



TOBACCO-FREE *Times*

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Issue XLIV : May-June 2026

RNI Title Approval No : CHAENG01153

Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction

RCTC: Empowering the Next Generation for a Tobacco-Free Future



The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER Chandigarh has consistently leveraged World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) as a national platform to promote evidence-based tobacco

control, strengthen multisectoral partnerships, and empower young people to become advocates for a tobacco-free India. Building on the success of its previous National Summits, RCTC organised the 6th National Summit on World No Tobacco Day 2026, bringing together 14 AIIMS, medical colleges, academic institutions, professional associations, and public health organisations in one of the country's largest coordinated youth engagement initiatives for tobacco control.

With the theme of mobilising youth as agents of change, the Summit featured a series of nationwide competitions and campaigns that encouraged students and young professionals to apply their creativity, innovation, and advocacy skills to tobacco control. These included T-shirt Painting, Reel Making, Poster Designing, Digital Creative Competitions, and an Innovation Challenge, providing participants with diverse platforms to communicate compelling tobacco control messages through art, media, and technology.

A key highlight of the Summit was the nationwide campaign "Mobilising Youth Voices for Tobacco Control," which inspired participants from across India to expose tobacco industry tactics, promote evidence-based tobacco control policies, and advocate for healthier, tobacco-free communities. Through these collaborative efforts, RCTC engaged hundreds of students and young professionals, strengthened partnerships with leading academic and healthcare institutions, and fostered a growing network of informed youth advocates committed to advancing tobacco control across the country.

The 6th National Summit exemplified RCTC's commitment to translating World No Tobacco Day into sustained public health action by creating opportunities for youth leadership, innovation, and multisectoral collaboration that extend well beyond a single-day observance.

Editor's Speak



Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 44th edition of Tobacco Free Times. This issue focuses on "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction", highlighting how the tobacco and nicotine industry continues to target consumers, particularly youth, through attractive marketing, flavored products, and misleading narratives.

As new nicotine products emerge, it is crucial to strengthen awareness, promote evidence-based policies, and empower communities to recognize and resist industry tactics. Through research, advocacy, capacity building, and youth engagement, we can collectively work towards a healthier, tobacco-free future. I hope this edition inspires informed action and renewed commitment to tobacco control.

- Dr Sonu Goel,

President – RCTC, Professor, Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh

EXPERTS SPEAK

The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC) is an important initiative for addressing tobacco control in all its forms. It serves as a repository of state and central government papers, gazettes, and other relevant documents. Closely associated with the Government of India and the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), it provides leadership in capacity building, research, and documentation related to tobacco control. There is a need to establish State Resource Centres with RCTC serving as the nodal centre. Best wishes and good luck.



Prof. Suneela Garg,

Director Professor & Head, Dept. of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi



My association with RCTC has been an enriching learning experience. Working closely with the team provided me with valuable exposure to public health research, strengthened my analytical skills, and gave me the confidence to contribute meaningfully to tobacco control initiatives. The mentorship and supportive environment at RCTC played an important role in my academic and professional growth.

Dr. G Visweswara Rao,

Associate Professor at Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences

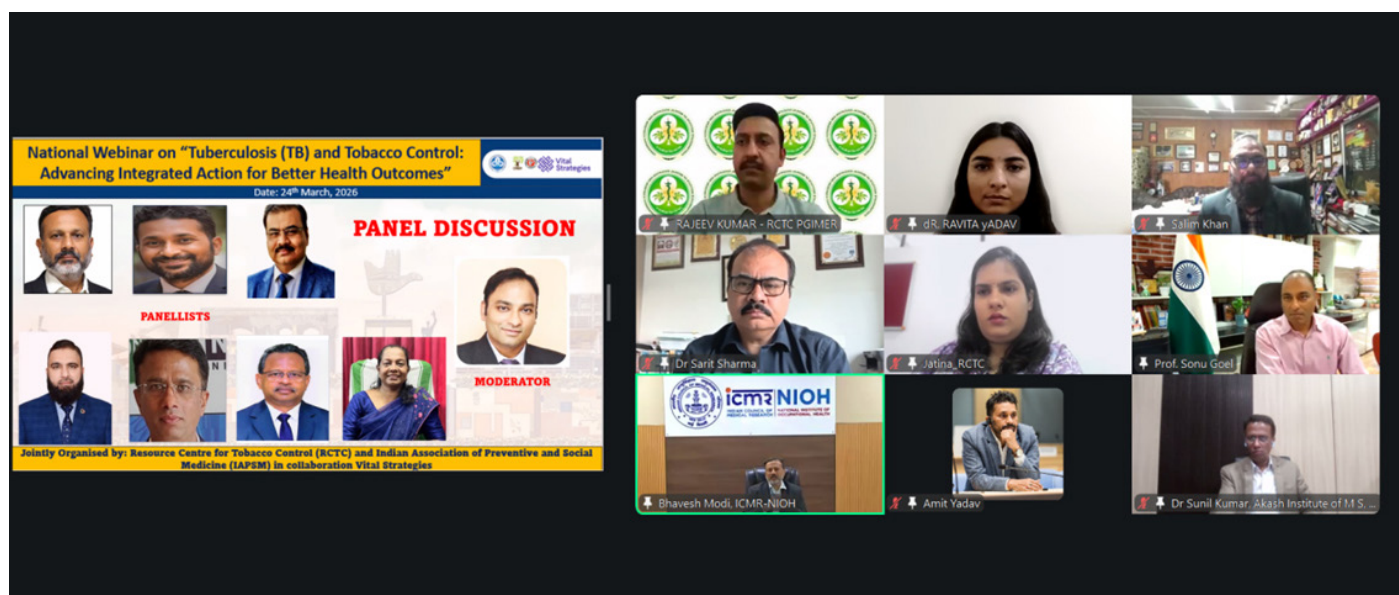
PROJECT UPDATES

National Webinar on TB & Tobacco Control: Expert Insights on Integrated Action for a TB-Free and Tobacco-Free India

