TOBACCO-FREE Times

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Oral Nicotine Pouches in India: An Emerging Public Health and Regulatory Challenge

RCTC: Building Capacity and Inspiring Change



The progress of tobacco control has never been the achievement of a single institution; it has been the result of a shared commitment by researchers, policymakers, healthcare professionals, civil society, academia, media, and communities working towards a common public health goal. At the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER, Chandigarh, our endeavour has been to strengthen this collective movement by connecting evidence with policy, research with practice, and people with purpose. Through strategic partnerships, mentoring young researchers, fostering scientific dialogue, and creating opportunities for collaborative learning, we seek to build a resilient tobacco control workforce capable of responding not only to today's priorities but also to the emerging nicotine and public health challenges of the future. We firmly believe that lasting progress will be achieved through collaboration, innovation, and a shared vision for a tobacco- and nicotine-free India.

Editor's Speak



Dear Readers,

The tobacco and nicotine landscape is evolving rapidly. As public health policies continue to reduce the burden of conventional tobacco use, the emergence of novel nicotine products presents new challenges for regulators, researchers, and policymakers. Remaining ahead of these changes requires evidence, vigilance, and timely action.

In this edition of Tobacco Free Times, we focus on oral nicotine pouches (ONPs)—an emerging category of nicotine products that is attracting global attention. Marketed as "tobacco-free," these products highlight how innovation can outpace existing regulatory frameworks and underscore the need for proactive, evidence-informed policymaking.

India has made remarkable progress in tobacco control through strong legislation, multisectoral collaboration, and sustained public health action. Protecting these achievements requires anticipating emerging challenges and ensuring that regulatory systems evolve alongside the changing nicotine product landscape.

At the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control, PGIMER, Chandigarh, we remain committed to generating evidence, strengthening capacity, and supporting informed policy dialogue. We hope this edition provides valuable insights and stimulates meaningful discussion towards building a healthier, tobacco-free India.

- 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), PGIMER, is setting a benchmark in advancing tobacco control in India. Aligning its initiatives with the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) at the medical college level can create a powerful public health synergy, accelerating the vision of a Tobacco-Free and TB-Free India.

Prof. Ashok Bhardwaj,
Professor Emeritus at MM Medical College & Hospital, Solan, Himachal Pradesh

"I appreciate the valuable insights and the initiative to organize this regional consultation. While national goals provide the overall direction, it is equally important to design and implement region-specific and local strategies. This consultation has been an excellent platform for sharing ideas, experiences, and innovative initiatives.



Ms. Susan Samson,
Director, Faith Foundation, Gujrat

PROJECT UPDATES

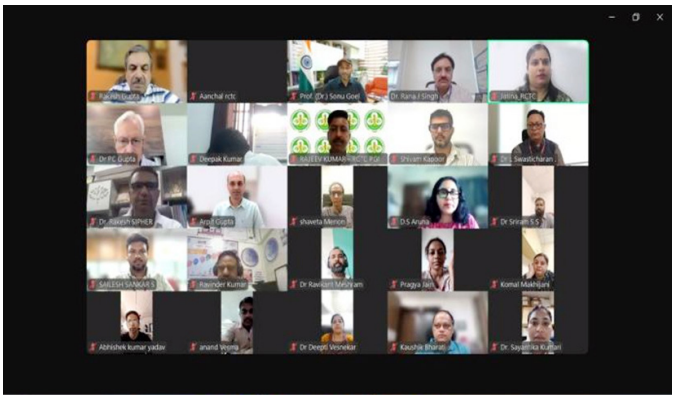
44th Edition of Tobacco Free Times Released, Spotlighting the Industry's Playbook on Nicotine Addiction

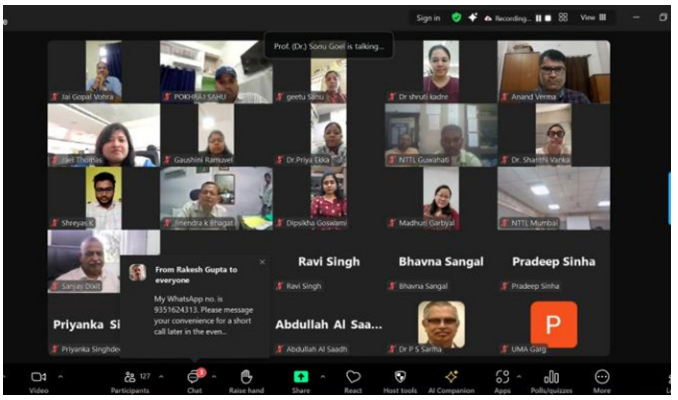
The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER Chandigarh, released the 44th edition of its newsletter Tobacco Free Times on 31st July 2026. Themed "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction," this edition examines how the tobacco and nicotine industry continues to target consumers, particularly youth through attractive marketing, flavoured products, and misleading narratives, and calls for stronger evidence-based policies and community awareness to counter these tactics. The issue also features reflections from Prof. (Dr.) Sonu Goel, President, RCTC, alongside expert perspectives from Prof. Suneela Garg and Dr. G. Visweswara Rao, and rounds up recent RCTC milestones. Through this edition, RCTC reaffirms its commitment to research, advocacy, and youth engagement in building a tobacco-free future.



