



TOBACCO-FREE *Times*

www.rctcpgi.org

Issue XXVIII : October-November, 2023

RNI Title Approval No : CHAENG01153

Tobacco Endgame Series Edition 7: Flavoured Tobacco Products: Trapping young into tobacco addiction & control strategies



Tobacco Free Times 27th Edition Released



The 27th Edition of the Bi-monthly publication "Tobacco Free Times" featuring Regulation of OTT Platforms: Strategies to Prevent Promotion of Tobacco/Nicotine Products was released at the Union World Conference on Lung Health 2023, Paris. Dr. Gan Quan, Senior Vice President, Tobacco Control, Vital Strategies; Prof. Sonu Goel, Chair- Tobacco Control Section and Director of Resource Centre for Tobacco Control; Prof. Pinpin Zheng, Director of the Tobacco Control Research Centre, Fudan University, Shanghai; Dr. Rana J Singh, Regional Deputy Director, The Union, SEA; Dr. Sejal Saraf, Senior Research Program Coordinator, Johns Hopkins University, USA; Ms. Kathy Wright, Programme Manager of the Global Implementation Programme and Global Hub, The Union; Mr Victor, Vital Strategies; Dr. Pankaj Bhardwaj, AIIMS Jodhpur and other renowned international tobacco control experts were present during the release of newsletter.

EDITOR'S SPEAK



In the deceptive allure of flavoured tobacco, lies a dangerous gateway to addiction. The masking of harshness is a calculated ploy, a lure directed at minors and youth. The tobacco industry uses various types of herbs, natural and artificial flavours to mask the harshness and increase the palatability of smoke, smokeless and emerging tobacco products. This issue contains in-depth information on flavours used in tobacco products and recommendations from experts for policymakers and other stakeholders to control them. Together, let us stand against the use of flavoured addition in tobacco products to make incoming generations free from the clutches of tobacco's insidious grip. The regulation or banning flavours addition into tobacco products, based upon the context of a country, will prevent initiating tobacco habits among youth and the overall reduction of tobacco use.

- Dr Sonu Goel,

E-RCTC and Professor, PGIMER, Chandigarh and Chair-
Tobacco Control Section- The Union

EXPERTS' SPEAK



The E-Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (e-RCTC) stands as a pioneering and dynamic e-learning hub dedicated to fostering information exchange for the advancement of tobacco control efforts in India. Functioning as a robust support system, E-RCTC reinforces the objectives of the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) by disseminating the latest notifications and circulars issued by national and state governments.

- Dr. Mir Mushtaq,

State Nodal Officer (Kashmir Division)
Jammu and Kashmir



The Resource Center for Tobacco Control(e-RCTC) has emerged as a leading organisation in India's battle against tobacco. It is a one-stop destination for policies, manuals, best practices, notifications etc. The e-RCTC's user-friendly interface and the prompt dissemination of crucial notifications have proven instrumental in tobacco control endeavors. I commend the center for its commitment to fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange in the global fight against tobacco."

- Dr. Rakesh Gupta,

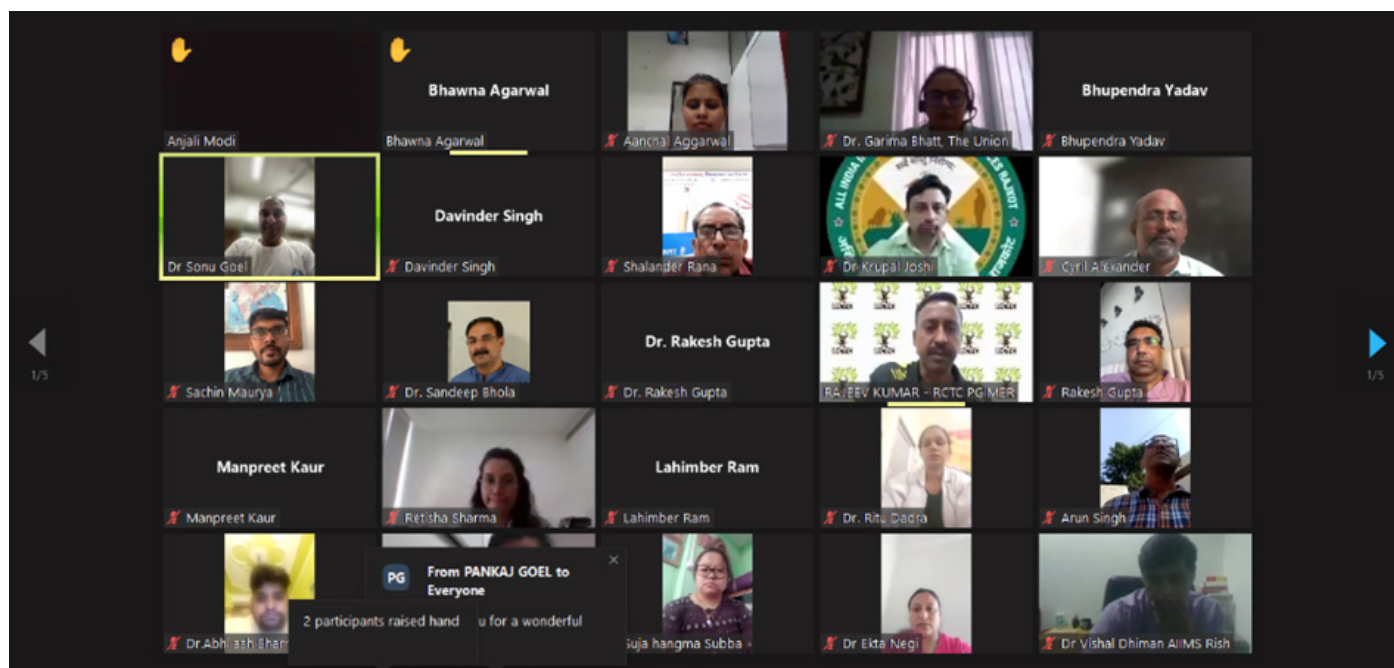
President & Director, SIPHER
Vice Chair Tobacco Control Section, The Union



