

REPORT

National Consultation of Coalition of Experts for Framework Development of Tobacco Endgame Hub in India

Date: 24th May, 2022 (9.00 am to 3.30 pm) Venue: NIHFW, New Delhi

Organized by

Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (E-RCTC)

Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh

In Collaboration with

**National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW),
New Delhi**

Supported by

**International Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
(The Union)**



Background

The Resource Center for Tobacco Control (e-RCTC), established in the Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGIMER Chandigarh in collaboration with the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union) proposes to establish the Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED^H) to accelerate the efforts to end the tobacco epidemic in India. The Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED^H) shall be a web portal which not only houses information about global good practices towards tobacco endgame but also shall host various webinars, meetings, workshops and generate meaningful evidence for policy advocacy.

In this regard, e-RCTC organized a National Consultation of Coalition of Experts for Framework Development of TED^H in India in collaboration with National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi supported by The UNION-SEA on 24th May, 2022 at National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), New Delhi from 9.00 AM to 3.30 PM. The objective of consultation was to discuss and finalise the structure, functions and Terms of Reference (TOR) of the TED^H .

Experts/Speakers

1. Mrs. Preeti Sudan, Former Health Secretary, Govt. of India
2. Dr. PC Gupta, Director, Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, Navi Mumbai
3. Dr. KS Sachdeva, Regional Director, The UNION, SEA
4. Dr. Vikas Bhatia, Executive Director, AIIMS, Bibinagar
5. Maj Gen (Prof) Atul Kotwal, Executive Director, NHSRC
6. Dr. Suneela Garg, Chair, Programme Advisory Committee, NIHFW and Co-Chair, MDRU, DHR
7. Dr. Jagdish Kaur, Regional Adviser (Tobacco Free Initiative), WHO SEARO, New Delhi
8. Dr. Sanjiv Kumar, Chair, Advisory Committee, Indian Alliance of Patients Group, Chair Indian Academy of Public Health
9. Dr. Rana J Singh, Deputy Regional Director, The UNION SEA

10. Dr. V K Tiwari, Dean, National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi
11. Dr. Rakesh Gupta, President and Director, Public Health, SIPHER, Chandigarh
12. Dr. Sonu Goel, Professor, Dept. of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh
13. Dr. Ravinder Singh, National President, Indian Dental Association
14. Ms. Opinder Preet Gill, Director Programs, Generation Saviour Association, Mohali Punjab
15. Dr. Upendra Bhojani, Director, IPH, Bengaluru
16. Dr. Arpit Gupta, Associate Professor, Oral Health Sciences Center, PGIMER, Chandigarh
17. Mr. Deepak Mishra, Executive Director, SEEDS, Bihar
18. Dr. Nirmalya Mukherjee, Director, MANT, Kolkata
19. Dr. Stuti Bhargava, Scientist-D (Medical) Division of Non-communicable Diseases (NCD), ICMR, New Delhi
20. Dr. Deepika Bahl, Senior Research Associate, Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi
21. Mohd. Aamir Khan, Project Manager, Sambandh Health Foundation
22. Dr. Astha Narula, Consultant, National Tobacco Control Program, New Delhi

Deliberations of the Consultation



Dr. Nidhi Jaswal, Technical Officer, e-RCTC and Tobacco Endgame Hub, DCM-SPH, PGIMER, Chandigarh anchored the National Consultation of Coalition of Experts for Framework Development of Tobacco Endgame Hub in India. She welcomed all dignitaries,

speakers, and delegates who joined the consultation.

The session-wise proceedings of the consultation are presented below:

Welcome Address and Introduction to the Tobacco Endgame Hub

Dr. Sonu Goel, Director, RCTC and Professor, Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGIMER, Chandigarh briefed the audience about the rationale of the consultation. Highlighting the need of



shifting the focus from tobacco control to tobacco endgame, Dr. Goel stated that tobacco endgame would help in reducing the deaths and diseases caused by the tobacco use and restrict new users from entering tobacco addiction. The Tobacco Endgame Hub shall be a web portal which not only houses information about global good practices towards tobacco endgame but also shall host various webinars, meetings, workshops and generate meaningful evidence for policy advocacy, Dr. Goel added. He further emphasized that the goal of this Hub is to act as a platform to collate information and resources and facilitate their utilization in moving towards this ambitious goal of ending tobacco in India.