National Webinar titled "Addressing the Emerging Challenge of Nicotine Pouches in India: Strengthening Enforcement Through Government and Multi-Stakeholder Action.

The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, PGIMER Chandigarh, in collaboration with Vital Strategies, organized a National Webinar on 21 July 2026.The webinar brought together over 300 participants from across the country, including policymakers, government officials, legal experts, researchers, clinicians, law enforcement agencies, civil society organizations, and public health professionals. The deliberations were led by 12 distinguished national experts, providing a multidisciplinary platform to examine the rapidly evolving landscape of oral nicotine pouches (ONPs) and identify strategic priorities for India's regulatory response. The discussions highlighted that oral nicotine pouches represent an emerging generation of nicotine products deliberately designed to circumvent existing tobacco control regulations.

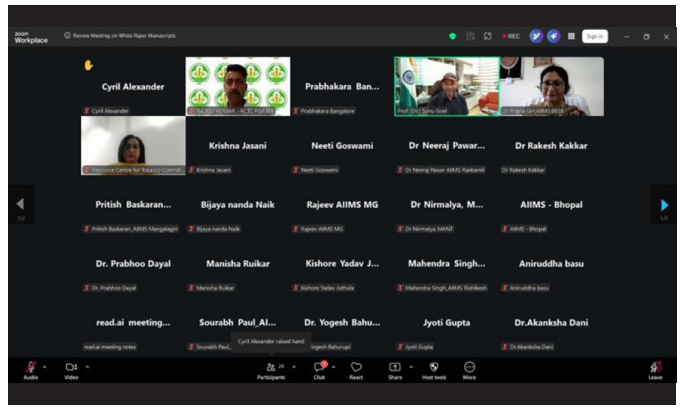




Review Meeting on White Paper with all AIIMS Consortium members

The Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER Chandigarh, convened aReview Meeting for the AIIMS Consortium White Paper Writing Programme on 21st July 2026, chaired by Prof. (Dr.) Sonu Goel, President, RCTC. The meeting brought together 26 participants, including nodal persons from 18 AIIMS institutions and external expert reviewers, to review three manuscripts — Tobacco-Free Generation: From Concept to Reality, Closing the Fiscal Gap: Increasing Taxes on Bidis, and COTPA Amendment: Closing the Gap — presented section-wise by their respective teams and discussed in detail with reviewers. Each paper received substantive feedback for strengthening evidence, structure, and policy alignment, with teams directed to submit revised manuscripts by 30th July for review and eventual submission to leading tobacco-control journals.





National Webinar on "Addressing Commercial Determinants of Tobacco Use: Governance Reforms Beyond the Health Sector"

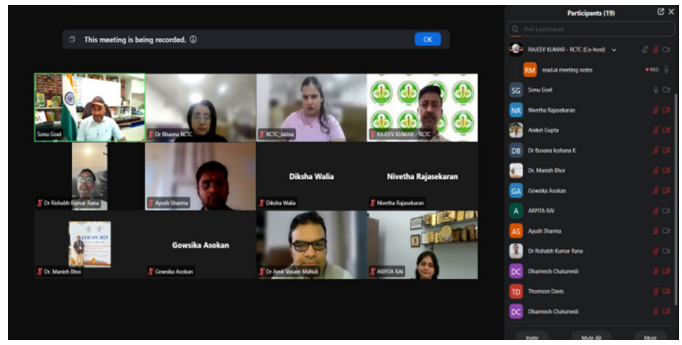
A webinar on Commercial Determinants of Health (CDoH) in tobacco control was held on 1 September 2026 (11:00 AM–1:00 PM), organized by RCTC in collaboration with Vital Strategies and C-CDOH, Institute of Public Health, Bengaluru. It brought together 18 experts from tobacco control, public health, academia and policy for expert presentations and an interactive panel discussion, concluding with remarks by Prof. Sonu Goel; the session saw strong engagement, with discussion extending beyond the scheduled time. The key takeaway was the need for India to shift from fragmented regulation to a coordinated national CDoH governance framework integrating COTPA, taxation, the National Tobacco Control Programme and Article 5.3, along with transparency, conflict-of-interest safeguards, industry-interference protection, digital marketing surveillance, fiscal measures and whole-of-government coordination.



Research Workshops on qualitative , quantitative and review studies

RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh, organized a series of three manuscript writing workshops for participants working on different study designs. The first, held on 26 August 2026, focused on manuscript writing for systematic reviews, meta-analyses, scoping reviews and narrative reviews, covering review methodologies and PICO(S) formulation, protocol registration on PROSPERO/OSF, data extraction and critical appraisal, statistical meta-analysis (effect measures, heterogeneity, PRISMA diagrams and forest plots), and GRADE certainty-of-evidence assessment. This was followed on 27 August 2026 by a workshop on manuscript writing for primary and secondary quantitative data analysis and commentary articles, which addressed formulating research questions and objectives, methodology for quantitative data analysis, common statistical methods, designing figures and tables, and reference management using EndNote.

The third workshop, held on 2 September 2026, addressed manuscript writing for qualitative studies, covering qualitative research designs, methodology (sampling strategies and data collection through IDIs/FGDs), approaches to qualitative data analysis (thematic, framework, grounded theory and content analysis), development of coding frameworks, and use of qualitative analysis software such as NVivo, ATLAS.ti and MAXQDA. Across all three workshops, sessions were moderated by Dr. Sonu Goel, Professor, DCM-SPH, PGIMER Chandigarh, and featured a consistent structure of expert-led sessions on writing the introduction, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion sections, culminating in an open discussion and vote of thanks by RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh.



