



# TOBACCO-FREE *Times*

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## Tobacco Endgame Series Edition 6: Tackling Tobacco Industry Interference

### E-RCTC: A Digital Health Platform Showcasing Tobacco Control Activities, Policies, Resource Materials, and Updates from Across India

E-RCTC, the E-Resource Centre for Tobacco Control, stands as an unparalleled solution, providing a comprehensive collection of resource materials dedicated to tobacco control efforts in India. With a steadfast commitment to promoting health and well-being, this collaborative initiative between PGIMER and The International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (The Union) has been actively engaged in advocacy activities aimed at curbing the harmful effects of tobacco consumption.

In its remarkable journey spanning for just over five years, E-RCTC has firmly established itself as a beacon of knowledge, systematically organizing a vast array of technical resources that empower program implementers, academia, and researchers. By offering a centralized platform, E-RCTC acts as a digital resource center, allowing users to access a wealth of information on tobacco control activities, policies, and updates from across the diverse landscape of India.

## Tobacco Free Times 25th Edition Released



The 25th edition of the bi-monthly publication "Tobacco Free Times" featuring "Beedi Smoking: Harmful consequences, policy landscape, challenges and way forward" was released at a "Second National bidi consultation on Beedi Lifecycle and Health and Economic Burden of Beedi consumption in India". The issue shed light on the detrimental effects of Beedi consumption, examined existing policies related to Beedis, and discussed the challenges in curbing Beedi smoking. Furthermore, the publication offered insights into potential strategies and a way forward to address this pressing public health concern in India. The event was attended by senior national dignitaries across the nation. The 25th TFT was distributed to all the delegates. The event was organized on May 19, 2023 at NAMS Auditorium, New Delhi 20th April 2023.

## EDITOR'S SPEAK



I would like to bring your attention to the importance of the theme for World No Tobacco Day 2023, which is "We Need Food Not Tobacco." This theme appropriately emphasizes the need for supply-side interventions, in line with articles 17 and 18 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The FCTC, established in 2005 under the guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO), is the first global health treaty dedicated to addressing tobacco control. It emphasizes the significance of providing viable alternatives to tobacco farmers while safeguarding the environment from harmful effects of tobacco and its products. By highlighting this theme, E-RCTC recognize the need to prioritize food production over tobacco cultivation and advocate for working towards supporting farmers in transitioning to sustainable and healthier agricultural practices.

- Dr Sonu Goel,

Director, E-RCTC & Professor, PGIMER Chandigarh

## EXPERTS' SPEAK



Although the fight against tobacco is still a constant challenge, the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control stands as a beacon of knowledge and cooperation, providing policymakers, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations with the tools and necessary inputs to strengthen the just cause of tobacco control. This institution is a vital ally in the collective efforts to safeguard and prioritize public health and build a smoke-free future for all.

- Dr. Yogesh Bahurupi,

Associate Professor, Department of Community and Family Medicine, AIIMS Rishikesh



The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control has emerged as a major resource center for tobacco control in India. Its working framework can be implemented in other countries to achieve significant success in tobacco control. I congratulate the team of RCTC for creating such a great platform in India, a one-stop platform for hosting multifaceted information about tobacco control such as national and state policies, and consultation reports. I wish them the best in their future endeavors to eradicate tobacco from India.

- Dr Suriya Kumar,

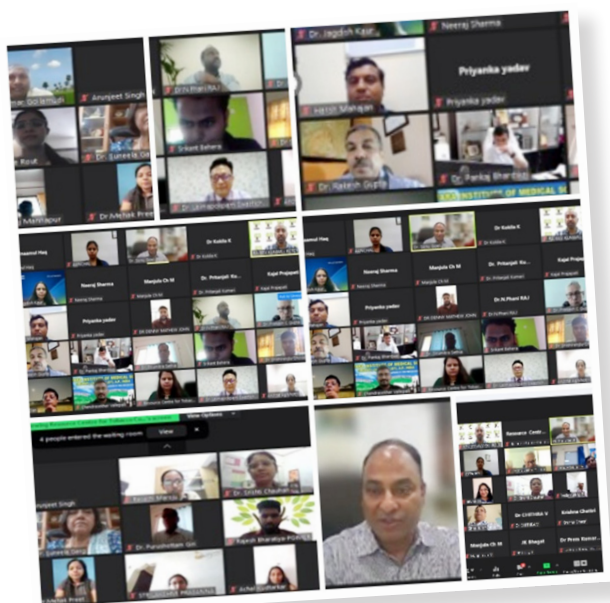
State Consultant - NTCP, Puducherry



## PROJECT UPDATES

### An international webinar on World No Tobacco Day 2023 titled “We Need Food, Not Tobacco”

The international webinar titled “We Need Food, Not Tobacco” took place on May 31, 2023, marking World No Tobacco Day. It was organized by the E-Resource Centre for Tobacco Control and supported by The UNION. The event aimed to promote viable alternatives to tobacco farming. Dignitaries and experts, including officials from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, WHO, and The Union, addressed various topics related to tobacco production's harmful consequences on health, environment, and food security. The webinar fostered heightened awareness and called for stronger measures to safeguard farmers' livelihoods from the tobacco industry's influence. Ultimately, the event emphasized the urgency of prioritizing food over tobacco cultivation.