National Webinar on Tuberculosis (TB) and Tobacco Control, held on March 24, 2026 (World TB Day), was organized by Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (IAPSM), and Vital Strategies, with 450 participants and 12 national experts. Prof. Sonu Goel (President, RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh) highlighted the strong link between tobacco use and TB. Dr. Rakesh Gupta (President, Rajasthan Cancer Foundation) and Dr. P.C. Gupta (Director, Healis Sekhsaria Institute of Public Health) emphasised the need for integrating tobacco cessation into TB care. Dr. Manish Kumar Singh

(Secretary, IAPSM) and Dr. Ravinder Kumar (State Nodal Officer, Himachal Pradesh) stressed bi-directional screening programme. Experts including Dr. Bhavesh Modi, Dr. Amit Yadav, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Dr. Salim Khan, Dr. Anil Purthy, Dr. Sairu Philip, and Dr. Sarit Sharma highlighted practical strategies such as brief interventions, training, and referral systems.

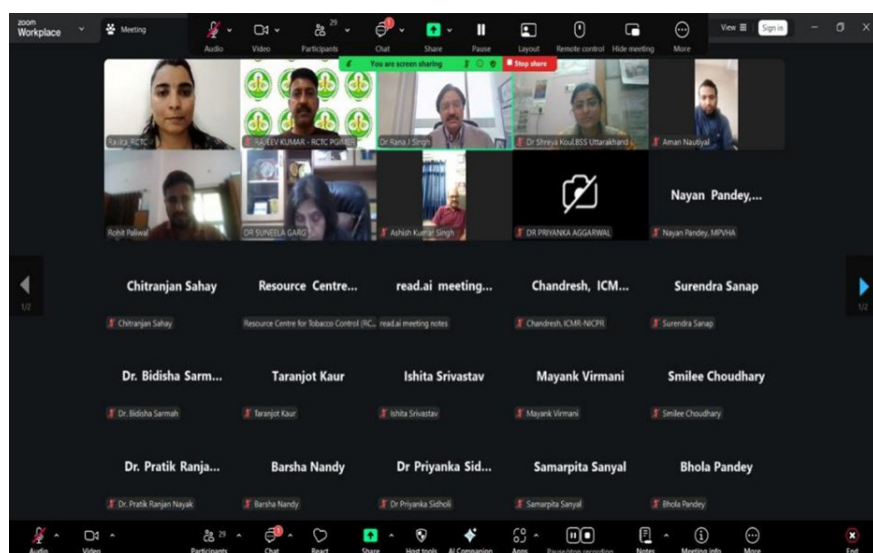
The webinar concluded that coordinated, integrated approaches between the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) and the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) are essential to achieve a "TB-Free and Tobacco-Free India."



5th Batch of Basic Course in Tobacco Control (BCTC) Successfully Completed

April 10, 2026, the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC) successfully completed the 5th batch of the Basic Course in Tobacco Control (BCTC). The course was designed to strengthen the knowledge and skills of participants in the domain of tobacco control, while promoting active engagement and improved learning outcomes through a structured and interactive approach.

A total of 58 participants were enrolled in the course, out of which 48 participants actively attended the sessions and successfully completed all course requirements within the stipulated timeline. The course included a series of well-curated modules covering key aspects of tobacco control, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject.



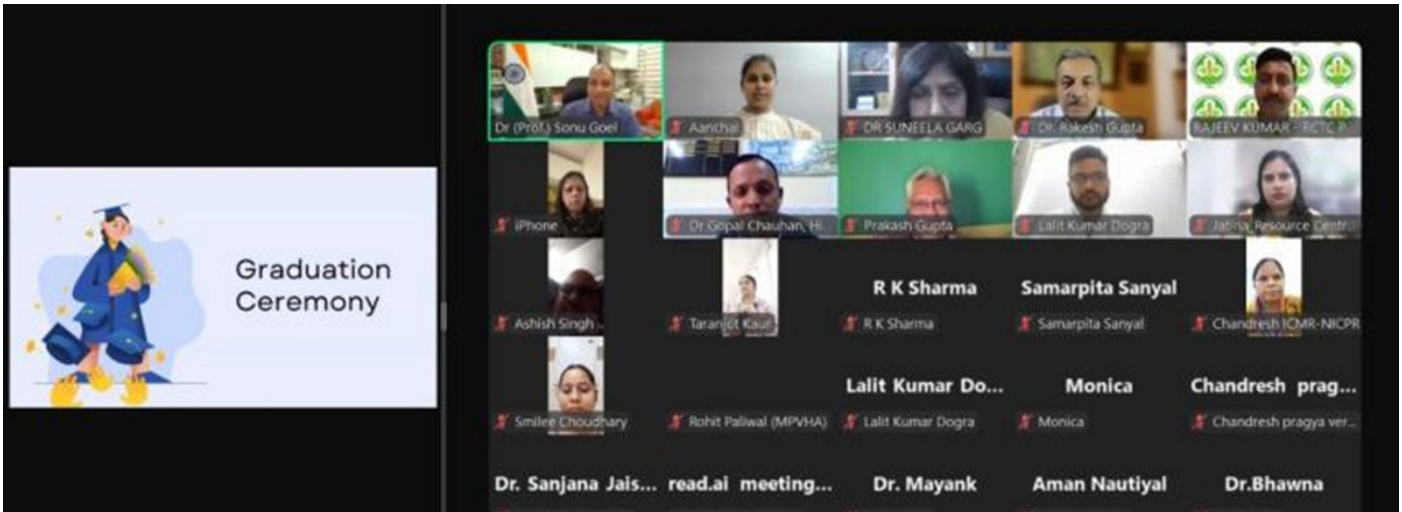
To further enhance participant learning and engagement, three live interactive sessions were conducted during the course with expert faculty members. These sessions provided a platform for participants to raise queries, seek clarifications, and engage in meaningful discussions on various topics related to tobacco control. The interactive nature of these sessions contributed significantly to deepening participants' understanding and application of the course content.