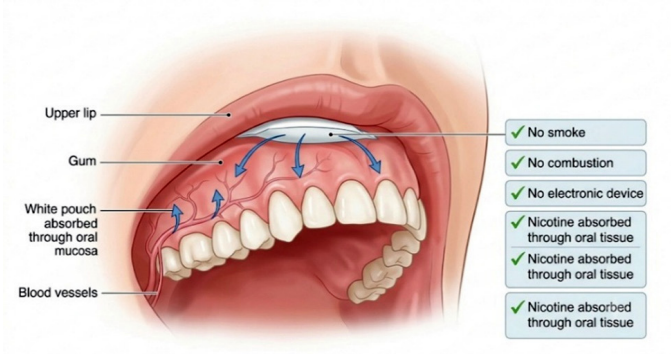
Oral Nicotine Pouches in India:
An Emerging Public Health and Regulatory Challenge



Understanding Oral Nicotine Pouches

Oral nicotine pouches (ONPs) are a new generation of nicotine products designed to deliver nicotine without tobacco leaf, combustion, or electronic devices. They are small, pre-portioned white pouches containing nicotine, plant-based fillers, flavourings, sweeteners, and other additives. Users place the pouch between the upper lip and gum, where nicotine is absorbed through the oral mucosa over a period of time. Depending on the product, the nicotine may be derived from tobacco or produced synthetically(1,2) .

Unlike conventional cigarettes, ONPs do not produce smoke, and unlike electronic cigarettes, they do not require batteries or generate aerosols. They also differ from traditional smokeless tobacco products such as gutka, khaini, and zarda, as most commercially available ONPs contain no tobacco leaf. These characteristics have led manufacturers to market them as "tobacco-free" or "smoke-free" products, often positioning them as modern alternatives to conventional tobacco products.



Globally, oral nicotine pouches have emerged as one of the fastest-growing nicotine product categories(3). Their discreet use, wide range of flavours, attractive packaging, and ease of use have contributed to increasing popularity, particularly among young adults . However, the absence of tobacco leaf or smoke should not be interpreted as an indication of safety. Nicotine remains a highly addictive substance, and recent evidence indicates increasing use among young people. Among US 10th- and 12th-grade students, past-30-day nicotine pouch use increased from 1.3% in 2023 to 2.6% in 2024, while lifetime use increased from 3.0% to 5.4% (1). Similar increases in nicotine-pouch use among youth and young adults were reported between 2023 and 2024 across Canada, England, the United States and New Zealand (2). These trends raise concerns about youth initiation, sustained nicotine dependence, and the potential reach of digital and other marketing practices among individuals who may not have previously used tobacco or nicotine products.

The emergence of oral nicotine pouches reflects the broader evolution of nicotine delivery systems, from conventional cigarettes and smokeless tobacco to electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and now tobacco-free nicotine products. While these innovations continue to diversify the nicotine marketplace, they also present new challenges for public health and regulation. Understanding how oral nicotine pouches differ from existing products is therefore essential to appreciating the regulatory questions they raise in India.

Why Are Oral Nicotine Pouches a Growing Public Health Concern?



A niche product a few years ago, oral nicotine pouches are now one of the fastest-growing categories in the global nicotine market. The World Health Organisation reports retail sales of more than 23 billion pouches in 2024, over 50% higher than the year before, and values the global market at close to US$ 7 billion in 2025. Growth on that scale is not consumer demand alone; it reflects sustained investment in product development, distribution and marketing (3).

India is also beginning to witness the emergence of these products. A recent market assessment by the ICMR–National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research (ICMR-NICPR) together with CPHR-MANT identified 68 oral nicotine pouch brands available in the Indian market, nearly two-thirds of which were imported. The study also documented 445 flavour variants across categories such as fruit, mint, desserts, beverages, and confectionery, highlighting the diversity of products now available to consumers. Such flavour profiles, combined with attractive packaging and discreet use, have raised concerns about their potential appeal among adolescents and young adults.

Another important concern relates to nicotine exposure. The ICMR-NICPR- led assessment found that nicotine concentrations in products available in India ranged from 2 mg to 120 mg per pouch, with some products containing nicotine levels substantially higher than those delivered by conventional cigarettes or approved nicotine replacement therapies. An analysis study found that that nicotine content in tested ONPs ranged from 1.79 mg/pouch to 47.5 mg/pouch. The study also detected TSNAs in more than half of the tested pouches (4). This wide variation raises concerns about nicotine dependence, accidental poisoning, and the absence of standardized limits on nicotine content. Furthermore, while these products are often marketed as "tobacco-free," this should not be interpreted as meaning they are risk-free. Nicotine itself is a highly addictive substance, and evidence on the long-term health effects of sustained oral nicotine pouch use remains limited. The limited evidence assessing short term health effects of oral nicotine pouches discusses oral lesions and gingival recession at the site of placement (5–7) . Additionally, some studies discuss users reporting gastrointestinal discomfort, nausea, elevated heart rate, etc. but more research is required to truly understand the implications of the use of these products before deeming them safe for use (8,9) .