### Sensitization Workshop/Webinar: Meghalaya



A district level workshop was conducted on 11th May 2023 at Mawryngkneng CHC, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya for “Capacity building of official of different stakeholder departments for effective coordination and enforcement of COTPA”. The workshop was attended by 40 participants from education, health, social welfare and police departments. The main outcomes were sensitization and increased awareness amongst different stakeholder departments for COTPA enforcement in the district of East Khasi Hills.

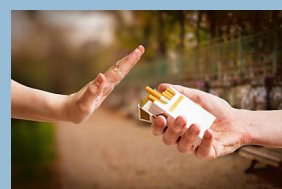
### Capacity Building Workshop / Sensitization Workshop/Webinar: Telangana



On 10th May 2023, a successful District level capacity building workshop on the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) was held in Hotel Mangal Murthy, Adilabad, Telangana. Various departments and local NGOs, including Health, Municipal Administration, School Education, Police, Public Relations, and Agriculture, actively participated. Dr. Sreeja, Additional District Collector, Adilabad, was the Chief Guest, while Dist. Sub Inspector of Police; V. Umender and Dist. Medical Health Officer; Dr. Rathod were the Guest of Honours. The workshop focused on sensitizing and educating officials about effective tobacco control implementation, particularly in addressing tobacco addiction among youngsters. Dr. Rathod's technical session on tobacco product epidemiology provided valuable insights, contributing to enhanced strategies for tobacco control in the region.

### Three SIPHER-ECHO webinar on Good, Replicable and Innovative Practices of Tobacco Control in India

On Wednesday, May 10, 2023, and Wednesday, May 24, 2023, respectively, from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, the Strategic Institute for Public Health Education and Research (SIPHER) and the ECHO Foundation, in collaboration with RCTC, organized a webinar titled “Utilizing Public Interest Litigation (PIL) Tool for Advocacy in Tobacco Control” and “Advancing Operational Research in Tobacco Control since COTPA 2003.” The guest speakers were Ms. Susan Samson and was Dr. Mangesh Padnekar respectively, two eminent figures in tobacco control in India.



### Development of Online National Resource Centre for Tobacco Control in India (A Stride Towards Tobacco Endgame)

Prof. Dr. Sonu Goel, director E-RCTC presented “Development of Online National Resource Centre for Tobacco Control in India (A Stride Towards Tobacco Endgame)” during 26th Annual Congress of Thoracic Society May 9-13, 2023, at the Pine Beach Belek Hotel- Antalya, Türkiye.





# Breathe Easy- Don't be a victim of tobacco smoking, an international movement against passive smoking



RCTC initiated a 21-day International Movement against Tobacco Smoking titled “Breathe Easy - Don't be a victim of Tobacco Smoking” from May 10th to May 31st. The objective of this campaign was to raise awareness about the hazards of passive smoking. Numerous national and international organizations dedicated to tobacco control participated in this initiative. RCTC, along with PGIMER in Chandigarh, organized various online activities such as polls and quizzes throughout the 21-day campaign period to promote awareness. The campaign effectively instilled a sense of responsibility among individuals, encouraging them to take action to protect themselves and others from the detrimental effects of second-hand smoke. By combining education, engagement, and participation, the campaign successfully emphasized the importance of smoke-free environments and empowered individuals to make informed choices for their well-being.

## Webinar on Tobacco Cessation



On May 29, 2023, Prof. Dr. Sonu Goel, the Director of E-RCTC, hosted an informative webinar focused on Tobacco Cessation. The webinar aimed to raise awareness among the public about effective and practical strategies for quitting tobacco use. Prof. Dr. Sonu Goel sensitized the audience by providing quick and actionable tips to support individuals in their journey towards overcoming tobacco addiction.

## DLCC: Telangana



A DLCC meeting was held on 10th May in Adilabad district chaired by Dr Sreeja, additional collector. Mr Srikanth, Program

officer, NTCP initiated the DLCC with the successful implementation of NTCP in Adilabad district. Dr Sreeja Additional District collector advised to Place NO SMOKING signage's in all government buildings. Mr Rathod, DMHO explained about the adverse effects of Tobacco and smoking among public.

# Conduction of Cyclothon cum Walkathon on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day 2023



On May 28, 2023, a successful Cyclothon and Walkathon event took place in Chandigarh to commemorate World No Tobacco Day. Nearly 600 participants joined to promote unity and determination, encouraging tobacco users to quit. Mr. Yash Pal Garg, Secretary of Health UT Chandigarh, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, and esteemed guests like Prof. R K Ratho and Dr. Adarshpal Kaur flagged off the event. Captivating performances by students at Sukhna Lake, including a Flash Mob, Skits, speeches, shadow boxing, and a rap song, delivered a powerful message to quit tobacco. The event also included health camps, dental checkups, and counseling sessions for tobacco and drug users, benefiting the attendees.