PROJECT UPDATES

A National Webinar on “Regulation of OTT Platforms: Strategies to Prevent Promotion of Tobacco/Nicotine Products”

A national webinar on “Regulation of OTT Platforms: Strategies to Prevent Promotion of Tobacco/Nicotine products” was organized by E-RCTC in collaboration with the Tobacco Control Section, The Union and supported by The Union, SEA. It was held on 20th October 2023 with a gathering of over 80 participants. Eminent dignitaries from diverse field viz. Prof. Ashok Puranik, Executive Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Guwahati, Mr. Cyril Alexander, Executive Director, Mary Anne Charity Trust, Tamil Nadu, India, Dr. Mansi Chopra, Deputy Director, HRIDAY, New Delhi, Mr. Ranjit Singh, Advocate, Supreme Court of India, Dr Garima Bhatt, Manager- Networking & Partnerships, The Union SEA, Dr. Sonu Goel, Director, E-RCTC and Professor, PGIMER, Chandigarh and Chair- Tobacco Control Section- The Union; shared their experience in the webinar. Prof. Ashok Puranik, Executive Director, AIIMS, Guwahati was the Chief guest of the webinar.



National Consultation on Flavours in Tobacco & Emerging Nicotine Products

A national consultation on “Flavours in Tobacco & Emerging Nicotine Products” was organized by the Strategic Institute for Public Health Education and Research (SIPHER), Chandigarh in collaboration with Healthy India Alliance, Resource Centre for Tobacco Control, PGIMER Chandigarh, and Project ECHO India. It was held on 03rd November 2023 and was attended by over 100 participants. Dr. Sonu Goel, Director, E-RCTC and Professor, PGIMER, Chandigarh and Chair- Tobacco Control Section- The Union., Dr. Shikha Vardhan, Joint Director, MoHFW, Govt. of India, Dr. Shalni Singh, Director, NICPR, Noida, Dr. PC Gupta, Director, Healix - Sekhsaria Institute of Public Health, Mumbai, Dr Ravi Mehrotra, Founder CHIP Foundation, Dr. Rakesh Gupta, SIPHER Chandigarh, Dr Amit Yadav, The Union SEA, Dr. Rakesh Gupta RCF Jaipur, shared their experiences during the consultation.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON FLAVOURS IN TOBACCO & EMERGING NICOTINE PRODUCTS

Date: 03rd November 2023 (Friday)
TIME: 11.00 HOURS TO 13.30 HOURS IST

ZOOM LINK FOR MEETING

Registration link: <https://iecho.org/public/program/PRGM1697435443261FH4YR8MW1H>

ORGANISED BY:
STRATEGIC INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (SIPHER)

SUPPORTED BY:
HEALTHY INDIA ALLIANCE (HIA), E-RESOURCE CENTRE FOR TOBACCO CONTROL
(E-RCTC) UNDER DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MEDICINE PGIMER CHANDIGARH
ECHO INDIA



Release of “Global Tobacco Control Insights”, Newsletter of the Tobacco Control Section, The Union at the Union World Conference on Lung Health 2023, Paris



The first issue of “Global Tobacco Control Insights”, a Newsletter of the Tobacco Control Section, The Union was released at the Union World Conference on Lung Health 2023, Paris. Dr. Gan Quan, Senior Vice President, Tobacco Control, Vital Strategies, Prof. Pinpin Zheng, Director of the Tobacco Control Research Centre, Health Communication Institute, Fudan University, Shanghai, Dr. Rana J Singh, Regional Deputy Director, The Union, SEA, Dr. Sejal Saraf, Senior Research Program Coordinator, Johns Hopkins University, USA, Ms. Kathy Wright, Programme Manager of the Global Implementation Programme and Global Hub, The Union, Dr. Sonu Goel, Director, E-RCTC and Professor, PGIMER, Chandigarh and Chair-Tobacco Control Section- The Union, and other renowned international tobacco control experts were present during the release of newsletter. The newsletter was prepared by Resource Centre for Tobacco Control, India in collaboration with various international partners.

