



Holistic Approach for De-addiction from Tobacco

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Religion is a great science & it has a glorious utility for the world. Religion advices us to rise above the misconceived civilization. The Hindus have received their religion through revelation of the Vedas & Upnishads. The philosophy of Upnishads is the basis of all Indian religion and morals and to a considerable extent of Hindu Policies, legislations and society. It's practical importance to is therefore immense. Those who have in dept understanding of Hinduism often opine that it is not bound by the dictums of religion, rather it is the philosophy of life.

A quote from Rigveda says 'ALL EVILS, O DIVINE PRODUCER DISMISS, WHAT IS GOOD SENT FORTH ON US' 'विश्वानी देव सवितुर्दुरितानी परासुव यन्दद्रं तन्न आसुव' This was the policy advocated against all evils. This is especially true against tobacco, which is the greatest enemy of mankind.

Tobacco thrived everywhere in the world despite social and some religious disapproval. The use of tobacco is harmful to general health and is a common cause of addiction and preventable illness, disabilities and death. Addiction to tobacco is such that it can not be got rid of by medicines alone but only through self control which can be activated through holistic approach and with the help of spiritual leaders who can accelerate eradication of tobacco menace.

Tobacco is traditionally seen in Hindu teaching as vyasana i.e. a dependence unnecessary for preservation of health. The vyasana impedes attainment of the Hindu goal of spiritual life; cessation of sufferings, access to Bliss which is not a limit of joy, but freedom from the bondage of nature. Medical science has categorically demonstrated the ill effect of smoking.



Hindu faith attaches importance to the human heart, a recurring central symbol used in various types of meditations.

Since smoking causes heart diseases, it should be seen as an assault on this holy seat of God. Although tobacco was not present in ancient India, its use today should be limited not only because of its medical effect but also out of consideration for others (Swami Amaranand). There are two dictums left by the sage Vyasa in all the Vedas; in all scriptures :-

परोपकाराय पुण्याय पापायू परपिडनम् !

Doing good to others is an act of merit, harming others is a sinful act. In this context it can be said smoking (active or passive) should not be encouraged; as both are harmful.

Tobacco consumption is not acceptable as a way of enjoying life in all the religious teachings. Mostly the followers from all religions visit the respective places of worship. In **Gurudwaras** the entry with tobacco products are prohibited. Such restrictive instructions act as reminder to refrain away from tobacco. Tobacco consumption is contradiction to the Islamic teachings also Ramzan, a holy festival of Muslim is indeed a new beginning in many ways including abstinence from tobacco habits for Muslim who observe fast during the month.

Tobacco finds no place in ancient Indian scriptures. Tobacco is trans cultural in India, Portuguese traders introduced tobacco in early 17th century. Since then tobacco use has spread with remarkable rapidity involving all sections of society. It is estimated that among the 400 million individuals aged 15 years and above in India 47% uses tobacco in one form or the other. Mass Education and motivation not to indulge in tobacco habits and if involved to quit these habits are undertaken by non-governmental organizations including Gayatri Pariwar; (A spiritual organization). The persons are administered oath after conducting Indian rituals such as lighting the fire (yagnyas and collective prayers). The fire rituals are conducted regularly across the country, some yagnyas are also performed in USA, U.K. and African Countries. The attendance ranges from few hundreds to even a million devotees. It is observed that pledge helps to give up tobacco habits. This study suggests that Indian ritual such as yagnyas (lightening of fire) is effective cultural approach based on Hindu religion to eradicate tobacco evil in real Indian manner.

It is a mission :-

Motivating Individuals against Smokeless and Smoking tobacco Ills Of the Nation.