## Dr. Gan Quan, Director of Tobacco Control at The Union during a visit to Resource Centre for Tobacco Control



On June 7, 2023, Wednesday, Dr. Gan Quan, Director of Tobacco Control at The Union, along with Dr. Rana J. Singh, Deputy Regional Director for NCD and Tobacco Control at The Union SEA, and Mr. Ashish Kumar Pandey, Deputy Director of the Tobacco Control Department of The Union, visited the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (e-RCTC, [www.rctcpgi.org](http://www.rctcpgi.org)) at PGIMER, Chandigarh. During the guest lecture, Dr. Quan emphasized The Union's focus on implementing policies and coordinating multisectoral efforts in over 50 countries for effective tobacco control. Particularly, he highlighted the critical importance of addressing tobacco consumption in populous countries like China and India, where millions of people die annually due to tobacco-related issues. Dr. Quan underscored that raising tobacco prices through taxation is a crucial strategy to make tobacco products unaffordable for the public. He also reiterated the significance of the six MPOWER strategies for demand-side tobacco control policies. However, he pointed out the major challenge faced by tobacco control advocates, namely the division between tobacco control and public health communities. Overcoming this challenge is essential to combat the interference of the tobacco industry, which possesses significant financial resources and political influence, hindering the efforts of tobacco control advocates.





## Capacity Building Workshop / Sensitization Workshop/Webinar: Telangana

An online webinar was conducted on the 30th of May to raise awareness and celebrate World No Tobacco Day in all 33 districts of Telangana. The event included activities such as rallies, school awareness programs, and exclusive raids in public places, radio announcements, signature campaigns, and distribution of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials.

## Abstracts for World Conference on Lung Health 2023

One of the abstracts selected for oral presentation at the UNION World Conference on Lung Health 2023 pertains to "Results from a randomized controlled trial on behavioural intervention for tobacco cessation in tertiary health care setting of North India." The conference is scheduled to take place in Paris, France, from November 15th to 18th, 2023. The abstract will present findings from a study that focused on the effectiveness of behavioral interventions for tobacco cessation within a tertiary healthcare facility in North India. This presentation promises to contribute valuable insights to the field of lung health and tobacco cessation strategies.

## Presentation at 9th annual International Conference on Public Health held at Athens, Greece

During the 9th Annual International Conference on Public Health held in Athens, Greece from June 19th to 22nd, Professor Dr. Sonu Goel, Director of E-RCTC, presented on "RCTC: A game changer in Galvanizing tobacco control initiatives in India".



## IEC:- Telangana



## Participation in United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC)



Mr. Rajeev Kumar Choudhary, Project Coordinator participated in the United Nations Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum 2023, held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand, from 6th to 9th June 2023. He also had the chance to share his experiences and knowledge about RCTC, representing his organization and contributing to the global dialogue on corporate social responsibility and human rights.

## One-to-One Meeting



A total of 22 meetings were held in Telangana and Meghalaya with high-level officials. The officials included Dr. Rama Krishna, Program Officer, NCD Health and Family Department; Smt. Sikta Patnaik, IAS District Collector of Hanamkonda district - Telangana; Smt. Swetha Mohanthy, IAS Commissioner of Health and Family Department - Telangana; Dr. Lakshman Singh, District Medical and Health Officer of Kamareddy; Dr. Kiran Mai, NCD Program Officer of Mahabubnagar; Dr. Jitender, IPS Additional Commissioner of Police; Dr. Uma Sri, NCD Program Officer of Hanamkonda district; G Ravi, IAS District Collector of Mahabubnagar; Raghunath Swamy, NCD Program Officer of Medchal Malkajgiri; and Dr. Anusha, APO, NTCP, NHM Telangana, Dr Sreeja IAS Additional collector Adilabad district-Telangana, Dr. B. Sambasiva Rao District Medical & Health Officer Hanumakonda district (Warangal urban) - Telangana, Dr Rathod District Medical & Health Officer of Adilabad district - Telangana, Srikanth psychologist Health department of Adilabad district - Telangana, Dr Anusha, Program Officer NTCP of Health and Family department - Telangana, Dr Shiva Leela, director Food and safety department - Telangana, Additional DGP, Telangana and SNO, state consultant NTCP in Meghalaya. The outcome of these one-to-one meetings held in Telangana and Meghalaya with high-level officials was aimed at discussing and strategizing the implementation of NTCP and addressing Non-Communicable Diseases in the respective regions. The meetings provided a platform for fruitful discussions on various aspects related to tobacco control, including policies, challenges, and potential solutions.