Overall, the successful completion of the 5th BCTC batch reflects RCTC's continued commitment to capacity building and strengthening the tobacco control workforce through quality training initiatives.

Valedictory Session of 5th Batch of Basic Course in Tobacco Control

The Valedictory and Certificate Distribution Session for the 5th Batch of the Basic Course on Tobacco Control was successfully conducted on 23 April 2026 at 4:30 PM. The ceremony was graced by eminent public health and tobacco control experts, including Dr. Suneela Garg, Dr. Rana J. Singh, Dr. Rakesh Gupta, Dr. P.C. Gupta, and Prof. (Dr.) Sonu Goel. During the session, certificates were awarded to 48 participants who successfully completed the

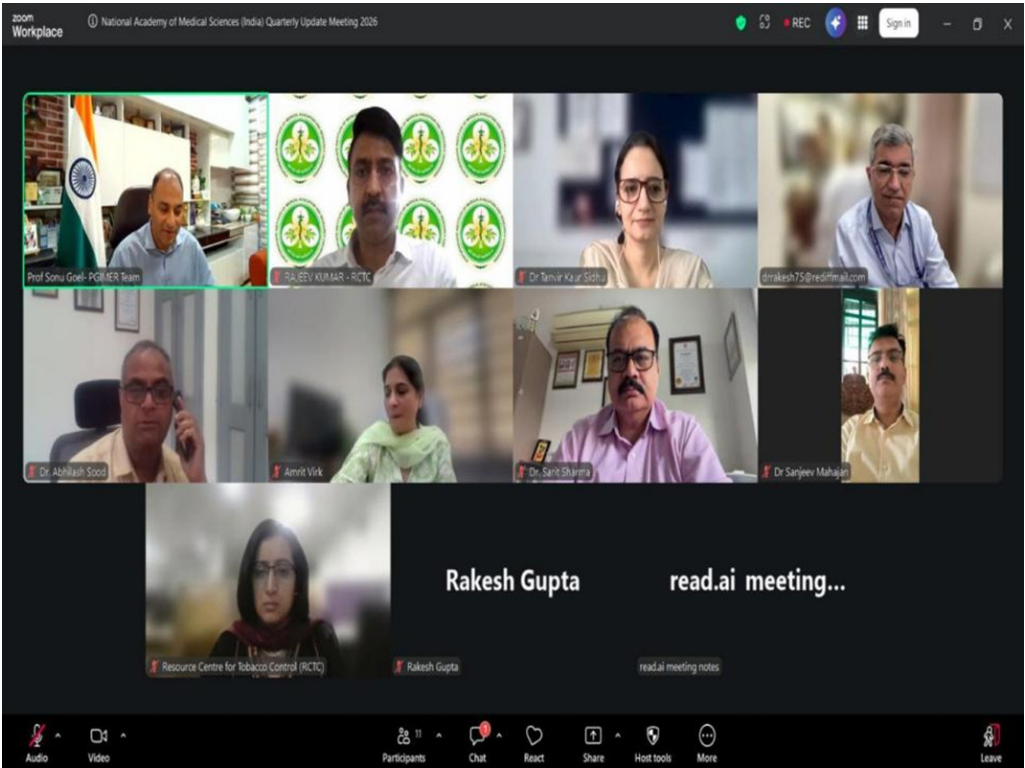
course through dedicated participation and active engagement. The programme highlighted the collective commitment towards strengthening tobacco control initiatives and building a skilled public health workforce. The valedictory ceremony concluded with encouragement to participants to serve as advocates for a healthier and tobacco-free society.



Quarterly Meeting of NAMS State Cells (Chandigarh, Punjab & Himachal Pradesh)

The Quarterly Update Meeting of the National Academy of Medical Sciences (India) State Cells for Chandigarh, Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh was successfully conducted on 7 May 2026 from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM through the Zoom virtual platform. The meeting was organised by Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER Chandigarh under the convenorship of Prof. (Dr.) Sonu Goel (Convener for Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh).

The meeting was attended by state nodal officers and members from all three state cells, including Dr. Rakesh Kakkar and Dr. Abhilash Sood. During the session, Prof. Goel presented the NAMS State Cell Annual Academic Activity Report 2025, highlighting key achievements such as the establishment of NAMS State Committees, conduct of the first induction meeting, inauguration of the institutional NAMS Cell at GMCH-32 Chandigarh, organisation of multiple CMEs and workshops, and publication of the Task Force Report on Tobacco Control endorsed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. State-wise



updates and future plans for 2026 were also discussed, including expansion of NAMS cells, academic collaborations, digital strengthening initiatives, and multi-institutional research activities. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks and assignment of action points for quarterly follow-up.

Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction



The Feeling Behind the Habit

No one starts smoking because they want lung disease. No one takes their first puff of a vape, slips a nicotine pouch under their lip, or chews tobacco because they are seeking addiction. What they are often seeking is something else entirely—a moment of calm during stress, a sense of belonging among friends, a feeling of confidence, maturity, rebellion, or control.