Acceptance of Original Research Article for publication

The original research article titled: “Perception of threat and efficacy in contracting COVID – 19 infection among tobacco users – a cross – sectional analytical study from four Indian States.” has been accepted for publication in Indian Journal of Public Health on 21st November 2023. This article was prepared under guidance of RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh.

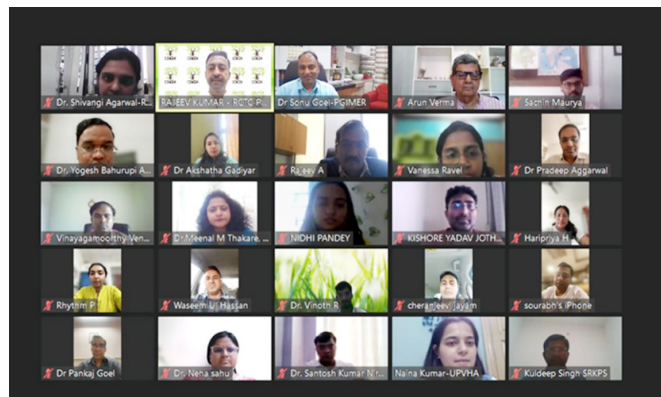
Sensitization Workshop/Webinar: Meghalaya

A State Level Workshop aimed at implementing the WHO-FCTC Article 5.3 Policy in Meghalaya was conducted on 31st October 2023, jointly organized by The Union SEA, PGIMER Chandigarh, and NEIGRIHMS Shillong, in collaboration with NTCP (National Tobacco Control Program), Meghalaya. The workshop's primary objective was to engage with key stakeholders in Meghalaya to identify and monitor increasing interference by the Tobacco Industry at both national and subnational levels while simultaneously taking steps to mitigate such interference, considering it a violation of the state's policy. The event saw participation from 32 representatives from various departments, including Police, Education, Taxes, Customs, State Legal Authority, Child Protection Rights, Health, Food Safety, and the Press.



Orientation Meeting of Third Batch – Basic Course on Tobacco Control

The orientation session for the 3rd Basic Course on Tobacco Control was conducted on 23rd October 2023 with great enthusiasm and participation. The session commenced with an informative introduction to the course's objectives, structure, and expected outcomes. A step-by-step guide to the login process for the course portal was provided, ensuring that all participants could access the course materials and resources effortlessly. The orientation also emphasized the importance of timely assignment submissions and highlighted the key dates and guidelines for project work submission. Head of the Departments and Senior faculties from 14 AIIMS across country are the participants in the course.





SLCC/DLCC: Telangana

On 13th October 2023, a District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) meeting was convened in Sangareddy district (a project district of PGIMER Chandigarh), which was presided over by Additional Collector Mr. Chandrasekhar, IAS. The primary focus of the meeting was to address the escalating issue of drug addiction within the district. During the gathering, the committee urged the Health and Police departments to collaborate effectively and implement stringent measures to combat drug addiction.



Awareness programs: Telangana

A significant number of schools in various districts have successfully conducted awareness programs and have been officially recognized as Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions. In Hanumakonda, 25 schools have achieved this status, while Adilabad has 7 such schools. Kamareddy has 23 tobacco-free schools, Peddapalli has 24, and Nalgonda leads the way with 45 schools that have implemented tobacco-free policies. Karimnagar follows closely with 25 schools, while Siricilla, Medak, Mahabubnagar, and Suryapet have 23, 23, 24, and 20 tobacco-free schools, respectively. This initiative, galvanised by RCTC PGIMER Chandigarh, reflects a concerted effort to create healthier, smoke-free environments within educational institutions across these districts, promoting the well-being of students and school staff.

Enforcement drive: Telangana

An enforcement drive was conducted in Adilabad District (a project district of PGIMER Chandigarh), targeting the sale of tobacco products that were being offered for prices exceeding their Maximum Retail Price (MRP). This enforcement initiative underscores the commitment to strengthen consumer protection laws and ensure that tobacco products are sold within legally stipulated price limits, safeguarding the interests of consumers in Adilabad District.



Flavoured Tobacco Products: a gateway to youth tobacco addiction

Background

Flavors and sweeteners are chemicals that are appealing independently and can also increase the use of tobacco products by enhancing the palatability of nicotine and other bitter or harsh constituents (Sarin 2019). Flavored tobacco products (FTPs) are generally used by young and inexperienced tobacco users, with prevalence (72.7%) much higher than non-flavoured tobacco products (Gupta AK 2021). Flavour improves the palatability of tobacco products in cigarettes, cigars, water pipes and smokeless tobacco products which usually attracts the youth. The recent reduced social acceptability of smoking has led to an increase in new tobacco products like e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products and nicotine pouches and flavours are also used in them. To prevent the initiation of tobacco use especially among youth, all

the key stakeholders and government officials should develop strategies and enforce the existing legal provisions to stop tobacco use.



