

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:840

ANSWERED ON:24.07.2015

Sale of Beedies and Cigarettes

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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

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- (a) whether beedies are more harmful and responsible for more deaths compared to cigarettes in the country, and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to impose same health warnings on beedi packs as on cigarette packs and levy equal taxes on both;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government has taken note of illegal sale of smuggled cigarettes across the country; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the preventive steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

(a): As per the Report titled 'Bidi Smoking and Public Health' (2008) published by Ministry of Health & family Welfare, beedi smoking is no less hazardous than cigarette smoking. A bidi contains about one-fourth the quantity of tobacco as a cigarette, yet it delivers a higher amount of tar and nicotine. Just like cigarette smoking, bidi smoking has been shown to increase the risk of chronic bronchitis, tuberculosis, and respiratory diseases.

(b) & (c): As per the provisions contained in "The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003" (COTPA) and the Rules framed thereunder all forms of tobacco products including cigarettes and bidi shall display the same health warnings.

As per the information provided by Department of Revenue, presently there is no proposal under consideration of the Government to impose equal taxes (i.e. Central Excise) on cigarettes and beedies. Cigarettes are chargeable to specific excise duty rates based on the length of cigarettes, whereas beedies are chargeable to specific excise duty rate irrespective of their length.

(d) & (e): As per the information provided by the Anti-Smuggling Unit of Department of Revenue, the Department has detected several cases of smuggling of foreign cigarettes in the country. The details of Cigarettes of foreign brands seized during the last three years and current year is at ANNEXURE.

The field formations including Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) have been sensitized and alerted to keep a strict vigil in this regards so as to prevent/check smuggling of foreign brand of cigarettes in the country.