

Warning on tobacco packs



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38,740 signatures of people across the country including Assam, who strongly support the implementation of new and larger [health](#) warnings on tobacco packages in India on April 1, has been submitted to Shri J. P. Nadda Hon'ble Union Minister for [Health](#) & Family Welfare on March 18.

The signatures were collected in an online and offline petition started by Sunita Tomar, an oral [cancer](#) survivor.

The new warnings reaffirm Indian global leadership, projecting the country into one of the first positions for the largest tobacco [health](#) warnings in the world. Countries like Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, have taken the cue from India and have dramatically increased the size of pictorial warnings on tobacco packages. "India has demonstrated global leadership with its new 85% pictorial [health](#) warnings. It is essential that these warnings appear on tobacco packages as soon as possible. A picture says a thousand words. Picture warnings are especially important for those who cannot read," said Rob Cunningham – Senior Policy Analyst at the Canadian Cancer Society – author of the report Cigarette [Package Health](#) Warnings.

International studies demonstrate that larger, pictorial warning on tobacco packages are effective way to INFORM users about the dangers of tobacco dependence; CONVINCED youth not to [start](#); MOTIVATE users to quit and COUNTER tobacco industry efforts to use packages as [marketing](#) tools. Effective pictorial warning increase knowledge about risks associated with smoking and can decrease intentions to smoke among adolescents persuade smokers to quit, and keep ex-smokers from starting again. Pictorial warning have a greater impact than text-only labels and can be recognized by low-literacy audiences and children — two vulnerable population groups.

A recent MoHFW-WHO supported PHFI study, estimated that the total economic costs attributable to tobacco use from all diseases in India in the year 2011 amounted to a staggering Rs 1, 04,500 crores — 12% more than the combined state and central government expenditure on health care in the same year.

India has 12 crore tobacco users, according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2009-2010, which means every ninth Indian consumes tobacco. Tobacco related diseases kills about 2500 Indians daily and over [10](#) lakh Indians every year. It is estimated that approximately 5500 children, some as young as 8 years old, [start](#) consuming tobacco daily.

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