What are flavoured Tobacco products?

The raw tobacco is harsh and distasteful. To increase the palatability and appeal, manufacturers add artificial or natural additives or combinations of additives to tobacco products. Manufacturers of tobacco products add herbs or spice, including strawberry, grape, orange, clove, cinnamon, pineapple, vanilla, coconut, liquorice, cocoa, chocolate, cherry, coffee etc., that adds to a characterizing flavor to the tobacco product or tobacco smoke (FDA 2009).



Image: <https://truthinitiative.org/>

Why Flavorous are added in tobacco products?

- To increase attractiveness or addiction.
- To mask the bitter taste of tobacco and give soothing effect.
- To improve texture and mouth feel.

Flavours used in tobacco and other emerging products

Flavours/additives used in Smoked Tobacco Products

- Herb or spice, including strawberry, grape, orange, clove, cinnamon, pineapple, vanilla, coconut, liquorice, cocoa, chocolate, cherry, or coffee.

Flavours/additives used in Smokeless Tobacco Products

- Fruit, Spice, Herb, Alcohol, Menthol, Sweet, Floral Etc.

Some Common Flavours used in any tobacco product:

- Eucalyptol
- Camphor
- Menthol
- Vanillin
- Pulegone
- Cinnamaldehyde

- Eugenol
- Coumarine
- Methyl salicylate
- Ethyl salicylate
- Diphenyl ether
- Linalool (floral/lavender)
- Acetophenone (oral/sweet)
- Anethole (anise)
- γ-Octalactone (coconut)

Flavours in E-cigarettes

There are over 7,000 different e-liquid flavours are available for e-cigarettes. The commonly used flavors are Classic, Menthol, Cherry Crush, Java Jolt, Pina Colada, Vanilla Bean, Bad Apple, Iced Berry, Banana, Pomegranate, Peach Pit, Watermelon, CoCoCoconut, Pineapple Punch, Carmel Popcorn, Bubble Gum, Cotton Candy and Tutti Frutti (Drugwatch.com 2023).



Flavours in Nicotine Pouches

Nicotine pouches, also called modern oral nicotine products, are white pouches containing nicotine among other ingredients. Mint, creamy coconut, tart pineapple, sweat, etc. are commonly used flavors in such nicotine pouches.



https://reusellcvslife/product_details/113537098.html

Health risks of FTPs

- As flavouring masks the harshness of the tobacco, FT products are associated with increased tobacco dependence and thus harder to quit.
- Flavoured tobacco is more addictive than regular tobacco products and increases the likelihood of long term tobacco use (CDC).
- The addictive nature of flavoured tobacco combined with additives like sugar, salts, humectants, gum Arabi contribute to respiratory problems, oral diseases and cancer.

Why ban on FTPs is necessary?

Flavoured cigarette bans significantly reduced smoking among youth and young adults (Rossheim et al., 2020). Flavour, particularly fruit flavour, was more likely to motivate young adults 18–24 to initiate vaping compared adults 35–44 (Landry 2029). There is limited availability of knowledge on how the toxic effects of flavours supplements the toxins already present in tobacco products. The tobacco industry has increased the use of synthetic chemicals due to an inability to meet the demand for natural flavouring substances

such as vanillin (vanilla flavours), pyrazines (coffee and chocolate flavourings), petrochemical hydrocarbon precursors, sachharine, thumatin etc.

Impact of Favours bans

The ban on addition of flavours into tobacco products has lead to a reduction in tobacco use. After the flavor ban in San Francisco City, flavoured tobacco use decreased from 81% to 69% among the 18-24 age group and 85% to 76% in 25-34 years age group (Yang 2020). A sharp decline of 55 million menthol cigarettes and 128 million total cigarettes was observed in Ontario after removing flavours in tobacco products (Chaiton 2020).

Advancements in Tobacco Flavours

To sustain the business, tobacco industry tried various means to circumvent the bans. They developed recombinant, sweet taste-stimulating proteins like thaumatin, which is 2000 times sweeter than table sugar. To produce the flavours within plants, transgenic tobacco plants are being developed. The genes are inserted from other flavouring plants into tobacco plants.



<https://www.science.org/content/article/genetic-engineering-transforms-tobacco-plant-antimalaria-drug-factory>

Indian Scenario

- India is the home of flavour tobacco products. India has the highest proportion of flavoured tobacco in the world because practically 70 to 90% of smokeless tobacco products contains flavours.
- Among the LMICS, India is one of the countries with the highest proportion of unique packs with flavour descriptors and/or imagery (menthol, mint, fruit and citrus flavoured most common flavours in India) (Cohen 2021).
- Capsule cigarettes accounted for the second largest proportion of unique packs in India, with over half being menthol flavored.
- There are no stringent laws to regulate contents and ingredients of tobacco products in India. Therefore, there is an unrestricted use of flavorings in cigarettes and other tobacco products.