Address by the Guests of Honour

Dr. PC Gupta, Director, Healix Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, Navi Mumbai



Congratulating the PGIMER team for organizing the consultation on Tobacco Endgame, Dr. PC Gupta commended the concept, aim and objectives of tobacco endgame hub, to move towards an India which is free from the diseases caused by

Tobacco. He focused on the need to set specific objectives, formulate precise strategies and measurable criteria for the endgame. It was suggested to follow inclusive approach while framing the framework of the hub. Dr. Gupta also mentioned the need to target the Tobacco Industry and curb the production and distribution of Tobacco in India.

Dr. KS Sachdeva, Regional Director, The UNION

Raising the issue of Tobacco Industry Interference, Dr. KS Sachdeva revealed tobacco industry contributes only a miniscule amount to the economy, however its harm to the society is huge. There is a need to rope in advocates and more people working on the legal aspects of the tobacco industry, create more influencers and leaders from different fields and areas of India, he further emphasized.



Dr. Vikas Bhatia, Executive Director, AIIMS, Bibinagar



Dr. Vikas Bhatia applauded Dr Sonu Goel and the RCTC team for taking the leadership on this topic and introducing new ideas and thoughts. He highlighted that Tobacco Endgame is a topic ahead of its time and a big initiative. Presenting the examples of

Australia, New Zealand and Finland, Dr. Bhatia reiterated to project tobacco free world for our next generation. Discussing challenges related to awareness, financial and political interruptions, he suggested a need to widen horizon, coalition and networking. He also garnered support of his institution in this initiative and told to rope in all AIIMS for furthering the approach.

Maj Gen (Prof) Atul Kotwal, Executive Director, National Health System Resource Center (NHSRC), New Delhi

Prof. Kotwal stressed on the innumerable issues in Public health ranging from Communicable diseases, Non communicable diseases to the outbreaks/ epidemics and even pandemics. It was mentioned that precise definition of what is



‘Endgame’, clear measurable indicators, strong scientific background backed by research studies are the pre-requisites for initiating tobacco endgame. He further reflected on the need for strong Inter-sectoral coordination and stressed upon providing some alternative employment opportunities to the tobacco farmers and traders. Ayushman Bharat- Health and Wellness Centers have focused on the comprehensive healthcare approach including the promotive and preventive aspects of any health event. This opportunity must be encashed in order to build strategies for tobacco endgame, for eg: counselling regarding tobacco use and its harmful effects on health, Prof. Kotwal added.

Dr. Suneela Garg, Chair, Programme Advisory Committee, NIHFW and Co-Chair, MDRU, DHR



Tobacco control and endgame is a huge part of Non-Communicable disease, and this consultation would revive the glory of NIHFW, said Dr. Suneela Garg. A need to strengthen MoHFW in the aspect of tobacco endgame was recommended by her. Dr. Garg ensured full support from NIHFW in all future

endeavors on this path towards ending tobacco use in India.

Dr. Jagdish Kaur, Regional Adviser (Tobacco Free Initiative), WHO SEARO, New Delhi

Dr. Jagdish Kaur began her session by stating that India is a signatory to WHO-FCTC and has a very strong law against tobacco. India is the only country to have ban on advertisements of products containing tobacco, however stringent enforcement of Act is lacking, she mentioned. There are still rise in surrogate advertisements of flavored



and smokeless tobacco products. There is a strong need to take data and evidence into action, she further added. Dr. Kaur stressed to maintain balance between demand and supply reduction activities, taking into account the need to rehabilitate Tobacco Farmers and their families and provide them and the traders with some alternative employment opportunities. She appreciated the current initiative and stressed upon generating more evidence for policy advocacy.