The expanding availability of oral nicotine pouches through e-commerce platforms and social media further complicates the public health landscape where it is promoted through youth-targeted themes, comedic content and positive sentiments towards use (10) . The Indian market assessment found these products in 7 of the 10 surveyed cities and available in 9% of retail outlets, demonstrating that they are no longer confined to isolated online markets. Their discreet nature, ease of concealment, and digital promotion pose additional challenges for preventing youth access and monitoring sales.

Another concern regarding ONP use is dual/ poly use of the pouches with other conventional tobacco products. A review on the prevalence and patterns of use of ONPs among adolescence showed that co- use with snus, cigarettes and e- cigarettes was prominent and also stated that the prevalence of ONP use increased with the number of other products used and co- use with electronic cigarettes was consistently reported. This may be due to use of onps in places where smoking is prohibited such as public parks, restaurants, theatres and even classrooms.

One argument deserves a direct answer rather than silence, because the industry will make it. Independent reviews find that pouches contain fewer harmful constituents than cigarettes or smokeless tobacco, and for an adult who switches completely away from smoking they may reduce exposure. Most of that evidence is industry-funded, none of it is Indian, and it does not address the population India actually has: close to 200 million adult smokeless tobacco users, a very large young population, and no established pouch market that needs displacing. A product that lowers risk for a smoker who switches can still increase net harm if it recruits people who would never otherwise have used nicotine. India's decision should turn on that population question, not on the toxicity of a single pouch [5,6].

Taken together, these developments suggest that oral nicotine pouches represent more than simply another nicotine product entering the market. They exemplify a rapidly evolving nicotine landscape in which product innovation is outpacing public health and regulatory responses. As their availability continues to expand, the need for timely evidence-based policies and effective regulatory oversight becomes increasingly important to prevent a new generation of nicotine dependence.



Global Regulatory Responses: A Spectrum of Approaches



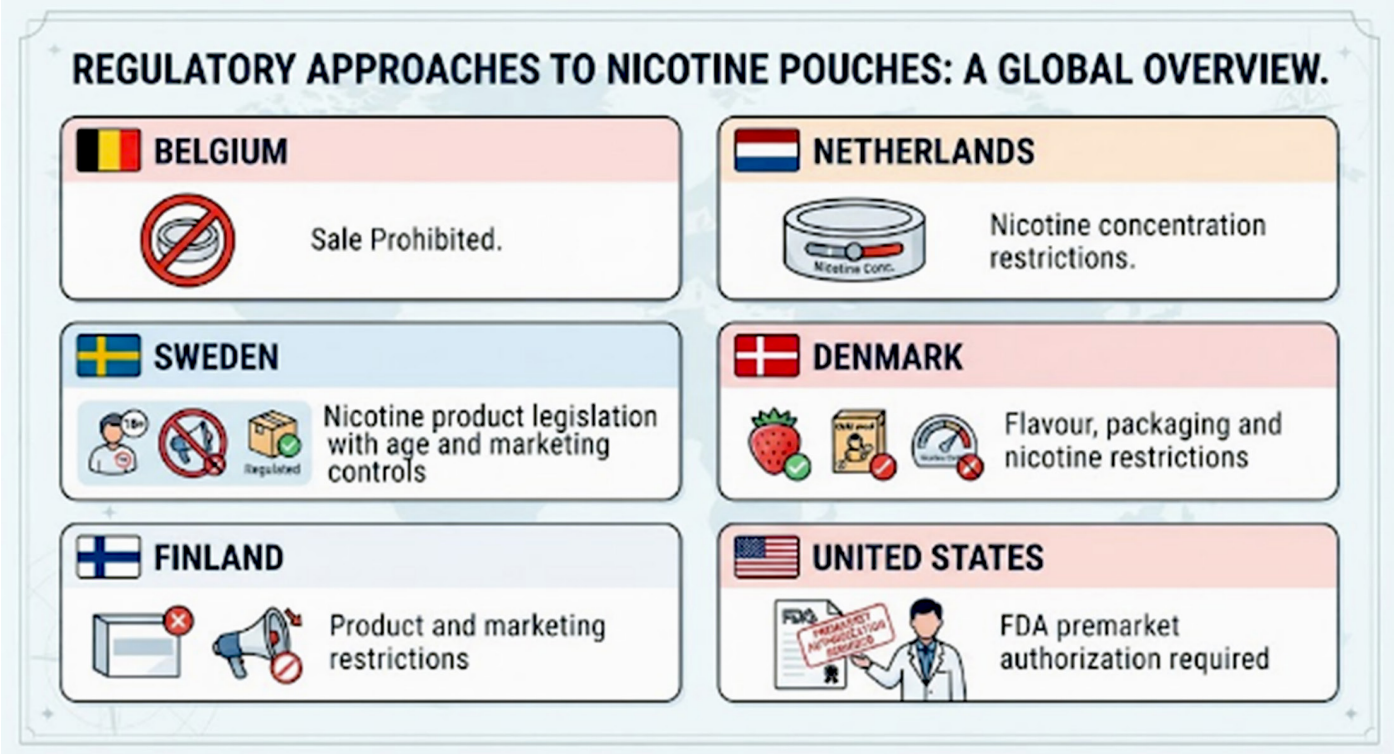
As oral nicotine pouches have expanded across international markets, countries have adopted diverse regulatory approaches, reflecting differences in legal frameworks, public health priorities, and perceptions of product risk. The picture is less reassuring than the debate suggests. On WHO's count, around 160 countries have no product-specific regulation of nicotine pouches at all; 16 ban their sale outright and 32 regulate them in some form. Oversight is the exception, not the rule [4].