Regulation of Flavoured Tobacco Products

Existing Regulation to control of FTPs

The Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006

The Production, Sale, Storage and Distribution of food products containing tobacco or nicotine such as Gutkha have been prohibited under the Food Safety and Standards



(Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011, notified under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. Under Section 59 of the Food Safety & Standards Act 2006, the punishment shall be imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months and also with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees, if a product is declared unsafe. This can be used to regulate flavouring of smokeless tobacco products.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

Giving tobacco or causes to be given tobacco to a minor is a punishable offense under the act. The violator shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to a fine which may extend up to one lakh rupees. Flavoured tobacco products are mostly used by minors and youth. This provision can be used to control the addition of flavours in tobacco products.

Section 268 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860

As per the section 268 of IPC, public nuisance is a crime. An action which causes any common injury, danger or annoyance to the public or to the people in general who dwell or occupy property in the vicinity, or which must necessarily cause injury, obstruction, danger or annoyance to persons who may have occasion to use any public right. It attracts a penalty of a fine which may extend up to 200 rupees and repeated violation would be punished for a term of imprisonment that may extend up to 6 months, or with fine, or both.

Global Ban on Flavoured Tobacco products

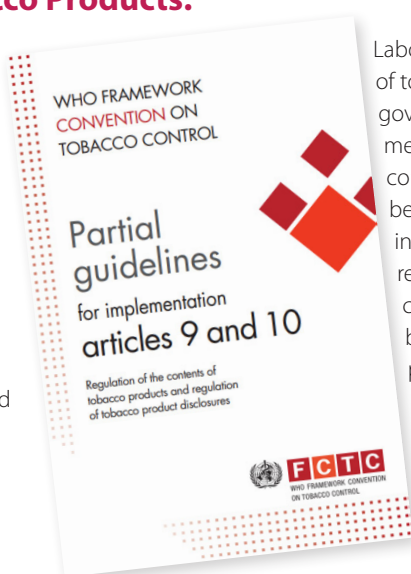
| SNo. | Country | Ban |
|------|----------------|---|
| 1 | Brazil | Ban-Pending. In 2012, Brazil became the first country in the world to ban menthol tobacco products. However, failed to enact the law due to tobacco industry interference. |
| 2 | Chile | Ban-Pending. |
| 3 | Ethiopia | Complete ban. Banned menthol flavouring for all forms of tobacco products to children and adolescents in 2015. |
| 4 | Turkey | Complete ban. The first country to successfully introduce a ban on flavouring tobacco products including menthol in 2015 and ban fully implemented in 2020. |
| 5 | Canada | Complete ban. Menthol cigarettes were initially exempted from a flavour ban in Canada in 2010. By October 2017 menthol cigarettes had been banned. |
| 6 | USA | Partial Ban. 2009- banned characterizing flavours other than menthol from combustible cigarette products nationwide. 2022, FDA proposed a rule to prohibit menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars |
| 7 | European Union | Ban- Pending Ban on the sale flavoured cigarettes was introduced. Implementation of the ban on menthol cigarettes was postponed. |

WHO- FCTC Guidelines for Flavored Tobacco Products:

The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) includes guidance on regulating the contents of tobacco products including ingredients which contains flavors. Articles 9 and 10 require the Parties to the treaty to:

- Regulate the contents of tobacco products.
- Require manufacturers and importers to disclose the contents of tobacco products.
- Independently test and measure the contents of tobacco products.

The Guidelines for Implementation of Articles 9 and 10 recommend regulation to prohibit or restrict ingredients that may be used to increase palatability in tobacco products. The Guidelines states: "From the perspective of public health, there is no justification for permitting the use of ingredients, such as flavoring agents, which help make tobacco products attractive."



Laboratories for industry disclosure of tobacco product ingredients and government compliance testing should meet international standards and compliance testing laboratories should be independent of the tobacco industry. The Guidelines further recommend reducing the tobacco companies' ability to market flavors by implementing restrictions on packaging design, including flavor descriptors and advertising (Articles 11 and 13) (WHO-FCTC).

Recommendations

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)

- Legislation is needed to prohibit the – manufacture, storage, transportation, trade, Import and sale of all the flavored tobacco products under COTPA and FSSAI etc.
- All flavored tobacco product accessories such as filters, capsules and papers should be banned.
- Strict enforcement of COTPA and ban on Tobacco Advertisement (including the surrogate advertising which is a form of advertising which is used to promote products which are banned or limited from advertising under government regulations), Promotion and Sponsorship.
- Indian and International tobacco companies should provide every detail on all flavored products sold by them to help the Indian government monitor flavoured products and their harms.
- The government should have a work plan for regularity in inspections and penalties for violations.
- Public awareness and educational campaigns for making masses aware of flavoured tobacco and flavor accessories.
- India, which have banned E-Cigarettes comprehensively under PECA 2019 need to enforce the law forcefully as these harmful products are still available mostly with flavors. The portal of MOHFW for lodging complaints should be monitored regularly.
- MOHFW may organize a physical/virtual meeting of all the stakeholders to work out the way forward.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:

- It should effectively stop all forms of surrogate advertising (which is a form of advertising which is used to promote products which are banned or limited from advertising under government regulations) of smokeless and smoking tobacco in Films/TV/OTT platforms by a stricter implementation of Film and TV rules under Section 5 of COTPA.

