Smoking Should be Banned in Public Places

1

~~Smoking has been a tricky problem for human beings~~. According to World Health Organization (2019), there are nearly 1.1 billion smokers on earth. In recent years, more and more people call for banning smoking in public places. Smoking not only affects the smokers but also the people and environment around. Smoking should be banned in public places for the following six reasons. First, secondhand smoke has negative effects on people’s health. Second, cigarette smoke may bother non-smokers. Third, people who smoke in public set a bad example to teenagers. Fourth, the prohibition on smoking in public places will decrease the number of smokers. Fifth, smoking in public places may do harm to the environment. Sixth, the ban on smoking in public will reduce the fire.

Secondhand smoke has negative effects on people’s health. When someone smokes in public places, the people around will involuntarily inhale the smoke. This is called secondhand smoke. According to the Center for Disease Control (2018), “Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and about 70 that can cause cancer.” If people inhale too much poisonous smoke in public places, they may suffer serious health problems. According to Zahid Naeem (2015), secondhand smoke can cause asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections in children and coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer in adults. And according to the data of WHO, secondhand smoke causes approximately 600,000 deaths per year. Smoking in public places puts people around at the risk of various fatal diseases. The health of innocent non-smokers is being jeopardized against their will. So due to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, smoking should be banned in public places. Joaquin Barnoya and Stanton A. Glantz (2005) also said that implementation of smoke-free policies would have substantial effects on heart disease morbidity and mortality through reducing secondhand smoke exposure.

2

Cigarette smoke may bother non-smokers. Cigarette smoke tends to linger on people’s hair and clothes. People’s hair may absorb the smoke of the nearby smokers. Clothes worn to a smoky bar may still smell like smoke days later. The smell of smoke will last for a long time even though the smoker has left. This can be really disturbing for people who hate the smell of smoke. And according to Victoria Henshaw (2014), “The majority of non-smokers in all the cities studied disliked the odours of cigarettes” (p.119). She also said some people felt that the smoke offended them. They thought the smoke was like an invasion of their own space. Victoria’s words show that public have a strong aversion to the smell of smoke. It can be inferred that a smoker in public places will bother many non-smokers around.

People who smoke in public set a bad example to teenagers. According to Aristidis Vasilopoulos et al (2015), teenagers are in the stage of seeking ~~for~~ social integration and acceptance. At this stage, teenagers are confused about the social environment. They simply follow the actions of adults. According to the research ~~done~~ by Ian Newman and John DeFrain (2018), young smokers choose to smoke in imitation of adults because they simply want to be like the adults and to feel “grown up,” to “fit in,” to “be cool” or “one of the guys.” When teenagers see people smoke in public, they may identify smoking as a transition into maturity. The smokers send a misleading message that smoking is normal. They also strengthen teenagers’ belief in the “coolness” of smoking. More teenagers start smoking due to the influence of seeing other people smoke in public places.

3

The prohibition on smoking in public places will decrease the number of smokers. Because smoking is forbidden in public places, people can only smoke in their homes. This will cut down the time they smoke if they work in smoke-free places. As a result, their cigarette consumption will reduce, and they will smoke less. This in turn encourages the smokers who have already tried to quit smoking. According to the study of Girija Syamlal et al (2018), the odds of smoking were significantly lower among indoor workers reporting a 100% smoke-free policy at their workplace than workers with a partial or no or no smoke-free policy at their workplace.

Smoking in public places may ~~do~~ harm ~~to~~ the environment. When the smokers smoke in public places, they tend to throw the cigarette butts almost everywhere. According to a survey done by Jessica M. Rath and her colleagues (2012), almost three-quarters of smokers reported littering ~~their cigarette butts at one point in their lifetime~~ by disposing of them on the ground or throwing them out of a car window. And more than half of the smokers littered cigarette butts in the past month.

Besides littering, the toxic chemicals in the cigarette are also harmful to the environment. According to Warren McLaren (2005), “Traditional butts are made of synthetic polymer cellulose acetate and never degrade, only breaking apart after roughly 12 years.” Because the cigarette butts can’t degrade naturally, they may end up in the water and soil. McLaren (2005) said that, “within an hour of contact with water, cigarette butts can begin leaching chemicals such as cadmium, lead and arsenic into the marine environment.” The cigarette butts left in soil will hamper nearby plant growth. The discarded cigarette butts may destroy the ecological balance of the nature. But if the smoking ban is enforced, the littering of cigarette butts will diminish. The environment will also be protected.

4

The ban on smoking in public will reduce the fire. According to the research of UC Davis (2000), smoking is a leading cause of fires globally. Inappropriate disposing of smoking materials is the main cause of smoking-related fire. When people throw away cigarette in public places, they may not have extinguished the cigarettes. They may also toss the cigarette butts on flammable materials. These are some causes of fire in public places. If people are not allowed to smoke in public, these things will not happen. There will be less fire that damages people’s safety and property.

Some people may argue that preventing smokers from smoking in public places infringes their rights. Smokers do have the right to smoke, but non-smokers also have the right to breathe fresh air in public places. The inhalation of secondhand smoke is involuntary and unavoidable. The health of non-smokers is compromised. And according to Yvette van der Eijk and Gerard Porter (2013), “given the addictive properties of tobacco, it can be suggested that smoking is incompatible with the notion of liberty, as the addict is not entirely free to choose whether to continue smoking or not.” Smoking is a personal decision and people can choose to smoke ~~under their will~~. But others should not be subjected to the health risks caused by secondhand smoke.

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Some people may say that smoke-free legislation in public places forces smokers to smoke more in their house. This may affect their family members. Biao Luo et al (2015) see it in a different way, they said smoking bans in public places can be effective in reducing tobacco consumption among smokers. These bans also contributed to the prevention of smoking uptake among children and young people by reshaping the perceived social acceptability of smoking. They believed that smoking bans in public places would encourage more people to quit smoking. Smoking at home can also be avoided.

Now people are becoming more and more conscious of the harm of smoking. Many people support the idea of banning smoking in public places. They realize that legislation on public smoking will protect non-smokers from secondhand smoke and set good example to teenagers. It will also cut down the number of smokers, protect the environment and reduce fire. Based on the reasons above, smoking should be banned in public places.

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