

# Assessing Tobacco Waste as a Form of Post-Consumption Marketing Through an Observational Study in Kolkata, India

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## Background

Tobacco products and product packaging are commonly littered, negatively affecting the environment. Tobacco product waste can include branding and, therefore, function as post-consumption product advertising—reinforcing social norms around use. An observational study in Kolkata, India was conducted to assess the presence of branded tobacco litter.

## Methods

- Data collectors recorded the location of each piece of tobacco litter, classifying its type [i.e., cigarette/ bidi butts and packaging; smokeless tobacco (SLT) packaging; e-cigarette/ heated tobacco product waste], and recording if the litter had a visible brand (name and/or logo) or health warning label (HWL).

## Results

- In total, 33% (n=736) of the litter had visible branding: a majority of cigarette (95%; n=110) and bidi (78%; n=50) packs, over half of all SLT packaging (52%; n=526), and in 3% (n=20) of cigarette butts.



$\frac{1}{3}$  of the tobacco litter observed had **visible branding** and may function as **post-consumption marketing**.

**Plain** and **standardized packaging** could limit this.



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## Additional Information

- Data collection was conducted at two different times during June and July 2022.
- Observations occurred along 12 routes—each route measuring at least 250 meters and equally located in three areas of Kolkata (South, Central and North).
- We found tobacco waste along every route and during every visit. In total, we observed N=2,227 pieces of tobacco product litter.
- SLT packaging comprised the largest portion of the sample (45%), followed by cigarette butts (33%; n=738), bidi butts (12%; n=268), cigarette packaging (7%; n=147), and bidi packaging (3%; n=64).
- A HWL was visible on 94% (n=138), 5% (n=24), and 32% (n=321) of cigarette, bidi, and SLT packs, respectively.

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