- It should conduct and sustain campaigning for masses to educate and make them aware of the risks associated with flavored tobacco, and flavor accessories.
- It should address the promotion of surrogate products, such as flavoured cardamom, by celebrities and athletes

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology:

- MEITY to strictly ensure no advertisement (Direct or indirect) of tobacco products/Pan masala and E-Cigarettes etc is allowed on e-commerce sites and social media sites.
- India, which has banned E-Cigarettes comprehensively under PECA 2019, needs to enforce the law forcefully as these harmful products are still available mostly with flavors as additives on e-commerce sites and social media. Legal notices may be sent to the violators before a stricter action is initiated

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI):

- FSSAI must send advisories to the Commissioners FDA in States/ UTs for strictly enforcing the provisions available under various sections of FSSAI to curb the menace of flavors and other additives in Pan Masala, Areca nut and use of dual pouch with Tobacco to circumvent the ban on Gutkha under section 2.3.4
- Commissioners FDA of various states and UTs must ensure compliance to the provisions under FSSAI through FSOs as above

Central Pollution Control Board of India:

Tobacco product waste (TPWs) is a major source of pollution of land and waters. 1.7 lakh tons of waste are generated every year. (ICMR-AIIMS study). Tobacco product wastes are diverse in nature, ranging from plastics, foils and filters that are not easily biodegradable.

- There is a need for a comprehensive policy deterrent and a financial levy, that is borne by the manufacturers for creating environmental pollution.
- Tobacco companies and their shareholders must take full



responsibility to reduce the environmental burden of their products. Apply The 'polluter pays' principle which is the commonly accepted practice that those who produce pollution should bear the costs of managing it to prevent damage to human health or the environment.

- The violations of the existing environmental laws and policies related to solid wastes/packaging should be strictly monitored, reported and regulated to ensure compliance.
- Given the irreversible impact of plastics on the environment and the human body, the un-necessary plastic waste generated from the tobacco products, which are mostly flavored, needs stronger and urgent policy shifts for its effective elimination.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

- Stricter implementation of JJ Act so that minors do not have any access to any kind of tobacco/nicotine products which are mostly flavored to attract youngsters.
- Chairperson NCPCR may write a letter to all the CCPR of states and UTs regarding the issue.
- Fines imposed and punishments given, need to be well-publicized as deterrent.

Ministry of Law and Justice

- Mandate building the capacity of stakeholders in the centre and states to take legal action against violations of COTPA 2003 AND

PECA-2019 regarding the sale of Tobacco/Nicotine products which are mostly flavored and protect them against litigation and intimidation of other means.

- To enact a law with comprehensive ban on use of any flavor/s in any of the tobacco/nicotine products and with no exceptions/exemptions may maximize public health benefits

Civil Service Organizations:

It is important to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to public health experts, medical professionals, the tobacco industry documents, retailers, consumers, health economists, and advocacy groups, when developing and implementing a policy to target the reduction in consumption of flavored tobacco or its constituents. This will help to ensure that the policy is well-informed and effective.

Academic Institutes/Public Health Organizations:

- Researchers in National Tobacco Testing Labs (NTTLs) and other academic institutes must conduct laboratory studies and disseminate findings to public and various stakeholder ministries to ban/regulate flavors.
- Tobacco/nicotine products content analysis, data collection and research through standard operating procedures are the key components of a comprehensive strategy for regulating flavored or unflavoured tobacco products.