# “We Need Food, Not Tobacco”

## Background

A record number of 349 million people across 79 countries—many of whom reside in low- and middle-income nations, including more than 30 on the African continent—experience severe food insecurity. Instead of cultivating wholesome foods, many of these nations use large tracts of fertile land to grow tobacco. Due to the detrimental effects that tobacco production has on people's health, the environment, and society, tobacco-growing nations frequently experience economic hardship.<sup>1</sup> The production of tobacco have adverse impacts on crop production and the environment, such as soil erosion, water shortages, deforestation, and air and water system contamination. Currently, tobacco is grown in over 125 countries as a cash crop, over an estimated area of 4 million hectares (ha), which is an area larger than the country of Rwanda or one lac times the area of various countries. Tobacco crops absorb more nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and the specific agricultural techniques known as “topping” and “De-suckering,” which are meant to achieve high nicotine levels and high leaf yields which contribute to the depletion of soil nutrients.<sup>2-3</sup>



## Patterns and Trends of Tobacco production:- Global Tobacco Production Trends

Despite government encouragement and subsidies for tobacco production, tobacco growing has declined over time in high-income countries. Transnational tobacco corporations have reduced production costs recently by shifting the production of tobacco leaves to low-income nations. Therefore, tobacco companies are increasingly focusing on these environments, especially African nations, to increase the production of tobacco leaves.<sup>4</sup> Tobacco is grown in more than 124 countries, over 55% of the world's tobacco is produced in Brazil, China, and India, and they are able to maintain their production without expanding their land area. Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique, Turkiye, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, and Zimbabwe are top ten nations which are involved in tobacco production.<sup>5</sup> In 2018, the South East Asia Region produced nearly 1.2 million tonnes of tobacco, with 760,268 hectares of harvested area.<sup>6</sup>

## Indian Scenario

Ninety-three varieties of tobacco crops including FCV(29), Burley (3), Natu (5), Lanka (2), chewing (17), Bidi (15), Cheroot (3), Cigar (4), Hookah and chewing are grown in India (15). Tobacco farmers, industry and others engaged in tobacco growing make efforts for developing varieties with high solanesol, high flavour, low nicotine etc.<sup>6</sup>

### Tobacco varieties in different states on India <sup>6</sup>

Type	Cultivated States
FCV Tobacco	Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka
Bidi Tobacco	Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Maharashtra
Cigar & Cheroot	Tamil Nadu & West Bengal
Hookah Tobacco	Assam, West Bengal, Bihar & UP
Chewing & Snuff	Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Odisha & U.P
Natu, Burley, Lanka, HDBRG	Andhra Pradesh

## III effects of tobacco production on farmers



More than 17 million people worldwide are employed in the tobacco farming industry.<sup>5</sup> The tobacco crop has no positive use, from the moment it is planted, tobacco crop start to degrade the health of the producer in multiple ways. It causes a form of nicotine poisoning known as “green tobacco sickness” (GTS) which is an occupational condition that affects tobacco farmers. This particular form of acute nicotine intoxication is brought on by nicotine absorption through the moist green tobacco plant.<sup>7</sup> Depending on the level of exposure, GTS symptoms include nausea, vomiting, pallor, dizziness, headaches, increased sweating, chills, stomach discomfort, diarrhoea, and increased salivation, prostration, and fatigue. Other symptoms and signs include dyspnea, a cough with or without expectoration, and occasionally dropping blood pressure or heart rate.<sup>8-10</sup> Daily exposure to chemical pesticides and tobacco dust is an unfortunate fact for tobacco farmers. A tobacco farmer who plants, grows, and harvests tobacco may take in as much nicotine per day as 50 cigarettes. Furthermore, tobacco farmers frequently bring dangerous substances home on their bodies, clothing, or shoes, which exposes their families—particularly children—to additional dangers.<sup>11</sup> Large amounts of tobacco smoke are also inhaled by tobacco farmers during the curing process, which raises the danger of lung diseases and other health issues.<sup>11</sup> Since women and children are frequently the main workers on tobacco farms, they are more likely to be exposed to the health risks associated with handling green tobacco leaves and toxic chemicals as well as tobacco smoke during the curing process. Given their body weight in relation to the amount of nicotine absorbed through their skin, children are especially at risk. The negative effects of tobacco farming also disproportionately affect pregnant women, who also have a higher risk of miscarriage. Inhaling tobacco dust while storing and rolling tobacco at home exposes those who roll bidis (hand-rolled cigarettes), particularly women and children, to respiratory illnesses and other health issues.<sup>12</sup>