Gayatri Pariwar is a spiritual mission started by Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya in 1936. The mission envisages the social reforms through the rituals based on Vedic Philosophy. Many branches of Gayatri Pariwar conduct Vyasan Mukti Abhiyan and imparts the knowledge to population about the ill effects of Vyasan in general and tobacco habits in particular. The mass



education is done at the Shantikunj headquarter of Gayatri Pariwar. At the research institute of Gayatri Pariwar, under the guidance of Dr. Pranav Pandya the Director of Bramhavarchas Shodh Sansthan at Haridwar, attempts are made to motivate the devotees to quit tobacco habits. The poster exhibition, health camps and street plays are arranged for the benefit of the society. Video films on the ill effects of tobacco are well received by the public. The founder Pt. Shri. Ram Sharma Acharya has written about 3000 books for the benefit of society. Books on Tobacco evil, 'तंबाखु एक दुर्व्यसन' gives details account of tobacco addiction and ways to get rid of tobacco.

A slogan is framed 'तंबाखु है तमोगुणी - छोडी इसे बनो सदगुणी' gives a correct message to the society. It is preached by Gurudeo that, the word yo 'यो' in Gayatri Mantra 'ॐ भूर्भुवस्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियो नः प्रचोदयात्]' gives us education message to refrain from all danderous addictive habits.

। योजनं व्यसने भ्यः स्यात्ता नि पुसंस्तु ज्ञभव । मिलीत्वैतानी सर्वाणी समये ध्वन्ति मानयम् ॥
। व्यसनीसे कोसी दूर रहे, क्योकी वे प्राणघातक शत्रु है । (पं. श्रीराम शर्मा आचार्य)

Paradigm shift in tobacco addiction can be brought out by mind control, and exercises like meditation, Sudarshan Kriya Yoga, collection prayers and pranayam.

H.H. Ravi Shankarji the founder of Art of living has suggested Sudarshan Kriya Yoga for leaving bad habits such as tobacco, alcohol.

Following recommendations suggested by WHO, a meeting on tobacco and religion in May 1999 on 6th March 2005, a symposium on 'Holistic Approach to tobacco control' was conducted at Dev Sanskriti Vishwa Vidhyalya, Haridwar and it was decided

1. To continue the dialogue and have information, especially with religious organization at the country level.
2. Develop collaboration between religious organization and WHO for tobacco free initiative on evidence based educational programs and investigations of the harmful effects of tobacco on men, women and children.
3. Holistic approach (i.e. treating the person as a whole rather than just the symptoms of disease) involves diverse disciplines like Medicines, Dentistry, Public Health, Law, Economics, Psychology etc. and with great importance by Indian culture and religious values that would be much more effective than the isolated efforts.

Indian tobacco addiction scene demands attention & requires holistic (Towards Totality) approach. Mass education and motivation not to indulge in tobacco habits are under taken by **Gayatri Pariwar**, a spiritual non Governmental organization. This mission envisages the social



reforms through the rituals based on Vedic philosophy. The persons are administered oath after conducting rituals such as lightening the fire (*yagnas*) and are asked as *Dev Dakshina* to take a pledge to give up tobacco taken by masses can be lasting because of individual's faith towards religion which allows them to develop a strong positive attitude.

The 'World No Tobacco Day' is organized at Govt. Dental College & Hospital, Nagpur in collaboration with R.S.T. Cancer Hospital, No Tobacco Organization, Radiology Department of Govt. Medical College, Quami Akta, Gayatri Pariwar, Gurudeo Sewa Mandal and Indian Dental Association and UNESCO Club. In support of the mission, significant events are organized such as all Religion Prayers Exhibition, public awareness rallies as well as interaction with the patients who fought courageously and successfully the Oral Cancer is also arranged. Recently in 2006, at world conference on Tobacco Or Health at Washington D.C. Spokesman from Hindu, Islam, Buddhist and Christianity also supported the 'Role of Faith in Tobacco Control' with evidence based practice tract workshop.

Religion when combined with scientific reasoning can be important tool in fight against tobacco. The Hindus have imbibed religious Philosophical and cultural education through the revelations of '*Vedas*' meaning divine wisdom. In general analysis, religion is being regarded by thinkers as a set of powerful beliefs. The Hindu thought is however universal. Hinduism is a way of life. In essence, the followers would generally have some Do's and Dont's which when properly channelized, followers can be expected to adhere to. This spiritual connectivity to dynamic of tobacco control leadership would be more effective than only scientific efforts.