For decades, the tobacco and nicotine industry has understood this simple truth. Its products are rarely marketed for what they are; instead, they are wrapped in emotions, aspirations, and identities. Behind every attractive flavour, sleek device, colourful package, celebrity endorsement, or social media campaign lies a carefully crafted promise—not of nicotine, but of a feeling.

This strategy continues to shape tobacco and nicotine use worldwide. Today, an estimated 1.2 billion people use tobacco products globally. Although this number has declined from approximately 1.38 billion in 2000, tobacco still reaches nearly one in every five adults worldwide. The persistence of this epidemic is not merely a reflection of nicotine

dependence; it is also a testament to the enduring appeal that surrounds these products.

To counter tobacco and nicotine addiction effectively, we must understand the forces that make these products attractive in the first place. The challenge is not only to address the substance itself, but also to unmask the emotions, perceptions, and marketing tactics that sustain its appeal. Only then can we build effective responses that protect individuals—especially young people—from becoming the next generation of users.



What the Brain Is Actually Chasing

The appeal of tobacco and nicotine products does not end with clever marketing or social influence. Once nicotine enters the body, it begins a far more powerful conversation—with the brain itself.

Within seconds of inhaling cigarette smoke or aerosol from electronic cigarettes (vapes), or after nicotine is absorbed through the lining of the mouth from products such as nicotine pouches and smokeless tobacco, nicotine enters the bloodstream and rapidly reaches the brain, where it binds to specialised receptors involved in attention, learning, and reward.

This interaction triggers the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter often associated with pleasure, motivation, and reinforcement. It is the same chemical that contributes to the satisfaction we feel after a good meal, a personal achievement, or a meaningful social interaction.

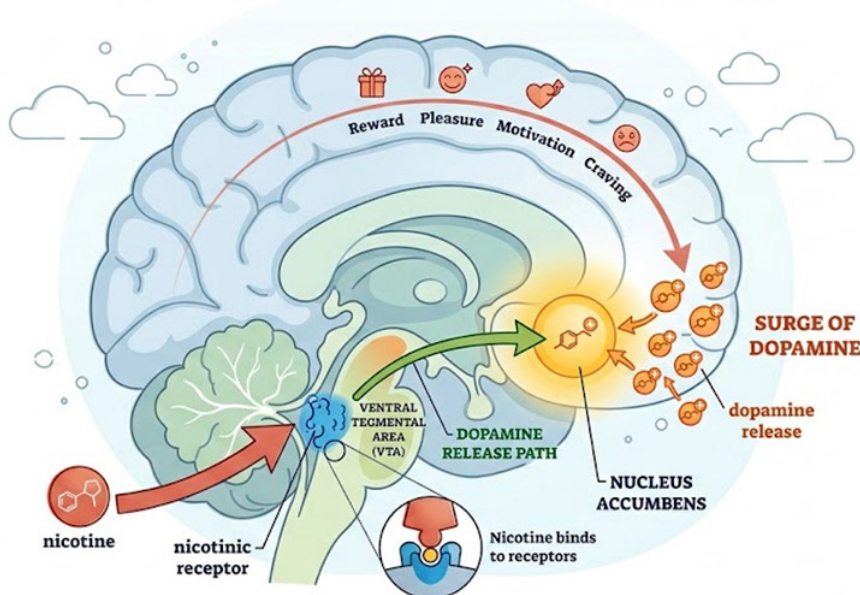
At first, the experience may feel rewarding—a brief sense of relaxation, focus, or relief. But the brain is highly adaptable. With repeated exposure, it begins to adjust to the constant presence of nicotine. More receptors are created, tolerance develops, and the

pleasurable effects gradually diminish. What started as a choice increasingly becomes a biological need.

Over time, nicotine no longer serves to create pleasure; instead, it helps users avoid discomfort. The brain begins to expect regular nicotine intake simply to function normally, making cravings, irritability, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating common when nicotine is absent. This transition—from seeking pleasure to avoiding withdrawal—is one of the hallmarks of addiction. Research has shown that nicotine can stimulate the brain's reward system far more intensely than many natural rewards. This powerful effect helps explain why tobacco and nicotine products can establish dependence so quickly and why quitting, despite strong motivation, is often a difficult journey.

Understanding this biology is important because addiction is not merely a matter of willpower. The brain is not chasing tobacco itself—it is chasing the chemical signals that nicotine has taught it to expect. Recognising this process helps us better understand why prevention, support, and evidence-based cessation services are essential components of tobacco control.

THE BRAIN'S REWARD PATHWAY



This chemistry shows up as four distinct pillars of appeal:

False relief: What feels like calm is mostly the body returning to baseline after withdrawal, not rising above it.

Ritual: The coffee-and-cigarette pairing, the after-meal vape, the work break — these become anchored habits, reinforced daily until they feel inseparable from the moment itself.

Identity and belonging: For adolescents especially, a cigarette, vape, or pouch can function as a social signal — independence, rebellion, group membership — often more powerful than any physical craving.

Sensory design: Flavoring, device aesthetics, and discreet vapor — modern nicotine products are built to be more palatable and less visible than traditional cigarettes.



None of these four pillars exist by accident. They are the product of a deliberate design strategy with a clear target.



Tobacco doesn't sell a product — it sells a feeling.

Built for the Market, Not Just Sold to It

The tobacco and vaping industries are not passive bystanders to addiction — they actively shape the appeal, and they adapt it by region. WHO's Director-General has noted that as global tobacco use declines, the industry is countering with new nicotine products that aggressively target young people. The pattern looks different depending on where in the world you are standing.