Table 1:- Risk factors reported for GTS as per systematic review <sup>13</sup>

Author (Publication year)	Risk factors reported from their study
Campos <i>et al.</i> , 2020 <sup>[14]</sup>	Sunlight exposure, use of pesticides
Rokhmah <i>et al.</i> , 2019 <sup>[15]</sup>	NR
da Mota E Silva <i>et al.</i> , 2018 <sup>[16]</sup>	Stalk removal of tobacco leaves
Park <i>et al.</i> , 2017 <sup>[3]</sup>	Cotinine concentration at dawn was significantly higher than that at other times; it was significantly lower during the non-harvesting period than during the harvesting period
Saleeon <i>et al.</i> , 2015 <sup>[17]</sup>	Gender of the farmer, smoking, skin rash, wearing a wet suit, process of curing tobacco leaves, and watering tobacco plants
Fassa <i>et al.</i> , 2014 <sup>[18]</sup>	Among men: Age, being a nonsmoker, hanging tobacco sticks in the barn, harvesting wet leaves, and exposure to physical exertion were risk factors for GTS Among women: Tying hands of tobacco, transporting bales, harvesting wet leaves, having had contact with pesticides, and exposure to physical exertion
Van Minh <i>et al.</i> , 2009 <sup>[1]</sup>	Men and increasing age
Arcury <i>et al.</i> , 2008 <sup>[19]</sup>	Task, topping, barning, and working in wet clothing, fewer than 25% of workdays had the largest effect
Parikh <i>et al.</i> , 2005 <sup>[11]</sup>	NR
Arcury <i>et al.</i> , 2001 <sup>[20]</sup>	Task, working in wet clothing, fewer than 25% of workdays
Ghosh <i>et al.</i> , 1986 <sup>[21]</sup>	NR

NR: Not reported, GTS: Green tobacco sickness

III effects of tobacco on environment

The production and consumption of tobacco poses a threat to the wellbeing of the planet, from exposure to pesticides, agrochemicals, second-hand smoke, deforestation, loss of biodiversity all have negative effects on the environment. In order to grow tobacco, chemicals, such as pesticides, fertilisers, and growth regulators, are typically used significantly. The production, distribution, use, and disposal of tobacco are all stages in which tobacco has an impact on the environment (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Life cycle of tobacco – from cultivation to consumer waste



**Heavy exposure to pesticides:-** It requires a lot of resources to grow tobacco, and pesticides and fertilisers are frequently employed, which degrades the soil. These substances escape into the water, deteriorating lakes, rivers, and drinking water. Since tobacco depletes soil fertility, agricultural land used for growing tobacco has a lower capacity for growing other nutritious crops.

**Deforestation:-** About 5% of all deforestation is caused by tobacco farming, leading to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and climate change. Trees must be removed, and the land must be cleared, to make room for tobacco crops. About one tree is required to produce 300 cigarettes. Because some of these areas have a limited supply of fertile land for growing food, this causes desertification and hunger. Each year, about 200 000 hectares (ha) of land are cleared for the cultivation and curing of

tobacco, which is nearly equal to the area of Cape Verde (403 000 ha).

**Deterioration of biodiversity:-** By destroying portions of the habitat and leaving smaller, disconnected areas, tobacco farming contributes to habitat fragmentation, which can threaten ecosystems and lead to biodiversity loss. In the form of soil erosion, decreased soil fertility and productivity, and the disruption of water cycles, it is also linked to land degradation or desertification. Fish are killed when chemicals leach into nearby water sources, and this also affects people and other animals who use the water for drinking and domestic purposes, such as cattle.

T.I.I's role in growing tobacco

The tobacco industry creates a variety of implicit and explicit associations with different entities in order to manipulate the perception of the industry that is seen in society for having financial advantages. Such affiliations are frequently used by industries to enhance their reputation (and legitimacy) and gain access to decision-makers for the purpose of influencing public policies. As an illustration, the tobacco industry is well known for its creativity in maintaining connections with governments all over the world. The 10th Sustainability Summit, which was recently held in the capital, was funded by ITC, the largest cigarette manufacturer in India. It has long provided funding for these summits. In actuality, the CII-ITC Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development is in charge of organising these summits. The 10th summit included partners from the government ministries (Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation; Environment, Forests & Climate Change), and GIZ (German Society for International Cooperation, Ltd.). The WHO-FCTC's Article 5.3 calls for the adoption of measures to stop the tobacco industry from interfering with public tobacco control policies due to conflicts of interest between governments and the tobacco industry.<sup>15</sup>

Alternative Crops to have Better Return on Investment <sup>6</sup>:-

Maize, rice, wheat, ragi, cotton, soybean, mustard, castor, groundnut, blackgram, chilli, chickpea, potato, ginger, sugarcane, jute, arecanut, banana, oil palm, eucalyptus along with dairy/ poultry/ fishery have been identified as a viable alternative to tobacco crops.

Suggested crop-shifting schemes for tobacco production identified in India

- 1. Partial Shifting of tobacco  
With irrigation:- tobacco and sugar cane



- Without irrigation:- tobacco and soybean
- 2. Complete shifting of tobacco
  - With irrigation:- sugarcane and soybean
  - Without irrigation:- soybean and groundnut

Area Under Tobacco Cultivation and Alternate Crops <sup>16</sup>

Tobacco Growing State	Area under Tobacco (in Hectares)	Common crops that may be grown on the same land
Gujarat	1,62,263	5,69,056 Tonnes of Wheat
Karnataka	95,479	2,76,412 Tonnes of Cereals
Andhra Pradesh	84,838	1,06,896 Tonnes of Gram
Uttar Pradesh	35,046	31,261 Tonnes of Pulses
West Bengal	15,150	22,089 Tonnes of Mustard
Bihar	10,266	28,837 Tonnes of Rice

### International examples needs to be followed

Sri Lanka tobacco cultivation has declined over the years. In 2017 Sri Lanka committed to shift all its tobacco farmers (nearly 3000) to alternative crops/ livelihoods by 2020. The country achieved 100% targets in introducing alternative crops (Red onion, Beet root) in Kurunegala and puttalam district. Other tobacco growing areas are also being supported to make this shift. Like Sri Lanka, Egypt committed to become a tobacco growing free country. Oman has established a committee on limiting tobacco plantation. The European Union has shifted away from tobacco farming subsidies. Kenya has started growing bamboo instead of tobacco.