Some countries have adopted a precautionary approach by prohibiting or severely restricting the sale of oral nicotine pouches. For example, Belgium has banned the sale of nicotine pouches, while the Netherlands has prohibited most nicotine pouch products that exceed specified nicotine limits. These measures were introduced primarily to prevent youth uptake and minimise the risk of nicotine addiction.

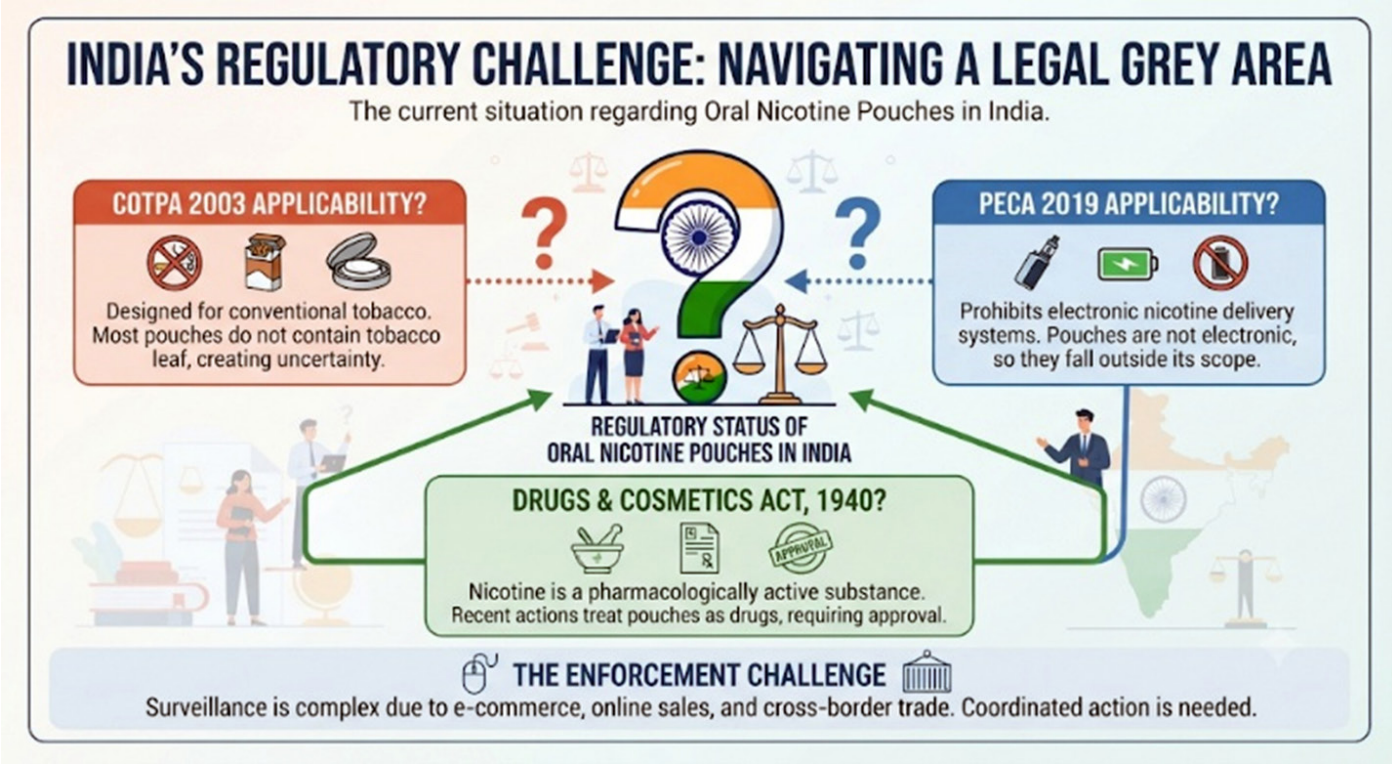
Other countries have chosen to regulate oral nicotine pouches under product-specific legislation. Sweden, the largest market, has regulated them since 2022 under a dedicated Act on Tobacco-Free Nicotine Products, which sets an 18-year age limit and requires product notification, health warnings and marketing restrictions. . Similarly, Denmark and Finland have gone further on product design: Denmark requires plain packaging, and Finland permits only menthol and mint flavours and caps nicotine at 16.6 mg per gram of product. In the United States, manufacturers must obtain authorisation from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) before marketing a nicotine pouch. The FDA granted its first such authorisations in January 2025, covering 20 ZYN products, and has authorised further pouch products since. Those decisions are already being cited as evidence of regulatory acceptance, so it is worth being precise about what they are: a finding that a specific product is appropriate for the protection of public health under United States law, on United States evidence, about a United States population. That is not a safety certificate, and it does not transfer to a country with India's tobacco use profile.

WHO has set out what a regulatory package for these products should contain, and the list is specific enough to act on: restrictions or bans on flavours; a ban on advertising, promotion and sponsorship that explicitly covers social media and influencer marketing; age verification and retail controls; health warnings and plain packaging; a cap on nicotine content; taxation to reduce affordability; surveillance of both use patterns and industry tactics; and the enforcement capacity to make the rest of it mean anything. Most countries have adopted none of it.