In much of the West, that pattern shows up as flavored vapes and sleek, low-visibility devices. In India and much of South Asia, the dominant form is different: smokeless tobacco. India is home to roughly 200 million smokeless tobacco users — the largest population of its kind anywhere in the world — consuming products like khaini, gutka, and paan masala that are often

wrongly perceived as a "safer" alternative to smoking simply because there's no smoke involved. That misperception is itself part of the appeal, and it is exactly as engineered as a flavored vape cartridge. Layered on top of this, India's most recent Global Youth Tobacco Survey GYTS is a WHO/CDC-supported global survey implemented in-country, so "India's Global Youth Tobacco Survey" reads slightly oddly — it's the India round of the global survey. Consider: "Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) found..." — also worth adding the year.

Found that 8.5% of school students aged 13–15 already use some form of tobacco — a reminder that the industry's youngest target audience exists across every product category, not just vaping.



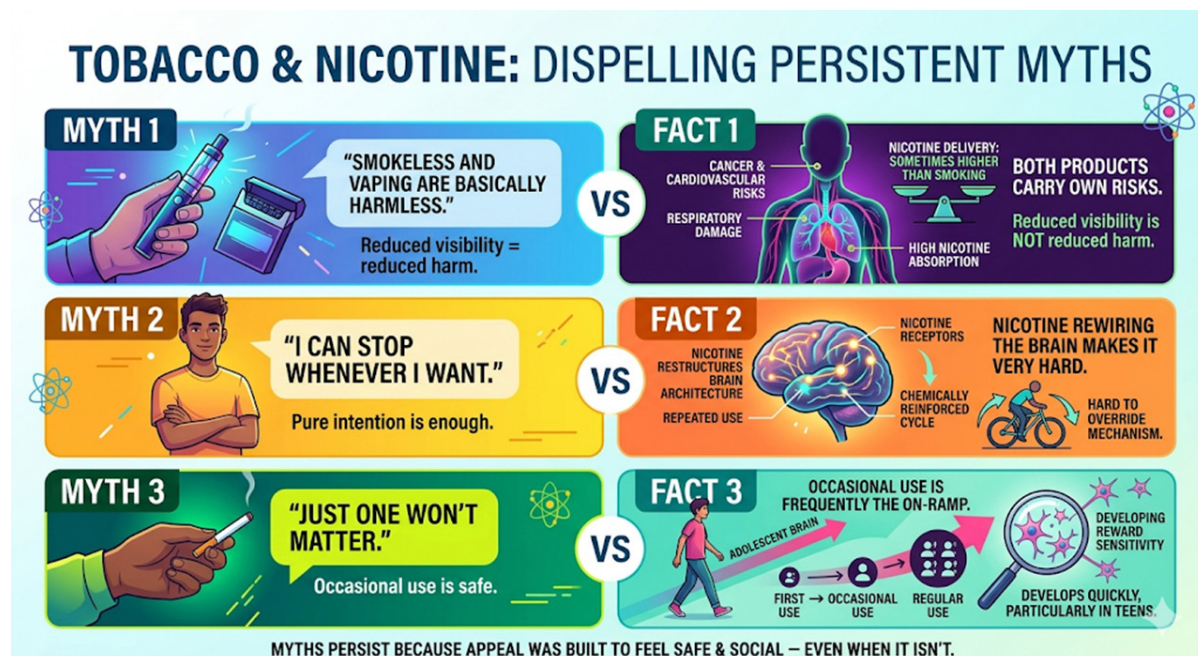
This is where many of the most persistent myths take root:

- **“Smokeless and vaping are basically harmless.”** Smokeless tobacco carries its own cancer and cardiovascular risks, and nicotine absorption from it can be just as high — sometimes higher — than from smoking. Most e-cigarettes still deliver nicotine, often at high concentrations, with their own respiratory and cardiovascular risks. Reduced visibility of harm is not the same as reduced harm.
- **“I can stop whenever I want.”** Nicotine restructures the brain’s

receptor architecture with repeated use; intention alone rarely overrides a chemically reinforced cycle.

- **“Just one won’t matter.”** Occasional use is frequently the on-ramp to regular use, particularly for adolescent brains still developing reward sensitivity.

These myths persist precisely because the appeal was built to feel safe, social, and manageable — even when the underlying mechanism isn’t.



The Cost, in Numbers

The appeal of tobacco and nicotine products may be carefully crafted, but the consequences are unmistakably real.

Every year, tobacco use claims more than 8 million lives worldwide. More than 7 million of these deaths occur among tobacco users themselves, while an additional 1.6 million occur among non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke. These figures remind us that tobacco’s harm rarely stops with the individual user. A parent’s habit becomes a child’s exposure, and a personal choice can translate into a shared health risk for families and communities.

The burden falls disproportionately on low- and middle-income countries, which are home to nearly 80% of the world’s 1.3 billion tobacco users. In these settings, tobacco-related diseases place enormous pressure on already stretched health systems and contribute to cycles of illness, poverty, and lost productivity.