### Recommendations

- There is a need to increase awareness among farmers community about the harmful effects of tobacco cultivation on them and their families through effective Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns through civil society partners should create extensive IEC materials for wider dissemination.
- The government should encourage and initiate good practices to support farmers by providing sustainable alternatives, including affordable seeds and guaranteed minimum prices for non-tobacco crops.
- There is a need to enhance the health system’s capacity to implement strong tobacco control measures through leadership and effective advocacy initiatives.
- Establish a network of ambassadors at the sub national and state levels to counteract interference from the tobacco industry.
- Implement substantial taxes on tobacco production in line with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Engage the Ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Labor Welfare to facilitate the provision of alternative livelihood opportunities for tobacco farmers.
- Need based contextual research focusing upon the health effects of tobacco on farming community, effect of implementing subsidized tax on tobacco production on changing alternative cross and similar study should be promoted.



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## EXPERTS COMMENTS



“The WNTD theme rightly emphasise the importance of supply side interventions for the first time, which is in accordance to article 17 and 18 of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control for providing alternative viable alternative to tobacco growers and protection of environment. Six demand reduction strategies are the main focus of WHO MPOWER, on which nations are working hard now. It's time to focus on supply side issues as well. Three supply-side issues must be addressed: first, providing viable alternatives to tobacco cultivators; second, protecting minors; and third, preventing illegal trade. . In order to follow up on and sustain the anti-tobacco control movement, common platforms with multi-stakeholder efforts must be established, by preserving the enthusiasm of individuals for taking tobacco control movement.

- Dr. Jagdish Kaur,  
Regional Adviser (TFI), World Health Organization



“The foremost aspect right now is to move from making action plan to working towards its implementation. The existing literature highlights the country's practices in implementation of Article 17, which primarily deals with tobacco cultivation. There are 18 global examples in total, but India is nowhere to be found. There is also a need to set deadlines at the global and national level for tobacco endgame.

- Dr. Rakesh Gupta,  
President, Rajasthan Cancer Foundation, Jaipur



“Currently 4.3 Lakh hectares area of land in India is under tobacco cultivation constituting about 0.27% of net cultivated area in the country. 5.53 million tonnes of fruits, 7.78 million tonnes of vegetables can be grown in the same area where tobacco is currently being produced. About 2.5% of GDP in year 2016-17 amounting Rs. 2 Lakh 31 Thousand crores was spent on tobacco users, which needs urgent solutions.

- Dr. Rana J. Singh,  
Deputy Regional Director: NCD and Tobacco Control,  
The UNION and SEA



“The Government of India is working on promoting viable alternatives to farmers. Around 1 lac acres has already been shifted from tobacco farming to alternative crops in last 5 years. In order to achieve SDG Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, we need to control the supply side of tobacco production and cultivation. There is urgent need of integrating various departments and ministries to support this movement.

- Dr. Leimapokpam Swasticharan,  
Additional Deputy Director General of Health Services  
-Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and  
Family Welfare, Govt of India

## World No Tobacco Day 2023 awards - the winners

Every year, WHO recognizes individuals or organizations in each of the six WHO Regions for their accomplishments in the area of tobacco control. This recognition takes the form of WHO Director-General Special Recognition Awards, World No Tobacco Day Awards, and in 2023, one WHO Director-General's Special Recognition Certificate.



### South-East Asia Region awardees

- State Tobacco Control Cell (STCC), Government of Meghalaya, India
- Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research Dharwad, India
- Indonesian Multiculture Farmers Forum (FPMI), Indonesia
- National Statistical Office, Thailand





# Glimpses of world No Tobacco Day activities round the country

## Union Health

On World No-Tobacco Day, Union Health Ministry released OTT guidelines for regulation of online depiction of Tobacco Products in online curated content. The guidelines said that, Anti-tobacco health warning messages displayed as a static message on OTT content must be legible and readable, with black font on a white background, and must include the warnings “Tobacco causes cancer” or “Tobacco kills”

## Jammu and Kashmir

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) called for a tobacco ban due to rising cancer cases. A pledge campaign urged people to quit smoking, while Doda's District Health Society organized awareness programs, promoting “We Need Food, Not Tobacco” during the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, striving to improve public health.



## Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh was honored on World No Tobacco Day for its remarkable strides in tobacco control, attributed to public cooperation. The state's “Save Youth Campaign” from May to July 2023 aims to achieve a tobacco-free status, prioritizing the well-being of its residents, especially the youth, and cultivating a healthier future.