There is no single model for India to copy. There is, however, a consistent pattern: the countries that acted early had a smaller problem to manage than those that waited.



India's Regulatory Challenge: Navigating a Legal Grey Area



Despite growing international attention to oral nicotine pouches, India does not yet have a dedicated regulatory framework governing these products. Unlike several countries that have introduced product-specific legislation or regulatory standards, India currently relies on existing laws that were developed to regulate conventional tobacco products, electronic nicotine delivery systems, or pharmaceuticals. Consequently, oral nicotine pouches occupy a regulatory grey area, creating uncertainty for both regulators and enforcement agencies.

The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003, is India's primary tobacco control legislation. COTPA applies to the products listed in its Schedule, all of which are tobacco products, and a pouch containing no tobacco leaf is difficult to place there. A pouch made with nicotine extracted from tobacco is a harder question than one made with synthetic nicotine, and that question has not been tested. Similarly, the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA), 2019, prohibits the manufacture, import, sale, distribution, storage, and advertisement of electronic cigarettes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems. Since oral nicotine pouches deliver nicotine without an electronic device, they fall outside the scope of this legislation.

In the absence of product-specific regulation, attention has increasingly turned to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940. Nicotine is recognised as a pharmacologically active substance, and products containing nicotine may require regulatory approval before they can be legally manufactured, marketed, or sold. This interpretation has provided the basis for regulatory action against pouches marketed without approval. It cuts both ways, however. Schedule K of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules allows nicotine gums and lozenges of up to 2 mg to be sold over the counter as nicotine replacement therapy, and there is documented industry interest in bringing pouches and dissolvable nicotine strips to market through that licensing route. A drug classification drawn without care could end up legitimising these products rather than restricting them. Notably, the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, have in exercise of powers under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, initiated action against unauthorized or unapproved or unlicensed, manufacture, sale, distribution and storage of ONPs.

However, the challenge extends beyond legal classification. Oral nicotine pouches are increasingly available through e-commerce platforms, social media, and cross-border trade, making surveillance and enforcement more complex. Their multiple points of sale, combined with the absence of product-specific rules, produce inconsistent enforcement. The import findings from the ICMR-NICPR-led assessment point to where the leverage lies: if two-thirds of the brands on the Indian market come from outside it, customs classification and port-level interception will achieve more than retail-level enforcement, and it is far easier to instruct one agency than a million shops.



What India Should Do Now ?

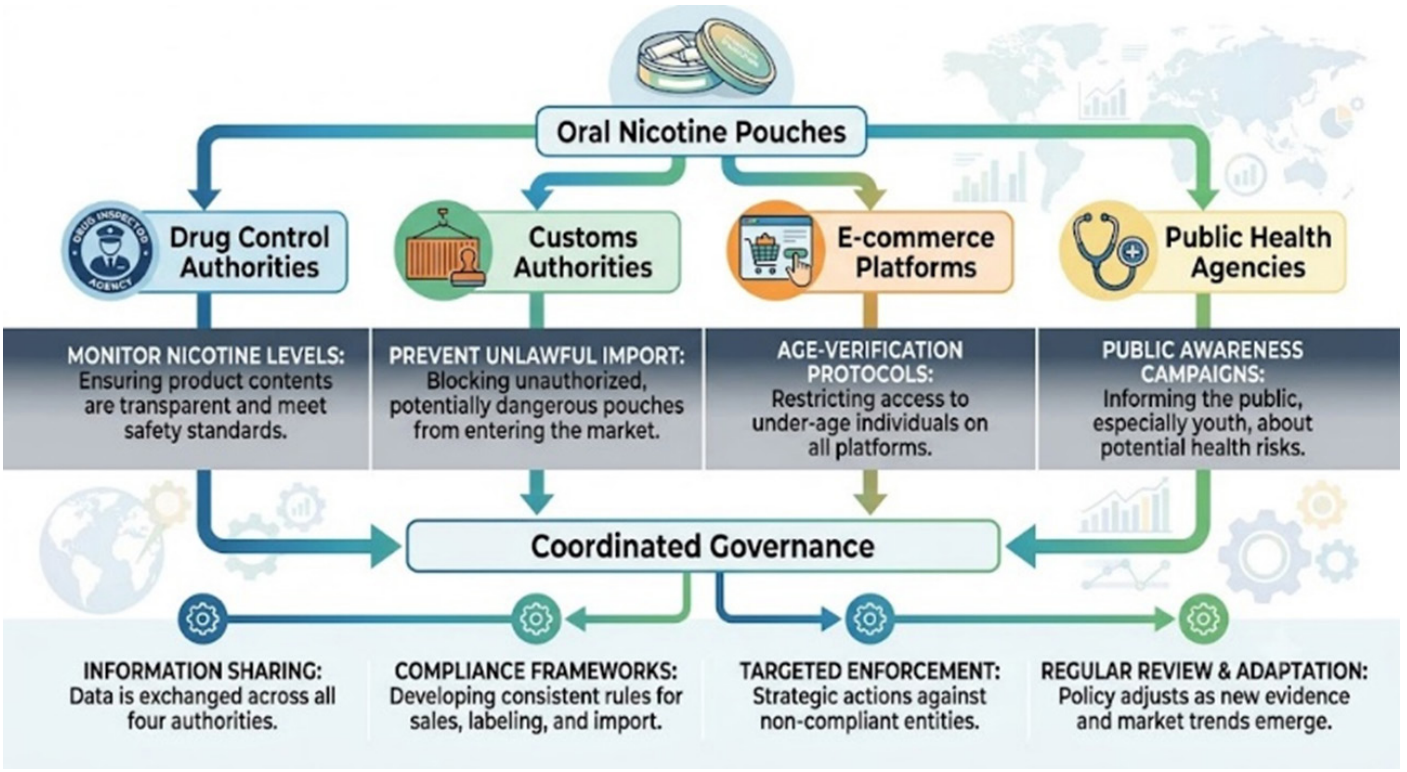
India has the advantage of arriving early, and it should use it. The e-cigarette experience is the relevant precedent: the 2019 prohibition came after the products had established a market and a user base, and enforcement has been difficult ever since. Acting while a category is still small is not simply cheaper. It is a different problem.