India bears one of the largest shares of this burden. With nearly 267 million adults using tobacco in some form, the country continues to face a substantial challenge from both smoked and smokeless products. Tobacco

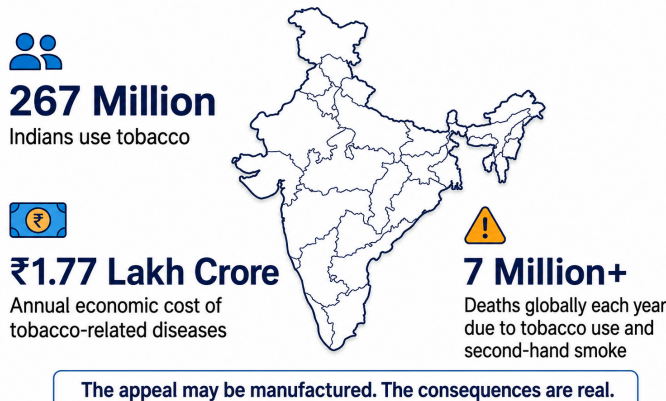
use contributes to a wide range of diseases, including cancers, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory conditions, and stroke, making it one of the leading preventable causes of death in the country.

The economic consequences are equally staggering. The cost of diseases and deaths attributable to tobacco use among adults aged 35 years and above has been estimated at more than ₹1.77 lakh crore in a single year—an amount that exceeds the combined budgets of many public health programmes. Behind this figure are

hospital admissions, treatment expenses, lost wages, reduced productivity, and families coping with the long-term consequences of preventable illness.

These are not merely statistics. They represent lives cut short, opportunities lost, and resources diverted away from education, development, and wellbeing. The true cost of tobacco is measured not only in disease and death, but also

in the social and economic burden carried by households and communities across the country. The appeal may be carefully manufactured, but its consequences are painfully real.



Turning the Mechanism Against Itself

Once the mechanism is visible, it loses some of its power — and the most effective countermeasures map directly onto the pillars that built the addiction in the first place.

- **Address the relief directly, not the substance.** Genuine stress-reduction techniques — physical activity, breathing exercises, brief walks — resolve the underlying stress instead of just managing withdrawal from the last dose.
- **Replace identity with alternative belonging.** Peer support groups, quitting communities, and open conversations about cravings replace the social function nicotine use was filling.
- **Replace ritual, don't just remove it.** If the trigger is coffee, change what comes with the coffee. If it's a work break, keep the break but change what happens during it.
- **Recognize design as design.** Treating flavored products, discreet packaging, and "safer alternative" marketing as deliberate appeal tools — rather than neutral choices — makes them noticeably less persuasive.

The data on formal support is unambiguous: most people who

try to quit "cold turkey," without any counseling or medication, have only a 3–5% chance of remaining smoke-free after six months.. Combining behavioral counseling with FDA-approved medication — nicotine replacement therapy (patches, gum, lozenges), varenicline, or bupropion — can more than double, and in some combinations nearly triple, the odds of quitting successfully compared with no support at all. For smokeless tobacco specifically, quit attempts rise meaningfully when users are exposed to clear warning labels and anti-tobacco messaging tailored to their specific product, not generic smoking-cessation material.

At the policy level, this same logic is already working. WHO's MPOWER framework — covering monitoring, smoke-free policies, cessation support, warnings, advertising bans, and taxation — now protects 6.1 billion people through at least one best-practice measure, and 110 countries have introduced graphic health warnings on tobacco packaging specifically to counter the industry's sensory design strategy.

"I quit four times before it stuck," one recovering smoker shared in a community support session. "Each time I told myself the failure meant I didn't want it enough. What actually changed wasn't willpower — it was finally naming the trigger: a stressful commute, every single evening. Once I had a real plan for that one moment, the rest got easier."

What This Means Closer to Home

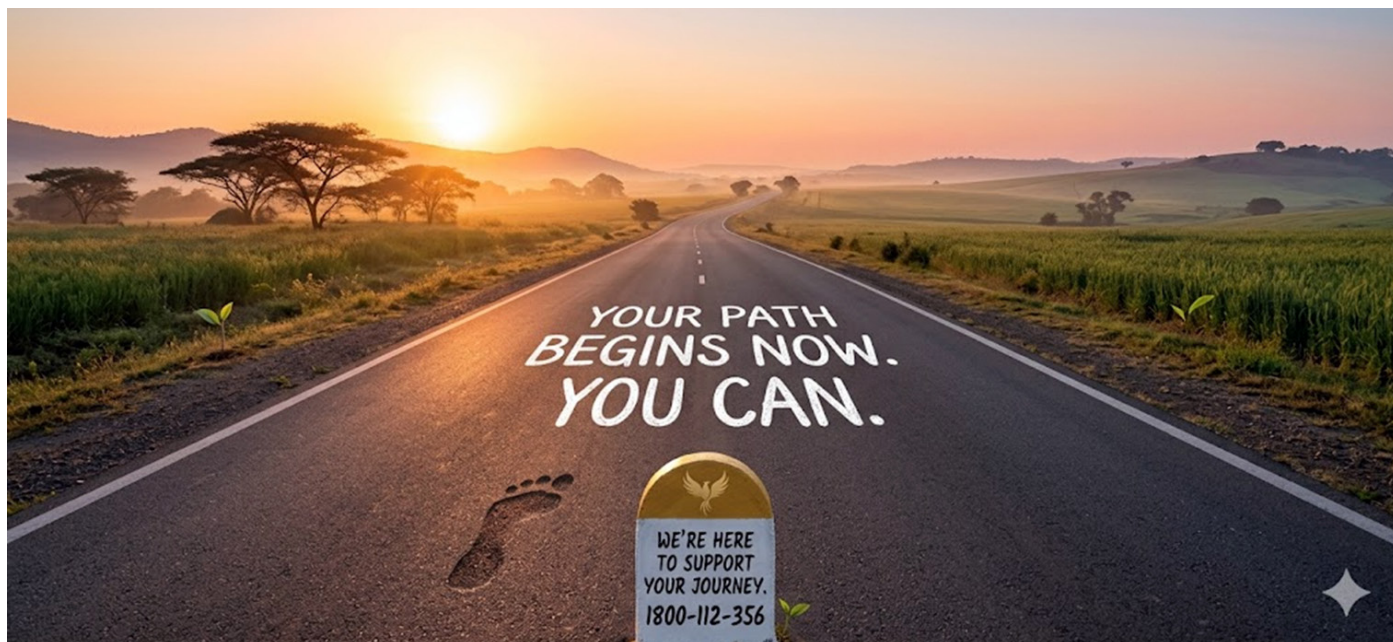
Workplaces, schools, and households can mirror these same counter-strategies at a smaller scale:

