

Dear, leave it for my sake!

“ Giving up smoking the easiest thing in the world, I know because I’ve done it thousands of times “

– Mark Twain

The moment we hear about smoking its literal meaning from the word smoke is forgotten and the entire concentration goes on Cigar smoking. Smoking word has become so common as synonym of Cigarette smoking. Quite often we read articles relating to this harmful habit in the newspapers and magazines. The person who is habitual smoker is more anxious to go through the details of the effects of this habit and takes extra pains to go through the articles carefully. But the question is, does it have an effect over his mind or he reads while smoking. Now this article is coming your way, which will be read by smokers and non-smokers and I accept being a smoker that you will still enjoy reading while smoking like any other article on this issue it becomes obligatory on my part to enlighten you about the most common facts underneath the ill- effects of this habit. Cigarette smoking is a major factor leading to heart diseases as it has been known for years. Lung Cancer and chronic lung diseases are linked with cigarette smoking.

In the recent years people have come to know that there is a direct link between cigarette smoking and diseases of heart and blood vessels. Numbers of studies are being conducted by way of interview, surveys, medical reports etc. as we are following the advanced countries for any research on this issue where it can be seen that nearly one million Americans die of heart attack, stroke and related disorders. More over nearly 40 million Americans are suffering with the disease relating to heart and lung disorder in one form or the other. Cigarette smoking is considered to be a factor in some three lakh twenty five thousand deaths each year. Therefore it is evident that heart diseases and lung disorders have come up as the major cause of untimely deaths. It is an un-debated issue that cigarette smokers run an extra risk of heart disease. The risk is even higher if the smokers also have high blood pressure or high levels of cholesterol in the blood.

Common men cannot fully understand everything like, how cigarette smoking increases the risk of heart disease but he knows the effect of nicotine and carbon monoxide on the heart and blood vessels. The tar and nicotine are not the only substance found in tobacco’s smoke. Therefore as a result of inhaling more deeply, a smoker is exposed to more harmful substances which may increase the risk of getting the disease. Now the question arises that; why day by day the culture of cigarette smoking is increasing in spite of knowing its ill effects. In recent years surveys conducted in metropolis have revealed that children in the school having attained the age of 14 years are having the curiosity to smoke during lunch hour, before going to school and after school hours and even girls are prone to smoking.

Why it is so? There are number of questions coming to the mind of a common man. Ban on smoking in the office, ban on advertisements in the media, prohibition inside cinema halls, theatre and Govt. Offices added to it a statutory warning printed

on the cigarette packets. Have we achieved the desired object of decreasing the increasing trend of this menace? The cigarette smoking leads to other chronic habits like drug addiction and alcoholism. The most affected people are the passive smokers. The study reveals that a passive smoker is affected to the tune of 30% while in the company of smokers.

I can recall the instances when my Secretary refused to sit in my office while I was smoking giving dictation to her. Her request always had positive effect on me for not smoking during her presence. Whereas even in the prohibited areas a smoker does not hesitate smoking cigarette in the toilet etc. Nationally and Internationally cigarette companies sponsor cricket matches and other events which are glaring examples of supporting the fact that there is a lack of will and general awareness for discarding this menace. Let me highlight the interesting aspect of enjoyment that generates in the mind of a smoker. He has got number of pleas/excuses for affording this habit and the most common are getting concentration, overcoming the stress, getting peace of mind , feeling relax and removing tension and sometime he may say that the enjoyment doubles when it is with drinking. It is not that the smokers do not know the ill-effect of cigarette smoking but somehow the comparison of risk of heart disease and enjoyment balance in their mind.

I have seen people coming to a Cardiologist for a treadmill test or a stress test after smoking continuously 10 cigarettes with the promise that in case something adverse comes out in the test he will leave smoking and this will be the last packet in his life. He feels somewhat alleviated when he declares himself as a chronic smoker and tells the Doctor with a great feeling that he smokes 2-3 packets a day but what is the end result when the outcome of stress test is normal. The smoking habit goes on. On the other hand, I have seen that people leave the smoking very confidently giving credit to their will power and with a pride say before the smokers that they use to smoke 4-5 packets a day which gives a very easy meaning that even after leaving the cigarette smoking they throw a challenge before the smokers.