References

1. <https://www.drugwatch.com/e-cigarettes/ingredients/>
2. CDC. <https://dhs.saccounty.gov/Pages/NR-The-Dangers-of-Flavored-Tobacco-Products.aspx>
3. Chaiton M, Schwartz R, Shuldiner J, Tremblay G, Nugent R. Evaluating a real world ban on menthol cigarettes: an interrupted time-series analysis of sales. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. 2020 Apr;22(4):576-9.
4. Cohen JE, Welding K, Erinoso O, Saraf S, Iacobelli M, Smith KC. The flavor train: the nature and extent of flavored cigarettes in low-and middle-income countries. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. 2021 Nov 1;23(11):1936-41.
5. Delhi Government. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/ban-on-manufacture-and-sale-of-tobacco-products-extended-by-1-year-in-delhi-11691673146328.html>
6. Gupta AK, Mehrotra R. Increasing use of flavoured tobacco products amongst youth. *Indian Journal of Tuberculosis*. 2021 Jan 1;68:S105-7.
7. Food and Drug Administration. Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Section 907. Tobacco product standard. General questions and answers on the ban on cigarettes that contain certain characterizing flavors (edition 2). Silver Spring (MD): Center for Tobacco Products, 2009.
8. (ICMR-AIIMS study) http://nicpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/tobacco_waste_report.pdf
9. Landry RL, Groom AL, Vu TH, Stokes AC, Berry KM, Kesh A, Hart JL, Walker KL, Giachello AL, Sears CG, McGlasson KL. The role of flavors in vaping initiation and satisfaction among US adults. *Addictive behaviors*. 2019 Dec 1;99:106077.
10. Rossheim ME, Livingston MD, Krall JR, Barnett TE, Thombs DL, McDonald KK, Gimm GW. Cigarette use before and after the 2009 flavored cigarette ban. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2020 Sep 1;67(3):432-7.
11. Sarin SK and O'Malley SS (2019). The science of flavour in tobacco products. *World Health Organ Tech Rep Ser*. 2019 Oct 24; 1015: 125–142.
12. World Health Organization. Partial guidelines for implementation of articles 9 and 10 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: regulation of the contents of tobacco products and of tobacco product disclosures. 2017. Available from: https://fctc.who.int/docs/librariesprovider12/meetingreports/guidelines_articles_9_10_2017_english.pdf?sfvrsn=1ee182e4_1&download=tue
13. Yang Y, Lindblom EN, Salloum RG, Ward KD. The impact of a comprehensive tobacco product flavor ban in San Francisco among young adults. *Addictive behaviors reports*. 2020 Jun 1;11:100273.



New WHO campaign highlights tobacco industry tactics to influence public health policies



The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially launched the “Stop the Lies” campaign, a crucial initiative aimed at safeguarding young people from the hazardous influence of the tobacco industry and its lethal products. The campaign underscores the urgent need to cease tobacco industry interference in health policies. Acknowledging the persistent endeavours of the tobacco industry to target susceptible groups, particularly the youth, the WHO is resolute in its commitment to exposing the industry’s strategies to undermine health policies. This initiative calls upon policymakers to remain steadfast in their stance against the undue influence of the tobacco industry.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/16-11-2023-new-who-campaign-highlights-tobacco-industry-tactics-to-influence-public-health-policies>

Tobacco Industry’s Interference in Government Policy Increases Globally



The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2023, unveiled by tobacco watchdog STOP and the Global Centre for Good Governance in Tobacco Control (GGTC), reveals a concerning escalation in tobacco industry interference within governments’ tobacco control policies. Out of the 90 countries scrutinized over the past two years, interference has intensified in 43. This index underscores the global challenge governments face in safeguarding tobacco control policies from undue influence, emphasizing the urgent need for collective efforts to address and mitigate the escalating impact of the tobacco industry on public health initiatives.

<https://healthpolicy-watch.news/tobacco-industrys-interference-in-government-policy-increases-globally/>

Smoking is the leading cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease



Cigarettes contain many hazardous substances that damage the lungs when inhaled



A recent briefing underscores smoking as a prominent contributor to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a prevalent lung ailment responsible for respiratory difficulties and claiming the lives of over 3 million individuals annually. The global burden of COPD is substantial, with an estimated 392 million people grappling with this condition, and a significant three-quarters of them residing in low- and middle-income countries. This stark reality underscores the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the widespread prevalence of COPD, especially in regions with limited resources.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/15-11-2023-smoking-is-the-leading-cause-of-chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease>

Smoking is the leading cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

A study conducted by researchers revealed that annually, more than half of the global burden of cancer deaths is concentrated in seven prominent countries: India, China, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Russia, the United States, and South Africa. It was revealed that four preventable risk factors contribute to an annual loss of over 30 million years of life globally. Among these factors, smoking tobacco emerges as the predominant influencer, contributing to a staggering 20.8 million years of life lost each year.

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/13-million-lives-lost-every-year-to-cancers-caused-by-tobacco-smoking-in-7-countries-lancet-study/article67543896.ece>



Promise to Protect: Over One Lakh School Teachers and Students Take Pledge for Tobacco-Free India



The Ministry of Education in India introduced the “Promise To Protect” digital campaign on Gandhi Jayanti, with the goal of safeguarding students from tobacco-related harm. Over 1,000 teachers nationwide pledged to maintain tobacco-free school environments and promote a tobacco-free India. The campaign aligns with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare’s guidelines for Tobacco Free Educational Institutions, focusing on raising awareness about tobacco’s harmful effects and preventing youth initiation.

