

Dear All

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, New Zealand passed what I see as the next set of regulations against smoking. I am not a smoker, never have been. I have written about regulations banning something e.g. liquor in the past and I studied smoking history again. Here are my learnings:

1. Cigarettes started in Mexico and South America in the 9<sup>th</sup> century but were never popular till the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for a variety of reasons like mass manufacturing, mass distribution, storage, etc. cigarettes is a \$ 1 trillion market globally and governments tax cigarettes heavily. Governments make about \$ 400 million from the cigarette industry every year. For many governments cigarette taxes are an important part of government revenue. China makes 11 % of government revenue through taxes on cigarettes.
2. In the 1920s, there was enough evidence to link cigarette smoking to respiratory illness.
3. Half of cigarette smokers die to tobacco related illnesses, and its estimated that the life of a smoker is cut down by 14 years because of smoking.
4. At the start of the century, regular smokers in American smoked 54 cigarettes per adult, that number moved to 4259 per adult by 1965 and then dropped to 2092 per adult in 2000 and is now 1691 in 2006. What led to this significant increase and then drop?
5. In World War 2, cigarettes were part of standard free issue to all US soldiers. So, wherever American soldiers were stationed, smoking picked up. The same was true in the Vietnam war too.
6. Most industry watchers believe that the Hollywood movies – western movies, war movies and others movies propelled cigarettes to something of a macho symbol. Cigarette brands then had some outstanding brand building for brands like Marlboro in 1961 changed the acceptance of cigarettes. Cigarette brands sponsored most sporting events like cricket, football, F 1 racing and it was common to see macho sportsmen puffing a cigarette in various pictures.
7. The first anti-smoking campaign was run in Nazi Germany and it flopped. But, the idea appealed to other countries and everyone started using it.
8. The first downturn for cigarettes started in 1965 when the surgeons general determined that cigarettes were harmful to health and a statutory warning became mandatory. The industry reacted to this in not a very positive way – they put the labelling on the pack in a typeface that made reading the warning a little difficult!
9. There are 8 million people who succumb to smoking related diseases every year, of this 1.2 million of them are passive smokers. So, smoking and the smoke that fills a room impacts non -smokers too.
10. In 1994, the 599 cigarette additives that go into a cigarette were listed in America for the first time.
11. Governments have done a lot over the years to discourage smoking – health warnings on packs, graphic pictures on packs, age restrictions, banning advertising, banning smoking in public spaces, banning smoking on aircrafts etc.
12. New Zealand has gone many steps ahead. Only 5000 people of a population of 7.7 million people are impacted by smoking related disease in NZ.
  - By 2024, NZ plans to reduce number of retail outlets selling cigarettes
  - By 2025, they plan to introduce a legislation to cut nicotine levels in cigarettes
  - By 2027, they plan to make selling cigarettes to anyone below the age 20 years illegal.
13. Only Bhutan has stricter rules against smoking.

Historical evidence of almost all categories shows that punitive rules lead to a black market, leads to crime , leads to breaking rules. Prohibition has never worked!

Everyone will watch the progress of NZ and then decide the next steps against smoking. Smokers might well feel that the world has turned against them!!

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