Three things should happen first, and they can happen in parallel. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and CDSCO should settle and publish the legal classification of pouches, separately for products using tobacco-derived and synthetic nicotine, so that enforcement agencies stop working from inference. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs should be issued a written instruction on the classification and treatment of imported pouches. And the large e-commerce marketplaces and social media platforms should be put on formal notice of what may not be listed, advertised or promoted, with one named regulator responsible for acting when they do not comply. Standards on nicotine content, flavours, packaging, health warnings and age verification follow from the classification decision and cannot sensibly precede it. The recent September, 2026 health advisory by the ministry of health and family welfare represents a step in the right direction, formally recognizes the growing availability of oral nicotine pouches in India and provides a clear regulatory basis for their surveillance and enforcement. By directing States/UTs to act against unapproved and unlicensed products, it strengthens efforts to prevent unregulated access, particularly among children and young people (11) .

The evidence gap should be closed through existing machinery rather than through new studies alone. Pouch-specific questions belong in the next rounds of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey and the Global Youth Tobacco Survey in India, and in state tobacco surveys. Point-of-sale audits around schools and colleges will show whether availability is following the pattern seen elsewhere, and they can be done quickly and cheaply. Systematic monitoring of online listings and influencer marketing will show what is being promoted and to whom, which is the evidence most likely to move a regulator.

None of this works if the agencies act separately. Drug regulators, customs, food safety commissioners, state tobacco control cells, the platforms and the research community each hold one part of the problem, and coordination has to be someone's stated responsibility rather than everyone's general intention. One further point deserves a place here: pouches are priced and marketed for urban, English-speaking, higher-income users, while India's oral nicotine burden sits with khaini and gutkha users who are poorer and more rural. India should decide now whether it is willing to accept a two-tier nicotine market, because that is the direction of travel.

Nicotine pouches are still at an early stage in India: a small number of outlets, no measured prevalence, and a supply chain running mostly through imports and online sale. Each of those is a control point that will be harder to reach in two years than it is today. That is the window, and it will not stay open long.



Oral Nicotine Pouches in India:

An Emerging Public Health and Regulatory Challenge



- Health Risks & Dependence
- Youth Vulnerability & Uptake
- Unregulated Market & Access
- Need for Effective Policy & Regulation

Canada Introduces New Cigarette Packaging and On-Stick Health Warnings

Canada has implemented a new phase of its tobacco packaging regulations, requiring all cigarette packs sold from 1 August 2026 to display updated graphic health warnings covering 75% of the front and back panels. The revised packaging features 13 new graphic images illustrating the harmful effects of tobacco use, along with updated health information inside packs. Canada also continues to mandate health warnings printed directly on individual cigarettes, reinforcing its position as the first country to adopt this innovative measure. Public health experts believe that regularly refreshing warning labels and placing messages directly on cigarettes will enhance public awareness, reduce product appeal, and discourage tobacco use, particularly among youth and new users.



Source: Canada Convenience Store News
Source Link: https://ccentral.ca/new-cigarette-packaging-rules-take-effect-august-1-2026

Spain Expands Smoke-Free Spaces Under Proposed Anti-Tobacco Law



Spain has approved a draft anti-tobacco law that would substantially expand smoke-free environments and strengthen regulation of emerging nicotine products. The proposed legislation prohibits smoking and vaping on restaurant terraces, beaches, public swimming pools, sports facilities, and selected outdoor public spaces. It also introduces smoke-free buffer zones around schools, hospitals, universities, and other public buildings. The bill extends similar restrictions to electronic cigarettes and other novel nicotine products while tightening regulations on their sale, advertising, and sponsorship. As part of Spain's Comprehensive Plan for the Prevention and Control of Tobacco Use (2024–2027), the reform aims to reduce tobacco consumption, strengthen youth protection, and address regulatory gaps created by rapidly evolving nicotine products.

Source: Euronews
Source Link: https://www.euronews.com/health/2026/07/21/government-moves-to-ban-smoking-on-terraces-and-beaches-under-new-anti-tobacco-law

UK Strengthens Powers to Combat Illegal Tobacco Retailers



The UK Government has announced plans to strengthen enforcement against businesses involved in the sale of illicit tobacco and vaping products. Under the proposed reforms, authorities in England and Wales will be able to close illegal mini-marts, vape shops, and other offending businesses for up to 12 months, doubling the current maximum closure period. The measure follows extensive investigations linking some retail outlets to organised crime, including the sale of illegal tobacco products, money laundering, and other criminal activities. Enforcement agencies believe the extended closure powers will provide more time to investigate offenders, disrupt illegal supply chains, and prevent businesses from quickly reopening, thereby strengthening efforts to tackle the illicit tobacco market.