<https://www.thehealthsite.com/news/promise-to-protect-over-one-lakh-school-teachers-and-students-take-pledge-for-tobacco-free-india-1016565/>

Sweden Close to Becoming First ‘smoke-free’ Country in Europe

Sweden, a standout in the European Union with the lowest smoking rates, is on the verge of declaring itself “smoke-free,” defined as having fewer than 5% daily smokers in the population. This remarkable achievement is attributed by many experts to decades of effective anti-smoking campaigns and stringent legislation. Others point to the significant role of “snus,” a smokeless tobacco product allowed in Sweden but banned elsewhere in the EU, marketed as a viable alternative to traditional cigarettes. Regardless of the contributing factors, the 5% target is now within close reach.

<https://arabtimesonline.com/news/sweden-close-to-becoming-first-smoke-free-country-in-europe/>



Educators call for fight against misinformation on new-age tobacco devices to protect children

Educators express deep apprehension over what they perceive as a worrisome trend where international tobacco companies, motivated by the pursuit of new markets, are disseminating misleading information about new-age e-cigarettes. These companies allegedly portray e-cigarettes, including vaping devices and heat-not-burn tobacco products, as either harmless or less harmful compared to traditional cigarettes. As the allure of these modern smoking alternatives intensifies, educators emphasize the urgency of countering misleading narratives and fostering a comprehensive understanding of the potential health risks associated with e-cigarettes.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/educators-call-for-fight-against-misinformation-on-new-age-tobacco-devices-to-protect-children/articleshow/105231398.cms?from=mdr>



Canada launches warning labels on each cigarette



In a pioneering initiative, Canada has emerged as the first nation to implement the direct printing of warnings on individual cigarettes, aimed at dissuading young individuals from initiating smoking and encouraging current smokers to quit. These warnings, presented in both English and French, will feature impactful phrases such as “Cigarettes cause cancer” and “Poison in every puff.” Commencing next year, Canadians can expect to encounter these new warning labels. Manufacturers are mandated to ensure the inclusion of these warnings on all king-size cigarettes sold by July 2024, with a subsequent deadline of April 2025 for regular-size cigarettes and little cigars featuring tipping paper and tubes.

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/each-cigarette-in-canada-will-have-a-warning-label-causes-impotence-101690938669704.html>

Rajasthan leads in enforcing tobacco control laws

Rajasthan has emerged as a frontrunner in enforcing the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003, garnering the distinction of issuing the highest number of challans as part of the Indian government's tobacco-free youth campaign. Demonstrating a steadfast commitment to curbing tobacco use, the state government's stringent measures have earned Rajasthan accolades, notably from the World Health Organization (WHO), which acknowledged the state's anti-tobacco campaigns.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/poll-battle-in-dausa-district-will-be-defined-by-prospects-of-ercp-political-complexities/articleshow/104646404.cms>



Govt. challans over 200,000 for tobacco related offences

The Indian government has issued more than 200,000 fines under the Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003. These penalties were levied on individuals who violated the act by selling tobacco products to minors and operating near educational institutions, as part of efforts to curb tobacco use and regulate its trade and advertising.

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/govt-challans-over-200-000-for-tobacco-related-offences-11690829865938.html>



Possession of e-cigarettes violation of law: Health Ministry



The Ministry has clarified that while the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA) does not explicitly prohibit individual use of e-cigarettes, its primary objective is to comprehensively restrict various aspects related to these devices. Enacted with the intention of curbing the prevalence of e-cigarettes, PECA specifically prohibits the production, manufacturing, importing, exporting, transporting, selling, distributing, storing, and advertising of e-cigarettes. This broad prohibition extends to cover all Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, Heat Not Burn Products, e-Hookah, and similar devices.

<https://www.deccanherald.com/india/possession-of-e-cigarettes-violation-of-law-health-ministry-2709311>

No compromise on OTT rules on display of anti-tobacco warnings: Govt. of India



The Union Health Ministry emphatically asserted that there would be no concessions on the OTT Rules 2023, mandating online streaming platforms to integrate anti-tobacco warnings into their content. In response to a media report that suggested a purported compromise between the Union Government and OTT streaming services regarding the inclusion of smoking warnings, the ministry categorically refuted the claims. Describing the report as "false, misleading, and based on misrepresented facts," the ministry clarified its unwavering commitment to public health, considering it a paramount duty.

https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/no-compromise-on-ott-rules-on-display-of-anti-tobacco-warnings-govt-123102100728_1.html

Send us your feedback, comments and suggestions at rctcupdates@gmail.com,

Editorial Team : Chief Editor - Dr. Sonu Goel, Professor, PGIMER Chandigarh

Associate Editor - Dr. Rana J Singh, Deputy Regional Director, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases (The Union)

Assistant Editors - Mr. Rajeev Kumar Chaudhary, Project Coordinator, PGIMER Chandigarh, Dr. Mahendra Pratap Singh, Technical Officer-RCTC & Tobacco Endgame Hub, PGIMER Chandigarh & Dr. Shivangi Agarwal, Program Officer, Coordination and Documentation, PGIMER Chandigarh

Logistic Support - Ms Aanchal, Admin cum Finance Officer

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the content in this newsletter, PGIMER Chandigarh will not be responsible or liable for any errors or omissions.