Now, there is another class of people who left smoking but started the habit of chewing tobacco with betel leaves or otherwise in the form of *pan masala* and what not. They are really fooling themselves because in any case they are ingesting it earlier the nicotine was going through the passage of lung but now it is getting absorbed through the intestine. In any case they are getting the satisfaction enjoying a particular level of nicotine absorption in the blood and harmful effects are seen.

My article will not be complete unless we touch upon the category of people who says that they are just smoking one cigarette with morning tea one after lunch and one after dinner and the plea taken is that they cannot have proper stools unless they smoke in the morning and full satisfaction is not there unless they smoke after lunch and dinner. These people are getting satisfied because very less amount of nicotine is going into the blood stream and a feeling is there that it is not going to harm them in the long run. They are not worried about the passive smoking of the other family members in their company.

About sixty to seventy percent smokers in our country are smoking *beedi* and not cigarette because it is cheap. It is said that smoke generated out of *beedi* is more

harmful than the smoke coming out of cigarette smoking. Since burning of *beedi* leaf leads to more toxic substances. In villages it is more common among women. Use of tobacco in *chilam* is another form of smoking. Well *hukka* is considered less harmful because smoke passes through water medium.

Can we really go away with this harmful habit a million-dollar question? Govt. earns revenue in thousands of crores by way of duties and taxes every year. Sports events get sponsors and above all large numbers of people are employed in *beedi* and cigarette industry. We should also not forget the *panwallas* who are having thousands of rupees income per day in big cities that too non taxable. Govt. plea that they are increasing taxes and duties every year, to make cigarette costly to discourage the people but it is not a realistic approach because within a span of last thirty years if the cost of cigarette has gone up to 20 times the number of smokers have also increased to the same tune. Another interesting aspect of this problem is that it is not only the addiction of nicotine in men but in ladies in the higher strata of society, they smoke to show as a sign of being modern. These ladies smoke in the parties, discos and other gatherings giving the meaning that they are different from other ladies they are not aware that this can form a habit later on. Even the pregnant ladies are sometimes ignorant about ill effects of smoking on the child in their womb.

Sometimes back I went to a Multinational Company's office and while sitting in the reception witnessed an interesting scene. A man who was waiting there took out his cigarette packet and was about to light cigarette suddenly he saw the sign of no smoking there and went to the receptionist for seeking her permission as to whether he can smoke. The receptionist pointed her finger to the No Smoking sign board and refused permission. Quite depressed the man sat and started looking here and there suddenly he saw the ashtray full of cigarette butts in it. Now feeling quite satisfied he went to the Receptionist again and asked as to why he has been refused smoking when so many persons have earlier smoked there as evident from the ashtray. The Receptionist smiled and very politely replied that these cigarette butts are from the people who never asked her permission and smoked here.

If I smoke, it never gives me right to advocate for it rather I take it as a personal choice or decision. At times I become a beggar for two paisa when I ask for a match stick for lighting my cigarette. Yes 50 match sticks cost one rupee only and believe me that we smokers are best friends in trains, parties and other public places when we look out for each other. What is the idea of writing all this when I can't give a message to my readers dear you can only leave it in one go and that requires will power and strong determination or your heart suffering with angina pain can compel you to do so when a single puff will become a drop of light poison. Remember if you stop smoking regardless of how long or how much you have smoked your risk of heart decease will be reduced eventually. Ten years after quitting cigarette smoking, the risk of death from heart disease is almost the same as if you had never smoked. Therefore, it is important to take a decision before the alarm is given by Cardiologist on the findings of stress test. Finally, for my teenager friends they will leave smoking only when a beautiful girl friend in love will say, Dear... Leave it for my sake.
