

Extended Abstract

Tobacco Missions in Societies

Introduction

Historically, the way of encountering tobacco was different between societies. This led to a lack of knowledge and experience regarding tobacco. However, with the development of health sciences and inter-communal communication, the opinions concerning tobacco products are now aligned.

Tobacco products have many uses. American tribes use tobacco in ceremonial and treaty settings, which is viewed as a kind of tradition. Apart from addiction and recreational use, another feature of the cigarette is decoration. Moreover, the increase in tobacco advertising is aimed at increasing cigarette use as a fashion statement. Cigarettes are even consumed to avoid religious pressures, oppose community pressures, and convey a message of freedom.

Societies' view of Tobacco through History

Smoking was once considered a healthy practice prior to smoking-related deaths, as explained by the World Health Organization (WHO). Tobacco was referred to as “sacred grass” and “healing of god” in the 16th century. The belief in the benefits of tobacco is presently growing and scientists' works have progressed in this direction. Writing in 1587, scientist Giles Everard observed that his tobacco use served as an antidote to many types of poisons and infectious diseases, even his need for a physician decreased.

At the end of the 16th century, the widespread use of tobacco reached the Islamic world and thus there were discussions about tobacco. Cerrah Ibrahim Efendi, the Palace Chief Physician, was the first to struggle against tobacco use during that period. However, this fight against tobacco use ended with Şeyhülislam Bahaî Mehmet Efendi claiming that tobacco was not haram by religion. While Altıparmak Mehmed Efendi initially defined tobacco as “halal” he changed his views later.

Analyzing the etymology of nicotine; in 1559, Jean Nicot, a French ambassador in Portugal, introduced tobacco to the French queen. The tobacco was called “Queen herb” because it offered treatment of different types of diseases (respiratory diseases, headaches, stomach diseases, and gynecology). The spread of tobacco from France to Europe was inspired by Jean Nicot, and hence it was named “nicotiana.” Furthermore, its component, described in 1828, was named “nicotin.” In the same century, the definition of nicotine started to change with the definition of nicotine, but it continued to be used for treatment.

The number of people addicted to tobacco has increased because of its use in ornaments and treatments in most religious ceremonies. After the 15th century, tobacco bans were introduced in large continents. In the early 16th century, defying prohibitions could even result in the exercise of death penalty in England, which was first introduced by King James I. In the same years Pope VIII. Urban opposed tobacco use by linking it to religious reasons. Those who did not comply with the prohibitions were punished by having their noses cut off in the first arrest and by death in the second. The Iranian ruler also imposed punishments for tobacco use that resulted in the cutting of the upper lip and death penalty. In the same time frame, the Netherlands faced plague epidemic, and the rumor of tobacco as a cure caused a significant increase in tobacco use. Especially in the last 30 years, although the damages of smoking and exposure to smoke have been demonstrated at the level of evidence it has not prevented the increased use of tobacco.

Findings

Societies have defined different missions for tobacco use. Each mission facilitated to predict health problems of different cultures. However, as medical science evolved, the harm of tobacco was better understood, and the old missions remained only in the literature.