Video Messages by the Guests of Honour

Dr. Mira B Aghi, Behavioural Scientist and Communication Expert; Dr. Joanna Cohen, Professor of Disease Prevention and the Director of the Institute for Global Tobacco Control at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Dr. Vinayak Mohan Prasad, Program Manager, No Tobacco Unit, World Health Organisation send their video messages which were presented during the consultation. While appreciating India's achievement over last decade towards ending tobacco menace, they applauded the current move to establish tobacco endgame hub in India.



Release Ceremony



The dignitaries officially released the 'Compendium of Good, replicable and innovative practices (GRIP) of tobacco control in India', which is edited by Dr. Sonu Goel. The case study compendium presents 27 case studies

contributed by 34 eminent tobacco control experts. These best practices cover almost every area related to tobacco control from advancing leadership and management in Tobacco Control in India to taxation policy on tobacco products in the country and will help in increasing the awareness and facilitate cross learning among stakeholders for strengthening the National Tobacco Control Programme in the country. Further, it would sensitize the stakeholders on best practices for its replication in other states.

The 19th Edition of Tobacco Free Times on 'Regulating Indigenous Tobacco Products' was also released during the ceremony.



Address by the Chief Guest, Mrs. Preeti Sudan, Former Health Secretary, GOI

Welcoming the Tobacco Endgame Champions, Mrs. Preeti Sudan emphasized that ‘changemakers’ present in the consultation need to work cohesively in a group and it must be strong and focused. Stressing upon the results of GATS1 and GATS2 results, she



highlighted the role of young population in tobacco use in India. We need to sensitize the adolescents and youths more regarding anti-tobacco activities, she suggested. She also presented the good practices of Bhutan and state of Sikkim of India in curbing tobacco use. For way forward, she suggested that a proposal should be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GOI to strengthen the Endgame Strategies. There is a need to set up Inter-sectoral/ Inter-ministerial coordination units and develop stepwise strategies with a timeline to achieve them, she added. Looking upon the India’s diversity, there is a need to create region-wise tailored strategies and document best practices. She further added that a strong monitoring and evaluation framework needs to be established and inclusion of grass-root level institutions like PRI, Gram Sabha may play a key role in the implementation of tobacco endgame activities.

Plenary Session: Tobacco Endgame Measures in India: Progress and Way Forward

Plenary 1

- **Chairs:** Dr. PC Gupta and Dr. Sanjiv Kumar
- **Speakers:** Dr. Rana J Singh, Regional Deputy Director, The UNION-SEA and Dr. Upendra Bhojani, Director, Institute for Public Health, Bengaluru.

Session 1: Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL)



Dr. Rana J Singh presented the need for TVL in India. He highlighted various best practices of Tobacco Vendor Licensing in the country. It was discussed that TVL may help in various governmental purposes and may benefit in reducing availability of

tobacco products; generate revenue to conduct enforcement drives and ensuring compliance with all tobacco control laws. He also presented various initiatives of state/local government to implement TVL.

Session 2: Tobacco Industry Interference

Emphasizing the relationship between endgame and TII, Dr. Bhojani mentioned that we need to go beyond ‘business as usual’ and include supply-side measures. He cited several ‘endgame’ measures focused on product, user, vendor, market/supply, and institutions and highlighted the need to anticipate TII tactics. Various



strategies including adoption of policies in line with the WHO FCTC Article 5.3; Addressal of conflicting interests for tobacco within governments; De-normalizing and prohibiting (re-channel) CSR by tobacco industry were suggested by Dr. Bhojani to tackle the incidents of tobacco industry interference. He reaffirmed that TII need to be curbed for achieving tobacco endgame.

