

# Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED<sup>H</sup>)

## Context

### Prevalence of Tobacco Use

With about 267 million tobacco smokers, India is the world's second largest consumer of tobacco products. India is also unique in the sense that it has diverse forms of tobacco products. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) conducted in India (2016-17) reported the overall prevalence of tobacco use to be 28.6% (smoked:10.38%, smokeless tobacco use (SLT): 21.38%). The total economic costs attributed to tobacco use from all diseases in India in 2017-18 (aged 35 years and above) amounted to USD 27.5 billion. In order to curtail the rising mortality rates and health costs due to tobacco use, the National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP), Govt. of India has effectively strategized tobacco control initiatives. However, the “control” of tobacco will never be enough to deal with the epidemic of tobacco related diseases and that the focus must be shifted to develop strategies for aiming ‘Tobacco Free India’.

### Where are we in Tobacco Control in India?

India is in fairly advanced stage of implementing existing measures of MPOWER policies and national legislation; and is moving steadily towards a tobacco endgame. However, this may be the right time for India to think over the concept of tobacco free generation, regulating nicotine content and imposing a 'sinking lid' on tobacco supply.<sup>1</sup>

Government of India has achieved many milestones to reduce the tobacco use in the country viz. ban on Gutkha (SLT) and display of specified pictorial health warning (PHWs) covering 85% of the principal display is among the boldest

<sup>1</sup> Kumar R, Lal P, Singh R J. Is India on a path to tobacco endgame? - An analysis of recent policy papers and measures taken by Government of India. Tobacco Induced Diseases. 2018;16(1):600. doi:10.18332/tid/84367.

measures by the Government of India. Major focus was on law enforcement especially TAPS ban, smokefree rules, prohibition of sale to and by minors and banning outlets near educational institutions; introducing a toll-free helpline and raise in tobacco taxes and undertaking mass media campaigns.

## **From Tobacco Control to Tobacco Endgame**

In this context, a “tobacco endgame” is a strategy for achieving the ultimate agenda of moving beyond controlling tobacco “toward a tobacco-free future wherein commercial and non-commercial tobacco products would be phased out or their use and availability will be significantly restricted.

### **Definitions of Tobacco Endgame:**

The tobacco ‘endgame’ encapsulates both a process and a goal. In the context of health and tobacco, the endgame is: ‘the final stage of the process of ending tobacco use’.<sup>2</sup>

OR

Initiatives designed to permanently change the structural, political, and social dynamics that sustain the commercial tobacco epidemic, in order to end it.<sup>3</sup>

The Resource Center for Tobacco Control, established in the Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health in collaboration with the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) proposes to establish the Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED<sup>H</sup>) to accelerate the efforts to end the tobacco epidemic in India. The Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED<sup>H</sup>) shall be a web portal which not only houses information about global good practices towards tobacco

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<sup>2</sup> Thomson G, Edwards R, Wilson N, Blakely T. What are the elements of the tobacco endgame? *Tobacco Control* 2012;21:293e295. doi:10.1136/tc.2010.040881

<sup>3</sup> Malone, R. E., McDaniel, P. A., Smith, E. A. (2014). *Tobacco Control Endgames: Global Initiatives and Implications for the UK*. Cancer Research UK

endgame but also shall host various webinars, meetings, workshops and generate meaningful evidence for policy advocacy.

### Why we need Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED<sup>H</sup>) to accelerate the decline in tobacco use?

The Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED<sup>H</sup>) is needed in India for the following reasons:

**First**, we do not have any platform in India from where we can fetch the reliable and comprehensive information (approaches, strategies, policies) related to tobacco endgame from different countries across the world. The existing information on tobacco endgame, though highly valuable, is lying scattered at different sources, which needs to be channelized and arranged in a systematic fashion at a particular place.

**Second**, few good practices and innovations in the area of tobacco endgame at the state/national level go unnoticed as it is either not documented or not presented strategically on their websites or social media.

**Third**, the platform will aim to provide the correct and credible facts about tobacco endgame which shall allay the problem of misleading facts on tobacco endgame existing on various web engines.

**Fourth**, the budding aspirants (researchers and academicians) involved in the tobacco control do not find a stage where they find opportunities in the area or orient themselves on tobacco endgame. The TED<sup>H</sup> is intended to provide a one-stop solution to all these existing challenges by providing capacity building trainings/workshops, etc. and developing evidence-based repository of tobacco endgame research.

In this way, this hub will catalyse the chain of tobacco endgame activities in the country. It will provide momentum to the establishment of country coordination

mechanisms and collaborations with other regional organizations to advocate for harmonized tobacco endgame initiatives and thus strengthening national and international partnerships. This is a promising beginning to have a significant impact for ending the tobacco menace in India.

## The TED<sup>H</sup> Framework



## Goal of Tobacco Endgame Hub in India

TED<sup>H</sup> envisions to achieve a Tobacco-free India by uniting global and national leaders in tobacco control and connecting them to policy makers for designing an Endgame Framework and its effective implementation.

## Aims and Objectives

The Tobacco Endgame Hub aims to collate and generate the evidence base for tobacco endgame policies and initiatives in India along with building leadership capacity of diverse stakeholders.

The main objectives of the endgame hub will be to:

- **D**evelop a repository of the tobacco endgame approaches, strategies, scientific publications and policies being implemented at the national and global level.

- **G**enerate evidence on the feasibility, effectiveness and acceptability of various endgame interventions for policy advocacy.
- **C**ontribute to development of communication strategies, build capacity in operational research and conduct leadership development programme in tobacco endgame.
- **P**rovide technical support to the governmental as well as non-governmental organizations in enhancing the skills and competencies of program managers at sub-national and level.