## Chandigarh

Chandigarh marked World No Tobacco Day 2023 with the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control organizing an international webinar themed “We Need Food, Not Tobacco.” The city's strict anti-tobacco law includes imprisonment for hookah serving. The Sahayta Charitable Welfare Society held an inter-school declamation contest to raise awareness, and a Cyclothon cum Walkathon event united participants in advocating for a tobacco-free environment and healthier lifestyles.



## Punjab

On World No Tobacco Day, Homi Baba Cancer Hospital (TMH) in Sangrur, Punjab hosted a special event attended by the Health Minister as Chief Guest. The event featured a panel discussion with experts and policymakers, focusing on strengthening tobacco control efforts. The gathering aimed to foster collaboration and knowledge sharing, advancing the campaign for a tobacco-free environment and improved public health in Punjab.



## Tamil Nadu

On May 31, 2023, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)-SRMIST conducted an impactful awareness program on the “Hazards of Tobacco Usage” at T. P. Ganesan Auditorium, Mini Hall-I, Tamil Nadu. The event aimed to educate the community about tobacco's detrimental effects, featuring informative sessions and discussions. UBA-SRMIST's efforts contributed to a healthier and informed society, promoting positive behavioral changes to combat tobacco consumption in the region.





**Bihar**

In Bihar, the Education department marked World No Tobacco Day with various activities. Oath programs saw people pledging against tobacco, while painting competitions highlighted tobacco's harmful effects. 'Prabhat pheris' or awareness rallies involved teachers, employees, and students from educational institutions. These initiatives aimed to raise awareness and promote a healthier, tobacco-free lifestyle among the younger generation in Bihar.

**Rajasthan**

Rajasthan celebrated World No Tobacco Day with a state-level event and the launch of the "Tobacco-free Youth" campaign by MD NHM (National Health Mission). Posters and brochures promoting tobacco prohibition were released. Participants from different backgrounds pledged to contribute to a Tobacco-free Rajasthan, fostering awareness and collaborative efforts for a healthier environment.



**Jharkhand**

In Jharkhand, the health department launched a 60-day campaign for a tobacco-free youth from May 31 to July 31, following the Union Health Ministry's directive. The initiative targets the youth, aiming to raise awareness about tobacco's harmful effects, prevent initiation, and support those seeking to quit. Jharkhand aims to protect its young population and promote a healthier, tobacco-free lifestyle.



**Nagaland**

In Nagaland, a series of events were organized to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco and promote a tobacco-free environment. These events included awareness lectures, interaction sessions, speeches, bike rallies, and anti-tobacco marches conducted across the state.



**Meghalaya**

Meghalaya received the prestigious World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) Award-2023 from the World Health Organization, recognizing its outstanding achievements in tobacco reduction. The State Tobacco Control Cell (STCC) was honored for promoting a tobacco-free environment. A month-long campaign with the theme 'My Meghalaya, Tobacco-free Meghalaya' involved 7,628 students collecting 16,532 signatures in support of tobacco control. Competitions and awareness initiatives further demonstrated Meghalaya's dedication to public health and a tobacco-free society.



**Assam**

In Assam, awareness drives were conducted in more than 50 schools in the Haatsingimari district. These drives aimed to educate students and create awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use. The initiative sought to sensitize young minds about the dangers of tobacco consumption and promote a tobacco-free lifestyle.



**Arunachal Pradesh**

In Arunachal Pradesh, the National Health Mission (NHM) conducted a two-month awareness campaign from May 31 to July 31 to address tobacco consumption issues. The initiative aimed to raise awareness about tobacco's health hazards and promote a tobacco-free lifestyle across the state. In East Kameng district, a student marathon was organized in Seppa to educate and engage the younger generation on the harmful effects of tobacco, encouraging healthier habits.





## Uttarakhand

At the state level World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) celebration in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, critical issues related to Tobacco Control were extensively discussed. The event witnessed active participation from multiple stakeholders representing various departments. The discussions revolved around strategies to combat tobacco usage, raise public awareness, and enforce effective tobacco control policies in the state.



## Karnataka

World No Tobacco Day programme was observed in many places. The event at Freedom Park was inaugurated by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader was a special guest. Keynote address was done by Dr. Vishal Rao, Surgical Oncologist and Member, High Power Committee for Tobacco Control.



## Haryana

In Fatehabad, Haryana, a "Tobacco & Drugs Free Tohana" campaign was launched in partnership with Bhramkumaris. The initiative aims to educate the public about the harmful effects of tobacco and drugs, promoting a healthier and drug-free lifestyle. The collaboration seeks to make a positive impact on the community, encouraging informed choices and a tobacco and drugs-free environment in Tohana.



## Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh formulated an action plan for a 60-day campaign under the banner of 'Tobacco-Free Youth'. This aims at spreading awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco.

The thrust of the campaign is to enhance compliance with the 'Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI)' endeavour as also enhance enforcement of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Prohibition Act (COTPA 2003).