Plenary 2

- **Chairs:** Dr. Vikas Bhatia and Dr. Suneela Garg
- **Speakers:** Ms. Opinder Preet Gill, President, Generation Saviour Association, Mohali and Dr. Rakesh Gupta, President and Director, SIPHER, Chandigarh

Session 1: Tobacco Free Generations (TFG)

Defining the concept of tobacco free generations, Ms. Opinder Preet Gill stated that TFG is an amalgamation of various concepts and theories, like compulsory vendor licensing, constraining emerging trends like hookahs and e cigarettes in youth, Increasing



Tobacco Access Age; Countering TII, Focused Tobacco Cessation etc which all together lead to establishment of a generation that has never and will never in future use tobacco. She specified that tobacco endgame will prevent future generations from ever becoming the users. Highlighting the way forward, Ms. Gill recommended focused Monitoring of the stakeholders directly or indirectly associated with TFG; Youth Participation in defining TFG; Consolidation of Activities, policies, interventions done at National, State and District Levels and documentation of good and innovative practices.

Session 4: Emerging Tobacco and Nicotine Products

Dr. Rakesh Gupta commenced his session by presenting various types of ENDS. It was highlighted that The Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases has played an important role along with many stakeholders in concluding the story of ENDS in India. He portrayed the journey of ENDS ban in India from 2012



to 2019. In the end, Dr. Gupta defined the key features of the PECA ACT, 2020.

3-year Journey of Resource Center for Tobacco Control (e-RCTC)

Mr. Rajeev Kumar, Project Coordinator, PGIMER Chandigarh presented 3-year journey of RCTC from inception to Version 2.0. Over a period of more than 3 years, E-RCTC has become increasingly engaged in systematically organizing technical resource material for capacity



building of program implementers, academia and researchers, highlighted Mr. Rajeev. The portal has attracted 4.2 lac visitors from around 100 countries in last 3 years, besides organization of 50+ workshops and webinars for the capacity building of around 3500+ program managers and academicians. It was mentioned that the portal serves as a one-point platform for various circulars/orders (1000+ from 36 states of India), policies and legislations, multidisciplinary publications. Nineteen (19) issues of a bi-monthly theme-based newsletter "Tobacco Free Times" have been published till date. Besides this, the resource centre is also running two online courses on Tobacco Control - Basics with 3-month duration & Advanced with 6-month duration which aim to strengthen the enforcement and implementation of tobacco control laws across length and breadth of the country.

Draft Framework of Tobacco Endgame Hub In India



Taking a step further, the resource center for tobacco control is planning to establish a Tobacco Endgame Hub in the country to achieve Tobacco-Free World for the future generation, said Dr. Nidhi Jaswal, Technical Officer, RCTC and Tobacco Endgame Hub during her session on 'Draft Framework of Tobacco Endgame Hub in India'. The Tobacco Endgame Hub (TED) has been established with an objective to accelerate the efforts to end the tobacco epidemic in India. Deliberating upon the rationale of the forming the hub, Dr. Jaswal

also presented the methodology used for development of the hub's framework which included extensive review of literature and review of various search engines and websites/portals of the organizations working on the concept of tobacco endgame. It was followed by her presentation on the framework of the hub which zeroed in on five themes- About the Hub; Hub Resources; Research; Endgame Reporter; and Support Gateway. This framework was later discussed in a group work.

Recommendations

Following recommendations regarding the structure, objectives and flow of information of the endgame hub were given by the high-level experts during the consultation

During the Inaugural Session (on Tobacco Endgame in India)

- There is a need to **set timeline, specific objectives, precise strategies and measurable criteria** of tobacco endgame in India (Dr PC Gupta, Dr Sachdeva and Dr Atul Kotwal)
- There is need for strong scientific background backed by **research studies** on tobacco endgame. (Dr PC Gupta and Dr Atul Kotwal)
- It is required to **include all stakeholders, influencers, leaders in development** of this context and it was emphasized to target the Tobacco Industry Interference. (Dr PC Gupta and Dr Sachdeva)
- Use of Ayushman Bharat- Health and Wellness Centers in tobacco endgame especially in cessation activities. (Dr Atul Kotwal)
- **Understand the various drivers of this initiative** in terms of Legal, Cultural, Political and Socio-economic perspectives. (Dr Suneela Garg)
- **Grass root level institutions** like PRI, Gram Sabha, etc. should be involved in planning and implementation of the tobacco endgame activities. (Dr Preeti Sudan)
- Need to strengthen Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Govt. of India in the aspect of tobacco endgame. It was suggested to **submit a proposal to the Ministry to strengthen the Endgame Strategies**. (Dr Preeti Sudan)
- It was suggested to set up **Inter-sectoral/ Inter-ministerial coordination units aiming towards tobacco endgame** (Dr Preeti Sudan)

