

Beedi Is Sold About Ten Times More Than Cigarettes in India: Report

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“Smoking is injurious to health” and “Tobacco causes cancer” — these two phrases are often seen on a pack of cigarettes. These warnings do not stop people from smoking anyway. Most city or urban people smoke cigarettes and cigars, while rural people or those from the lower economic sections prefer to smoke beedi. Beedis are small, rolled tendu leaves with tobacco in between. Most people call it beedi in Hindi, you will be surprised to know that English words for these hand-made cigarettes aren't much different.

Making beedis is very easy. While one may think that cigarettes are more popular, Indians prefer smoking beedis more. Beedis are sold about ten times more than cigarettes in the country. The ease of putting together a beedi is what makes it possible for rural women to make them at home and sell them to earn a living. A huge downside of smoking beedi is that it is much more harmful than a cigarette. While cigarettes have a filter and processed tobacco, beedis have uncured, coarse tobacco without a filter. Beedis deliver 3-5 times more nicotine, tar and carbon monoxides than conventional cigarettes.

According to India Environmental Portal, beedi production in the country was largely restricted to Bombay and Southern Gujarat until 1900. Only after the drought of 1899 in Gujarat, did the people move outside the state and this migration caused the birth of the beedi industry on a small scale. Today, about 30 lakh people are actively participating in beedi production. Beedis are also exported outside the nation.

Beedis are very popular in the nation. The word 'beedi' is derived from the Marwadi word 'beeda'. The Marwadi dialect is not much different from Hindi. Beeda is also another word for paan, which is a betel leaf wrapped up with betel nuts, herbs and condiments. Most people think that the name beedi is just a common Hindi word and don't realise that the English pronunciation is not much different. There are a few other words for the hand-made cigarettes in English, and those are biri and bidi.

Source: <https://www.news18.com/buzz/did-you-know-beedi-is-sold-about-ten-times-more-than-cigarettes-in-india-7289455.html>