- **Normalize talking about cravings and relapse without shame** — shame keeps people quiet about the exact moments when support would help most.
- **Create smoke- and chew-free shared spaces**, recognizing that second-hand exposure and visible normalization affect the people around the user, especially children at home.
- **Aim youth education at identity, not just health risk.** Statistics rarely compete with belonging; conversations that address why a young person wants to use a product are more effective than ones that only list what it does to the lungs.
- **Make support visible and product-specific** — a quitline number on a smokeless tobacco pouch, or a counselor who understands vaping culture, removes a barrier that generic warnings don't.



The Core Idea, One More Time

Nicotine addiction was never primarily about the substance — it was about the feeling the substance was engineered to deliver: calm, belonging, ritual, and design, all aimed at a chemical reward system that quietly takes over. Naming that mechanism — in research, in policy, and in everyday conversation — is what makes it possible to choose something else instead.



If you or someone you know is working to quit, professional cessation support — counseling, nicotine replacement therapy, or a doctor's guidance — meaningfully improves long-term success. Reaching out is a strength, not a setback.

EXPERTS SPEAK

The tobacco and nicotine industry continues to reinvent itself through attractive flavours, modern product designs, synthetic nicotine, and digital marketing aimed at young people. Our response must be equally innovative—grounded in evidence, strengthened through policy, and driven by collective action to protect future generations from nicotine addiction.



Dr. Rana J. Singh,
Director – Tobacco Control, Southeast Asia, Vital Strategies

Preventing nicotine addiction begins with honest conversations. Families, schools, health professionals, and communities must work together to help young people understand why these products are marketed so aggressively and why saying 'no' today protects their future.



Dr. Mira B. Aghi,
Behavioral Scientist and Tobacco Control Expert

The greatest risk is not simply the emergence of new nicotine products, but the illusion that they are harmless. Strong science, informed citizens, and evidence-based policies are essential to counter deceptive industry narratives.



Dr. P. C. Gupta,
Director, Healis-Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health

Protecting future generations from nicotine addiction requires more than strong laws—it demands vigilant surveillance, evidence-based policies, effective cessation services, and the collective commitment of every sector of society to stay ahead of evolving industry tactics.



Dr. L. Swasticharan,
Deputy Director General & Director (EMR), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

The greatest misconception in tobacco control is that tobacco benefits the economy. In reality, the health, productivity, and financial losses caused by tobacco far exceed any short-term revenue it generates. Investing in tobacco control is an investment in a nation's future.



Mr. Chris Bostic,
Former Policy Director, Action on Smoking and Health (ASH)

As tobacco and nicotine products continue to evolve, regulation must be guided by robust scientific evidence. Product testing, laboratory surveillance, and international research collaboration are essential to ensuring that public health policies remain effective and responsive to emerging challenges.



Dr. Cheah Nuan Ping,
Head of WHO Collaborating Centre on Tobacco Testing and Research, Singapore

FDA Cracks Down on Tobacco Products Disguised as Everyday Items

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued warning letters to eight retailers for selling unauthorized nicotine pouches and dissolvable tobacco products designed to resemble everyday items such as candy, breath strips, and cough drops. The agency warned that such products can attract young people and increase the risk of accidental ingestion by children. The FDA reiterated its commitment to removing unauthorized tobacco products from the market and preventing youth access to nicotine products.



Source: US Food & Drug Administration
<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-warns-retailers-selling-illegal-tobacco-products-look-everyday-products>

WHO Director-General's World No Tobacco Day Awards 2026 Honour Tobacco Control Champions from the South-East Asia Regions WHO Director-General's World No Tobacco Day Awards 2026 Honour Tobacco Control Champions from the South-East Asia Region

The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the recipients of the WHO Director-General's World No Tobacco Day Awards 2026, recognising individuals and organisations from across the six WHO regions for their outstanding contributions to advancing global tobacco control. The awards honour exceptional leadership in implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), strengthening tobacco control policies, countering tobacco industry interference, and promoting evidence-based public health action.



In the WHO South-East Asia Region, five recipients were recognised for their significant contributions to tobacco control:

- Principal Health Secretary, Medical and Health Department, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India
- ICMR–National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (NICPR), Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, India
- People's Health Foundation, Myanmar
- Acting Sub-Lieutenant Trakul Thotham, Thailand
- Tobacco Control Research and Knowledge Management Center, Thailand

The recognition highlights the region's continued commitment to strengthening tobacco control through policy leadership, research, advocacy, and multisectoral collaboration. The achievements of the awardees reinforce the importance of sustained efforts to reduce tobacco use and protect present and future generations from the harms of tobacco.

Source: World Health Organization. WHO Director-General's World No Tobacco Day Awards 2026 – Meet the Winners.

Source: WHO / PAHO (<https://www.who.int/news/item/19-05-2026-world-no-tobacco-day-2026-awards---meet-the-winners>)

UK Approves Landmark Smoke-Free Generation Law

The United Kingdom has approved the Tobacco and Vapes Bill, Please check if it's a bill or an Act now , as it has been approved paving the way for a smoke-free generation. Under the legislation, individuals born on or after January 1, 2009, will never be legally able to purchase tobacco products. The law also grants authorities greater powers to regulate vaping and nicotine products. Public health experts have welcomed the measure as a major step toward reducing smoking-related disease and preventing nicotine addiction among young people.

