

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY: UNDERAGE CIGARETTE SMOKING

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Authors:

Patnaik, R. (Institute of Management Technology - Nagpur (IMT))

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Abstract:

Cigarette smoking amongst youth, till some time ago, was seen to be on **the** rise. This was marked significantly by peer pressure, which almost forced **the** young to take up **smoking**. **With the** risky behaviour of **the** sometimes less-informed, but mostly reckless youth, inevitably came **the** responsibility of **their** custodians - **the** elders, **the** society, **the** government, and even **the** companies that manufacture and sell **cigarettes** - who sought to protect **their** youth from **the** harmful effects of **smoking**. Interestingly, **cigarette** manufacturing companies seem to come out proactively and address **the** issue of **underage smoking** through cessation. This is counterintuitive as **the cigarette** companies are deliberately killing a potential growth segment of **their** market. To curb **underage smoking**, **the** government is making **cigarette smoking** illegal for individuals below 18 years of age. Adding to this, **the** stricter Foods and Drugs Administration (FDA, US) norms, **the smoking** prevention acts, **the** tobacco settlement agreements, and so on, are restricting **underage cigarette smoking**. **The cigarette** companies go on to issue age identity cards to **their** markets and also educate **their** retailers to stop **the underage** sale of **cigarettes** altogether. All of **these** efforts have led to a decrease in tobacco use amongst youth over **the** years. Are **the** tobacco (**cigarette**) companies trying to ameliorate **the** market or is **there** any selfish business interest in all this. Is **there** a clear sustainable strategy at place? **With** numerous health diseases and deaths attributed to **cigarette smoking**, are tobacco companies stoppable? And who will stop **them**?

Topics:

Stakeholder analysis; Teenage smoking; Tobacco; Master Settlement Agreement; Tobacco control; Family smoking; United States; United Kingdom; USFDA

Settings:

US and UK, Tobacco; cigarette, Worldwide: BAT (UK) £15 billion; 55, 000+ employees; PM(US) Altria Group \$23 billion; 9900+ employees, June 2010