

## Changes in law on cigarettes, other tobacco products to impact F&B sector: NRAI

PTI | Jan 19, 2021

**NEW DELHI:** Any changes to the Cigarettes And Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 will directly impact the food and beverage sector, industry body NRAI said on Tuesday as it urged Health Minister Harsh Vardhan to consider its viewpoints on the proposed amendments. The proposed amendments will not only hugely inconvenience the consumers but will also adversely impact the overall consumer sentiments, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) said in a statement.



*Representative photo*

"While we understand the health concerns arising out of smoking and understand Government's efforts to contain smoking habits, we as an industry that has an annual turnover of approximately Rs 4 lakh crore and provides direct employment to over 7 million Indians, are also hugely concerned about the impact of this decision on our business at a time when we are fighting a grim battle to eke out a mere survival for ourselves," NRAI President Anurag Katriar said.

The proposed licensing requirement will further add to the red tape which goes against the avowed policy of the government, he added.

"The proposed amendments to COTPA will inconvenience our consumers, thus hurting the consumer sentiments, which will have a direct bearing on our business. We cannot afford this," Katriar said.

While restaurants can regulate the sale of tobacco products, it will be incorrect to hold a restaurant management responsible if an individual guest lights a cigarette in violation of the rules. The proposed fines are also very significant and seem disproportionate for the nature of the offence, he added.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to request the Government of India to make NRAI an integral part of the consultative process as the restaurant sector is a very significant part of the larger hospitality and tourism industry," Katriar said.

The amendment to COTPA proposed by the Ministry of Health disallows retail sale of loose sticks of cigarettes, prohibits sale of tobacco products to persons below 21 years, put controls on in-shop advertising and promotion, amongst others

**Source:** <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/changes-in-law-on-cigarettes-other-tobacco-products-to-impact-fb-sector-nrai/articleshow/80348591.cms>