Source: BBC News (<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn08jy6w0l5o>)



Victoria Strengthens Action Against Illegal Tobacco Trade

Australia's state of Victoria has introduced new legislation to strengthen enforcement against illegal tobacco sales. The proposed laws would allow authorities to close businesses involved in the illicit tobacco trade and impose significant penalties on offenders. The move comes amid concerns over rising nicotine consumption and the growing black market for tobacco and vaping products. Officials believe stronger enforcement will help protect public health and reduce organized criminal activity linked to illicit tobacco.

Source: Reuters (<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/australian-state-cracks-down-illegal-tobacco-shops-nicotine-use-surges-2026-06-04/>)



U.S. States Advance New Tobacco and Nicotine Regulations

Several U.S. states have introduced or expanded tobacco and nicotine control measures. Proposed actions include increasing taxes on electronic smoking products, restricting flavored tobacco products, regulating nicotine pouches, and banning disposable vaping devices. These legislative developments reflect growing efforts to address emerging nicotine products and strengthen protections for youth and public health.

Source: Convenience Store News (<https://csnews.com/tackling-tobacco-may-2026-legislative-regulatory-roundup>)

Vietnam Intensifies Efforts Ahead of World No Tobacco Day 2026

Vietnam has launched nationwide activities to mark World No Tobacco Day 2026 and strengthen tobacco control efforts. Authorities have called for stricter enforcement of tobacco control laws, increased public awareness campaigns, and stronger action against electronic cigarettes and heated tobacco products. The initiative aligns with the global theme, "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction," and emphasizes protecting young people from nicotine dependence.

Source: Vietnam News (<https://vietnamnews.vn/society/1781679/world-no-tobacco-day-2026-taking-action-to-combat-nicotine-and-tobacco-addiction.html>)



Nagaland Imposes One-Year Ban on Tobacco and Nicotine-Based Food Products

The Government of Nagaland has imposed a one-year ban on the manufacture, storage, distribution, transportation, and sale of all food products containing tobacco or nicotine. The ban covers gutkha, pan masala, flavored chewing products, and similar items intended for consumption. Implemented under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, the measure aims to protect public health, particularly among children and young adults, who remain vulnerable to tobacco addiction and its harmful effects.

Source: Akashvani News (News on Air) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2238296®=48&lang=2>



Nagaland Introduces Tobacco Vendor Licensing to Strengthen Enforcement

Nagaland is taking significant steps to strengthen tobacco control by introducing Tobacco Vendor Licensing Rules and enhancing enforcement mechanisms across the



state. During the World No Tobacco Day 2026 observance, state officials announced that over 400 violations related to tobacco sales near educational institutions had been penalized in the previous year. The state has also constituted a committee to support implementation of WHO FCTC Article 5.3 and address tobacco industry interference in public health policies.

Source: Akashvani News (News on Air) <https://newsonair.gov.in/nagaland-to-introduce-tobacco-vendor-licensing-rules-to-strengthen-tobacco-control-measures/>

Government Launches ToFEI App to Promote Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions

On World No Tobacco Day 2026, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the pilot version of the Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) App. The digital platform is designed to support schools and colleges in monitoring compliance with tobacco-free guidelines, reporting violations, and strengthening implementation of tobacco control measures. Initially launched in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Meghalaya, the app is expected to enhance accountability and create healthier learning environments for children and adolescents.



Source: News on Air <https://newsonair.gov.in/govt-launches-app-to-monitor-implementation-of-tobacco-free-norms/>

Interstate Counterfeit Cigarette Racket Busted in Lucknow

Lucknow Police dismantled an interstate counterfeit cigarette network and arrested two individuals involved in the illegal trade. Authorities seized approximately 3,940 packets of counterfeit cigarettes valued at nearly ₹10 lakh. Investigations revealed that the network sourced products from Delhi and Madhya Pradesh and supplied them across several states through a phone-based distribution system designed to avoid detection. The operation highlights the growing challenge posed by illicit tobacco trade and the need for stronger enforcement measures.



Source: Hindustan Times (<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/lucknow-news/phonebased-fake-cigarette-supply-chain-exposed-in-lucknow-2-held-101775327848797.html>)

Enforcement Drive Targets Tobacco Sales Near Educational Institutions



The Elite Anti-Narcotics Group for Law Enforcement (EAGLE) conducted inspections of shops located near educational institutions in Vijayawada and seized cigarettes, gutka, and other tobacco products being sold in violation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003. Notices were issued to shop owners, and penalties were imposed. Officials also emphasized the importance of displaying tobacco-control signages and maintaining tobacco-free zones around schools and colleges.

Source: The Hindu <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/andhra-pradesh/eagle-seizes-cigarettes-tobacco-products-from-shops-near-educational-institutions/article70811160.ece>

Over Four Tonnes of Banned Tobacco Products Seized in Kerala



Excise officials in Kerala seized more than 4,000 kilograms of banned tobacco products during a major enforcement operation in Balaramapuram. Acting on intelligence inputs, authorities detained an individual suspected of storing and distributing the products across the district. Preliminary investigations suggest that the contraband was transported from neighboring states for illegal sale within Kerala. Officials have launched further investigations to identify the distribution network and strengthen action against illicit tobacco trade.

Source: The Hindu <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/massive-seizure-of-banned-tobacco-products-in-balaramapuram/article71021385.ece>

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

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