating approximately Rs 4,402 crores in foreign exchange earnings and Rs 13,853 crores in excise revenue annually. The industry's total contribution to the national economy is around Rs 18,255 crores.

EXPORT TRENDS

- **Export Destinations:** India exports tobacco products to over 115 countries. Key export destinations include Belgium, the Philippines, Egypt, Germany, Nepal, the USA, and Turkey.
- **Export Volumes:** Between April 2023 and July 2023, India exported 49,157 tonnes of flue-cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco, valued at Rs 1,502 crore (approximately US\$ 180.4 million). Additionally, during the same period, the country exported 84,745 tonnes of unmanufactured tobacco, valued at Rs 2,063 crore (approximately US\$ 247.8 million)



LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK TO CONTROL TOBACCO USAGE CIGARETTES AND OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS ACT (COTPA), 2003

- **Smoking Restrictions:** Smoking is prohibited in public places and workplaces, except in designated smoking areas at airports, hotels with more than 30 rooms, and restaurants with a seating capacity of over 30.
- **Advertising Ban:** The act bans most forms of tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship (TAPS). However, it allows point-of-sale advertisements and some sponsorships with specific restrictions.
- **Health Warnings:** Tobacco product packaging must include pictorial and text health warnings covering 40% of the front surface. The use of misleading terms like “light” and “low-tar” is prohibited.
- **Sales Restrictions:** The sale of tobacco products to minors (under 18 years) is prohibited, as is the sale of tobacco products within a 100-yard radius of educational institutions.

NATIONAL TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAMME

The **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP)** is an extensive initiative launched by the Government of India in 2007-08 to reduce tobacco-related diseases and deaths. The primary objectives of NTCP include:

- Raising awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use
- Reducing the production and supply of tobacco products
- Ensuring effective enforcement of the **Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003**
- Assisting individuals in quitting tobacco use
- Promoting the implementation of tobacco prevention and control strategies recommended by the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

- **The World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)** is the first international treaty negotiated under WHO's guidance. Adopted by the World Health Assembly on May 21, 2003, it came into force on February 27, 2005. The FCTC has been ratified by 182 countries, including 50 WHO European Member States.
- This evidence-based treaty reaffirms everyone's right to the highest standard of health and seeks to combat the global tobacco epidemic by reducing both the demand for and supply of tobacco.

JUDICIAL DIRECTIONS TO CONTROL THE TOBACCO USE

- In 2017, the **Rajasthan High Court** implemented a ban on the use of plastic sachets for packaging gutka and pan masala. This measure effectively decreased the accessibility of these products and their attractiveness to youth.
- Additionally, various High Courts have issued directives to authorities to prohibit the sale of all tobacco products within a 100-yard radius of educational institutions. This action aims to shield students from exposure to tobacco smoke and related products.

WAY FORWARD

- **Enact Comprehensive Tobacco Control Measures:** India should enact comprehensive tobacco control measures that encompass all varieties of tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, and rigorously enforce these regulations.
- **Enhance Taxes and Prices:** Increasing taxes and prices on tobacco products can effectively diminish consumption and generate revenue for tobacco control initiatives.
- **Prohibit Tobacco Advertising and Promotion:** India should prohibit all types of tobacco advertising and promotion, encompassing sponsorships and product placements
- **Enforce Health Warnings:** India should enforce conspicuous health warnings on tobacco products, incorporating graphic images and textual alerts, to enhance awareness about the hazards associated with tobacco use.
- **Switch Farmers to other alternative crops:** For tobacco farmers operating on a large scale, the return on investment per rupee for jowar cultivation (1.84) surpasses that of tobacco (1.48). The government is also looking for alternative employment opportunities for farmers who are indulging in tobacco farming.

Prelims Based Question

Q1. Consider the following statements with reference to Tobacco production:

1. **More than one-third of tobacco is produced by Gujrat.**
2. **India is the largest producer and consumer of Tobacco in the world.**

Choose the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 Only
- (b) 2 Only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Mains Based Question

Q1. Despite several local and Global efforts, tobacco usage has been on the rise, especially among the young generation. What more can be done to contain this menace?

[Vikas](#)

PRAGATI-2024

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WHY IN THE NEWS?

Recently, the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), operating under the auspices of the Union Ministry of Ayush, unveiled "PRAGATI—2024" (Pharma Research in AyurGyan And Techno Innovation). This new initiative is set to open up significant opportunities for joint research endeavours in Ayurveda.



PRAGATI-2024 encourages joint research initiatives between CCRAS and the Ayurvedic pharmaceutical industry. This collaboration is anticipated to stimulate innovation and expansion within the Ayurveda field.

What is the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS)?

- The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India. It is responsible for formulating, coordinating, developing, and promoting research in Ayurvedic sciences.
- Since its inception in 1978, CCRAS has been the leading organisation for advancing research in Ayurveda. It is committed to enhancing the quality of healthcare through the principles of Ayurveda.
- CCRAS undertakes and promotes research in clinical studies, literature, and pharmacology within Ayurveda to solidify evidence-based practices.

- The council releases various scientific publications, research articles, and additional literary works to spread awareness and information concerning Ayurvedic discoveries.
- The council provides training and education programs for students, practitioners, and researchers in Ayurveda. It operates several research institutes and centres across India that provide healthcare services based on Ayurvedic principles.
- It also formulates, coordinates, develops, and promotes research on scientific lines in the Ayurveda and Sowa-Rigpa systems of medicine. Its headquarters are in New Delhi.
- CCRAS is responsible for assessing the effectiveness and safety of Ayurvedic treatments and therapies by conducting clinical trials and research. Additionally, it examines the pharmacological aspects of Ayurvedic medicines, focusing on their standardisation and quality assurance.
- CCRAS also dedicates efforts to studying and translating ancient Ayurvedic manuscripts to maintain and spread this traditional wisdom and documenting and researching medicinal plants and their uses in traditional medicine.

Ayurveda is deeply embedded in India's cultural and spiritual heritage. Its practices, philosophies, and wisdom have been passed down through the ages, pivoting in defining the Indian ethos and safeguarding its venerable knowledge. The foundational texts of Ayurveda, including the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, and Ashtanga Hridaya, serve as significant sources of ancient medical understanding, offering a window into traditional healing methods and natural therapy.

SIGNIFICANCE OF AYURVEDA:

- Ayurveda advocates for a harmonious wellness approach, focusing on health's physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. This holistic perspective fosters the development of more encompassing health strategies.
- Ayurveda emphasises disease prevention through healthy lifestyle habits, proper diet, and consistent detoxification. This forward-thinking strategy helps maintain enduring health and avert illnesses.
- Ayurvedic medicine utilises natural herbs, minerals, and formulations, often with fewer side effects than synthetic drugs. This makes it a safer alternative for long-term use in many cases.
- Ayurveda successfully addresses chronic issues, including arthritis, diabetes, digestive problems, and illnesses linked to stress, by implementing changes in lifestyle and utilising herbal remedies.

CONCLUSION:

CCRAS plays a pivotal role in the scientific validation and modernisation of Ayurvedic practices. Its initiatives are geared towards incorporating Ayurveda into the global healthcare system, making ancient practices accessible and widely acceptable. The council's efforts are instrumental in preserving the rich heritage of traditional medicine and promoting its global recognition. Ayurveda is valued for its direct health benefits and significant contributions to cultural heritage, holistic health practices, and sustainable living. Integrating Ayurveda with contemporary medicine provides critical insights and complementary methods that enrich healthcare practices.

[Amit Pradhan](#)