## Goa

In Goa, World No Tobacco Day was marked with impactful events. South Goa District Hospital (SGDH) organized a rally to raise awareness against tobacco consumption and promote a healthier lifestyle. Additionally, the "5th Goa Anti-Tobacco Film Festival 2023," organized by ESG, Goa Dental College and Hospital, National Tobacco Control Programme, and Directorate of Health Services, creatively spread anti-tobacco awareness and encouraged collective efforts to combat tobacco use in the state.



## Maharashtra

On World No Tobacco Day 2023, a motorcycle rally was jointly organized in Dhule district, Maharashtra, by IMA, DTCC, NGOs, CSOs, and MGVS. The rally aimed to raise awareness about tobacco's harmful effects and promote tobacco control initiatives. Engaging the community, the rally sought to create a positive impact and inspire a tobacco-free lifestyle for better public health in Maharashtra.



## Kolkata

In Kolkata, a powerful play was staged at Howrah station to showcase the ill effects of tobacco and raise awareness among the public. The play aimed to engage commuters and passersby, delivering a compelling message about the harmful consequences of tobacco use on health and well-being. By utilizing this creative approach, the organizers sought to make a significant impact on a large audience, urging individuals to consider the health risks associated with tobacco consumption and promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle.

## Gujarat

In Gujarat, a Cyclothon was organized by Faith Foundation to spread awareness about the dangers of using tobacco. The event culminated in Vadodara after covering a total distance of 220 kilometers, passing through six districts in the state. Cyclists and volunteers actively participated in this initiative to raise awareness and educate the public about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption on health.



## WHO and tobacco control partners urge countries not to partner or work with the tobacco industry



WHO and tobacco control partners strongly advise countries to avoid collaborating or associating with the tobacco industry due to its efforts to manipulate research, policy making, and public perception for promoting nicotine and tobacco products. They said that partnering with the industry undermines public health interests, and WHO urges Member States to reject any funding or partnerships with tobacco-related entities.

Read more at:  
<https://www.who.int/news/item/03-05-2023-who-and-tobacco-control-partners-urge-countries-not-to-partner-or-work-with-the-tobacco-industry>

## India needs separate taxation policy to control smokeless tobacco: Lancet

The Lancet report emphasizes the need for a distinct taxation policy in India to effectively control smokeless tobacco use. Taxation is a cost-effective measure in reducing prevalence, and India has taken a comprehensive approach to address this issue. Researchers from PHFI and ASTRA consortium have highlighted the country's efforts ahead of World No Tobacco Day.



Read more at:  
<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/india-needs-separate-taxation-policy-to-control-smokeless-tobacco-lancet-11685460880893.html>

## Canada to become 1st country to put health warnings on individual cigarettes



Canada is set to become the first country to implement health warnings on individual cigarettes starting from August 1st. Each cigarette sold in the country will carry warning labels such as "Cigarettes cause cancer," "Tobacco smoke harms children," and "Poison in every puff" to discourage smoking.

Read more at:  
<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2306/230605-cigarette-health-warnings.html#:~:text=From%20August%20the%201st%2C%20every,%22Poison%20in%20every%20puff.%22>

## Novel products, misleading information threaten to undo decades of gains against tobacco use

In the Americas, the use of tobacco has decreased significantly from 28% to 16.3% between 2000 and 2020. However, the progress made in combating tobacco use is at risk due to the emergence of novel products and deceptive information from the tobacco industry, particularly targeting young individuals. On the eve of World No Tobacco Day, Dr. Jarbas Barbosa, Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), has called for effective policies to safeguard young people from these threats.

Read more at:  
<https://www.paho.org/en/news/29-5-2023-novel-products-misleading-information-threaten-undo-decades-gains-against-tobacco>

## Lancet lauds India's bid to curb smokeless tobacco, calls it 'exemplary'

The Lancet Global Health Research Review has praised India's efforts to curb smokeless tobacco use, considering them "exemplary." India has adopted a comprehensive approach aligned with the WHO FCTC, including measures such as taxation, regulation of contents, labelling and packaging, education campaigns, cessation services, restrictions on sales to minors, and a ban on sale and manufacture of smokeless tobacco products like gutkha. The mandatory depiction of harmful ingredients on packaging, pictorial health warnings, and mass media campaigns against smokeless tobacco are particularly noteworthy in India's successful efforts to combat this issue.

Read more at:  
<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/indias-exemplary-efforts-in-curbing-smokeless-tobacco-use-praised-by-lancet-global-health-research-review-101685472294880.html>

## Research highlights global impact of smokeless tobacco use

A research review of government control policies indicates a global reduction in smokeless tobacco use, though some countries still lack comprehensive research in this area. The University of York and the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), along with the ASTRA consortium, conducted an extensive review on policies concerning smokeless tobacco. The study explored the policies' context and assessed their impact on smokeless tobacco usage worldwide.



Read more at:  
<https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2023/research/global-impact-of-smokeless-tobacco-use/>

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