

Ideal Standard Pack Shape for Bidis Sold in India: Learnings from Key Informants

Background

Studies of bidi packs in India show low compliance with health warning label (HWL) requirements. Most packs are cone-shaped, vary in size, and are wrapped in newsprint.

This study explored the perspective of tobacco control key informants (KIs) in India on the ideal standard bidi pack shape.



◀ A 2017 bidi pack from India showing the current shape

Methods

We conducted KI interviews with international tobacco control stakeholders working in India (n=4), state and national Ministry of Health employees (n=3), and government employees (n=2; Department of Metrology and National Tobacco Testing Lab).

We displayed three mock packs to KIs and asked which shape they believed would be most feasible to implement and why:

- Rectangular cardboard box
- Trapezoidal cardboard box, which approximated the shape of current bidi packs
- Cylindrical tin container

Data were thematically analyzed.

Key informants in India prefer **box and trapezoidal shapes** over a cylindrical shape for a proposed standard bidi pack



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Results

KIs preferred the box and trapezoid shapes. KIs preferring the trapezoid cited its portability, display of HWLs on front and back, and low resemblance to cigarette packs—avoiding conferring an associated “high-status” appeal.

KIs preferring the box cited its eco-friendliness, portability, bigger HWL image/text, ease of checking compliance, and higher cost to manufacture (a cost that would be passed onto consumers via pack price increases, thereby likely reducing demand).

The cylindrical shape was unanimously rejected as it limited HWL visibility and was not easily portable.

Conclusions

According to KIs, a standard pack may be a feasible approach to improve HWL visibility.

While KIs preferred the cardboard trapezoid and box shape equally, a trapezoid may be best-suited to approximate the current shape of bidis on the market.

Results can inform future policy discussions.

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