Source: BBC News
Source Link: https://www.bbc.com/news

Illegal Tobacco Products Seized During Retail Enforcement in England



Trading Standards and police authorities in Shropshire, England, have seized hundreds of packets of illegal cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco following intelligence-led enforcement at a local retail outlet. Officials confiscated 692 packets of cigarettes and 220 packs of rolling tobacco, with an estimated market value of nearly £9,000. Authorities highlighted that illicit tobacco trade undermines legitimate businesses, reduces government tax revenue, and is frequently associated with organised criminal networks and labour exploitation. The case underscores the continued importance of coordinated enforcement involving police, Trading Standards, and tax authorities to disrupt illegal tobacco supply chains and protect public health.

Source: BBC News
Source Link: https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd95l85j9v7o
Estonia Proposes Stronger Measures to Protect You

Estonia Proposes Stronger Measures to Protect Youth from Nicotine Products

Estonia's Ministry of Justice and Digital Affairs has proposed new legislation to strengthen controls on tobacco and nicotine products, with a particular focus on preventing youth access. The draft bill seeks to establish a clear list of permitted flavourings for nicotine products, tighten controls on cross-border purchases, increase penalties for violations, and strengthen enforcement against illegal sales. The proposal also aims to improve transparency by requiring public authorities to disclose meetings with tobacco industry representatives. These measures reflect growing concern about the appeal of flavoured nicotine products among adolescents and the need for stronger regulatory safeguards to protect young people from nicotine addiction.



Source: ERR News
Source Link: https://news.err.ee/1610081611/justice-ministry-cracks-down-on-minors-access-to-tobacco-products

Pakistan Calls for Investigation into Illegal Cigarette Smuggling Networks



The ACT Alliance Pakistan has called for a nationwide investigation into an alleged cross-border cigarette smuggling network involving Afghan-linked cigarette brands. According to the organisation, illicit tobacco products are being transported through Balochistan and distributed across Pakistan, resulting in significant tax losses and contributing to organised crime and money laundering. The alliance has urged customs authorities, tax agencies, and law enforcement to dismantle the networks responsible for smuggling and illegal distribution. The development highlights the continuing challenge of illicit tobacco trade in the region and the need for stronger cross-border enforcement and regional cooperation.

Source: Tobacco Reporter
Source Link: https://tobaccoreporter.com/2026/07/21/pakistan-pressed-to-investigate-cigarette-smuggling-ring/

Malaysian Health Experts Renew Calls for a Nationwide Vape Ban

Public health organisations and anti-smoking advocates in Malaysia have renewed calls for a nationwide ban on vaping products amid growing concerns over the misuse of e-cigarettes to consume synthetic drugs. Experts have highlighted increasing reports of devices being used for substances such as ketamine and etomidate, raising concerns beyond nicotine addiction. The renewed appeal comes alongside broader discussions in Southeast Asia on strengthening regulation of electronic nicotine delivery systems. Health advocates argue that comprehensive restrictions on vaping products are necessary to protect young people, reduce substance misuse, and prevent further expansion of the rapidly evolving nicotine market.



Source: Tobacco Reporter
Source Link: https://tobaccoreporter.com/2026/07/22/health-advocates-renew-call-to-ban-vapes-in-malaysia/

Haryana Declares Over 1,100 Villages Tobacco-Free



Haryana has declared 1,128 villages and 12,865 educational institutions as tobacco-free under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP). The achievement reflects sustained implementation of tobacco control measures through strengthened enforcement, public awareness campaigns, community engagement, and tobacco cessation services. The initiative demonstrates how coordinated action involving local administration, educational institutions, health departments, and communities can create tobacco-free environments. Haryana's experience provides an important model for other states seeking to strengthen grassroots implementation of tobacco control policies and protect children and adolescents from tobacco exposure.

Source: The Times of India
Source Link: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/haryana-declares-1128-villages-tobacco-free/articleshow/132499212.cms

Maharashtra Extends Ban on Gutkha, Pan Masala and Similar Products for Another Year



The Government of Maharashtra has extended its prohibition on the manufacture, storage, distribution, transport and sale of gutkha, pan masala, flavoured tobacco, flavoured supari, kharra, mawa, and similar products for another year. The order, issued by the Commissioner of Food Safety on 13 July 2026 under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, reaffirms the State's commitment to protecting public health and preventing tobacco-related diseases. The notification cites extensive scientific evidence linking smokeless tobacco and areca nut products to oral cancer, oral submucous fibrosis, oesophageal cancer, and other serious health conditions. It also highlights the substantial enforcement efforts undertaken since the ban was first introduced, including large-scale seizures, thousands of FIRs, and continued action against illegal supply networks. The decision reinforces Maharashtra's long-standing commitment to reducing the availability and consumption of smokeless tobacco products, particularly among young people and vulnerable populations.

Source: SCC Times
Source Link: Maharashtra Extends Ban on Gutkha, Pan Masala and Similar Products for Another Year

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