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Background

Addressing the tobacco epidemic requires the adoption of evidence-based tobacco control policies consistent with the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control. Unfortunately, few studies have explored the political dynamics of tobacco control policy adoption to help us better understand why these policies are successfully adopted in some low- and middle-income countries but not in others.

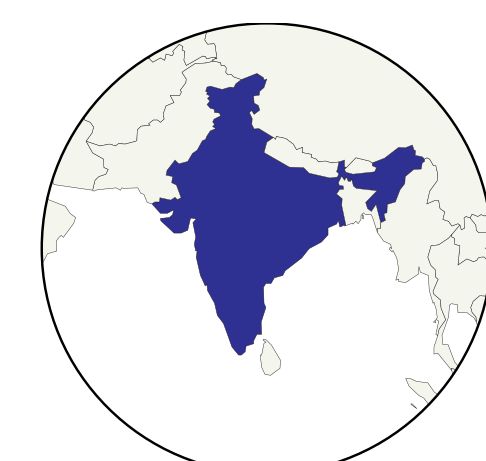
In light of this gap, the primary aim of this study was to understand the process and determinants that led to the issuance of the 85% health warning labeling law in India in 2014 and the passage of the smoke-free law in Turkey in 2008.

Methods

Under the guidance of John Kingdon's *Multiples Streams Theory*, a case study approach was used for each country whereby data were gathered from two different sources: key informant interviews (N=41) and document review (N=284). Subsequently, cross-case analysis was conducted to identify cross-cutting themes.

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Multiple Streams Theory Constructs: Results from India & Turkey



	India	Turkey
Problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The burden of tobacco-caused diseases was high in India <p><i>"So what happened was that in May [2014], this report [Economic Impact of Tobacco on India] was released, and it's a very shocking figure, the burden on India because of tobacco-related diseases."</i> - Civil Society Actor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The burden of tobacco-caused diseases was high in Turkey <p><i>"In Turkey we have many books and publications about tobacco and I can tell you for the first time in 1988, there was a survey in Turkey it was implemented by the government. And the smoking rates were 63% in men and approximately 24% in women so it's very high."</i> - Civil Society Actor</p>
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BJP Party came into power Health Minister was an anti-tobacco advocate who was interested in making India a global leader in tobacco control <p><i>"Dr. Harsh Vardhan, who was the health minister then, he had mentioned in many interviews that tobacco is one of the things he wants to sort of crack down on. And he's a doctor. He's got that activist streak in him."</i> - Journalist</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AKP party came into power Prime Minister, Health Minister and Head of Health Commission were anti-tobacco advocates The party was interested in gaining global visibility <p><i>"Yes, it is our chance. It is our chance, yes. Prime Minister and very dedicated Health Minister."</i> - Turkish Academic</p>
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tobacco control community recommended that the health warnings labels be increased <p><i>"The government proposed to increase tobacco health warning labels...based on the recommendation of a committee of experts, constituted in February, 2014, with the mandate to look at global best practices."</i> - Government Official </p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tobacco control community recommended that the government pass a 100% smoke-free legislation <p><i>"We got together, NGOs, academicians. All organizations were synchronized in Turkey."</i> - Turkish Academic</p>
Policy Window	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opened by the political stream <p><i>"I think the ball really started rolling again when the Modi government was elected in 2014. He appointed Dr. Harsh Vardhan, who was an ENT surgeon. Very passionate about tobacco control... he was very excited about 'how can I make India number one in tobacco control?'"</i> - International Actor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opened by the political stream <p><i>"Two chances for this topic. One FCTC and two prime minister thoroughly support the idea. Given those it was easy for us."</i> - Government Official</p>

Results

In India and Turkey, elections brought forth new leaders who were personally committed to tobacco control, and political parties that were eager to elevate the global status of their countries.

Understanding this context, international and national advocates worked collaboratively to seize these windows of opportunities; policy entrepreneurs gained direct access to new leaders, and framed the policies as measures that are not only evidence-based, but ones that can help their respective countries gain global leadership. To ensure that tobacco use continued to be regarded as a problem of concern, media advocacy was also employed to shed light on the severity of the epidemic.

Conclusions

This comparison suggests the need for advocates to:

- develop a rigorous understanding of their countries' political context in order to formulate appropriate advocacy strategies (i.e. in these two cases, advocates framed tobacco control as foreign policy)
- be well-versed in the scientific evidence surrounding the harms of tobacco use and the effectiveness of the policy option
- work collaboratively, and
- be prepared to seize windows of opportunities