- **Strong Monitoring and Evaluation framework** (stepwise strategies with timeline) is required to ensure follow up on strategies implemented. (Dr Vikas Bhatia and Dr Jagdish Kaur)
- Regarding the **tobacco endgame date**, it was proposed that 2047 (100th Year of Independence of India) can be the year at which there should be any tobacco in the society. It will be synonymous with Double Azadi (Azadi from tobacco also) (Dr Vikas Bhatia)
- **Ranking of states/ associations** according to the activities being undertaken by them on tobacco endgame (participants)
- Urged the IDA and other associations for inclusion in its **membership, a clause on quitting tobacco** (in-case he/she is a user). (participants)
- A Strategic Committee could be formed by MOHFW to provide **legal supports to CSO** from TI. (participants)

During Group Work (on Framework of Endgame Hub TED^H)

- The hub should cater to all **components of tobacco life course**: From field to consumption.
- Efforts should be made to **mobilize all health-related professional bodies** to work in collaboration towards TED^H. They should come out with a declaration on the same.
- It was recommended to create a **digital group/ group e-mail** for brainstorming on the TED^H
- Involve medical colleges and institutes, nursing, and dental colleges in advancing research on diverse themes of tobacco endgame for placement on TED^H .
- The use of TED^H as a public domain or a public declaration of ending tobacco in the coming years was doubted due to two reasons: 1. Industry Interference and 2. Weak Scientific evidence. It was also pointed out that Tobacco Industry is well connected and strong- much larger than the group working towards ending tobacco in India. They will move at a much faster pace in blocking the activities planned for ending tobacco. Further, it was apprehended that the hub may create further adversities faced by certain organizations working towards ending tobacco.

- It was suggested to be cautious while using the term ‘endgame’ for the hub and ensure that the tobacco endgame strategies do not trigger the big players in the tobacco industry. The narrative/rhetoric must be well thought of and formulated to ensure inclusion of all. It was debated whether the strategies of tobacco endgame should be placed on TED^H. It was finally decided that since it is an academic endeavour, the existing strategies and practices can be placed. However, future strategies should not be placed on TED^H. It was suggested that instead of using the narrative of ‘ending tobacco in India’; the narrative “to reduce diseases caused by tobacco” should be used.
- There is a need to **encourage more research wings** in every department to develop more projects on tobacco endgame. It was requested if ICMR can conduct any workshop on research in the area of tobacco endgame.
- Creation of an **entertaining and exciting interface TED^H** for youngsters who want to learn more on this topic. Introduce games, competitions for them and how they can quit tobacco- linking with Tobacco de-addiction programme. Portal can create an interface linking with the health impacts of tobacco
- Need to **highlight activities** undertaken by the educational institutions or organisations in this portal
- A select group of volunteers should be created (1-2 from each state) and they may be labelled as ADMIN, so that they can upload relevant information under relevant section of TED(H). These will be approved by SUPER-ADMIN for placement on the portal.
- TED^H portal must be backed with **strong technical knowledge, Political feasibility and Social desirability/ effective advocacy skills**. The narrative of the tagline ENDGAME must be rational, for example, helping people in quitting tobacco or assisting young in not initiating tobacco at early age.
- The participants suggested to **hold regular meetings** of advisors and volunteers for advancement in the hub (content and flow).
- It needs to be ensured that the TED^H does not work like an activist/ advocate. It may be used as a resource for generating information on tobacco endgame. The hub can create evidence-based advocacy activities. The hub will initiate dialogues, generate evidence from all resources and collate information.

