



TOBACCO-FREE Times

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Tobacco Endgame Series Edition: What is Tobacco Product Regulation?

Tobacco Control Research: RCTC's Significant Contributions

India's first Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), a collaboration of PGIMER, Chandigarh (Under & Progress), and Vital Strategies, India developed its portal in the year 2018. It has crossed 8 lac viewers from over 110 countries globally to date and still counting. The viewers include program implementers, academicians, researchers and other stakeholders working tirelessly in the field of tobacco control. The RCTC portal has marked its place in making the world tobacco-free as it showcases an array of valuable and vital information under various heads like Policies and Legislations, circulars and orders, NTCP structure, IEC material, conducting webinars and workshops covering topics such as tobacco product regulation, role of different institutions of the society in tobacco control, strengthening COTPA compliance and many more.



EXPERTS SPEAK

RCTC is a true inspiration to work with, demonstrating how public health issues can be effectively addressed through motivation and collaboration. I am pleased to be associated with RCTC.



- Dr. Saurabh Paul,
Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine
AIIMS Raeibareli

EDITOR'S SPEAK



Tobacco products, despite their significant public health impact, remain largely unregulated in terms of contents and emissions in many countries, unlike most consumer goods. Recently, health officials have shown growing interest in regulating tobacco products as a means to reduce tobacco-related mortality and morbidity. However, implementing effective regulation faces challenges such as limited understanding of common approaches or best practices and insufficient resources and/or technical expertise.

The importance of tobacco products regulation is emphasized in World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC). Specifically, Article 9 outlines obligations for member countries regarding the regulation of tobacco product contents and emissions, while the Article 10 addresses the regulation of information disclosure about these contents and emissions. WHO has continually provided support to its Member States in regulating tobacco products and in developing this laboratory capacity through a series of advisory notes and other resource.

This 32nd edition of Tobacco free times serves as a comprehensive summary for policymakers, health officials, and program managers engaged in the complex task of tobacco product regulation. Drawing on the latest research, best practices, and global experiences, we aim to illuminate the path forward in developing effective regulatory frameworks. From addressing the technical challenges of product testing to navigating the intricacies of policy implementation, this edition offers invaluable insights to support decision-makers. As we confront the evolving landscape of tobacco control, it is our hope that this compilation will empower stakeholders with the knowledge and tools necessary to enact meaningful change in their communities and beyond.

- Dr. Sonu Goel,
RCTC and Professor, PGIMER, Chandigarh and Chair,
Tobacco Control Section- The Union

"I joined the RCTC network and its activities in March 2024, and have since been actively following and implementing them within my own institute. This experience has greatly enhanced my conceptual understanding, and I now feel confident that I am part of a reputable organization."



- Dr. Rakesh Bahl,
Professor & Head, Department of Community & Family Medicine



TOBACCO-FREE MILESTONES: A GLIMPSE INTO RECENT ACTIVITIES

Regional Consultation for Key Stakeholders and Networking Partners to Develop a Roadmap for Effective Implementation of Tobacco Control Measures in India.

The Regional Consultation for Key Stakeholders and Networking Partners to develop a roadmap for effective implementation of tobacco control measures in India was held from August 6th to 8th, 2024, at the National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) in New Delhi. The event was a joint effort among the RCTC, Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health at PGIMER (Chandigarh), Vital Strategies India, and NAMS. It gathered government officials, scholars, researchers, and leading experts from various associations and NGOs. The consultation aimed to address the challenges of implementing tobacco control policies, while providing actionable recommendations for policymakers, academicians, and civil society. Through discussions, participants were able to explore various barriers to effective tobacco control in India and create strategies to overcome them.



Celebrating 30th Edition: of 'Tobacco Free Times'

"Tobacco Free Times" (TFTs), a bi-monthly newsletter, is published by the RCTC. Every TFTs edition focusses on a different aspect of tobacco control and provides information, updates, and analysis on pertinent laws, studies, and programs. The 30th edition of the TFT was released during the "Regional Consultation for Key Stakeholders and Networking Partners to Develop a Roadmap for Effective Implementation of Tobacco Control Measures in India" held from August 6th to 8th, 2024 at NAMS, New Delhi.



Roadmap for Effective Implementation of Tobacco Control Measures in India" held from August 6th to 8th, 2024 at NAMS, New Delhi. Dr. Leimapokpam Swasticharan, Additional Deputy Director General of Health Services, Director at Directorate General of

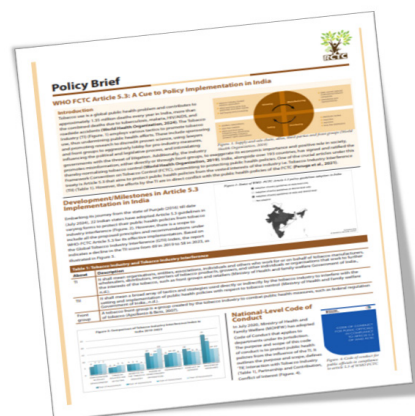
Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, presented the edition that centers around the theme, "Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference." The primary focus of this TFT was to encourage youth to avoid tobacco and related products, raise awareness of the tobacco industry's tactics, and support the implementation of the National Tobacco Control Programme. It also highlighted various initiatives adopted by medical institutes to protect children from tobacco industry interference.



Policy Brief Launch: "WHO-FCTC Article 5.3: A Cue to Policy Implementation in India"

The RCTC has launched a policy brief, "WHO-FCTC Article 5.3: A Cue to Policy Implementation in India." during the "Regional Consultation for Key Stakeholders and Networking Partners to Develop a Roadmap for Effective Implementation of Tobacco Control Measures in India," held from August 6th to 8th, 2024, at NAMS, New Delhi.

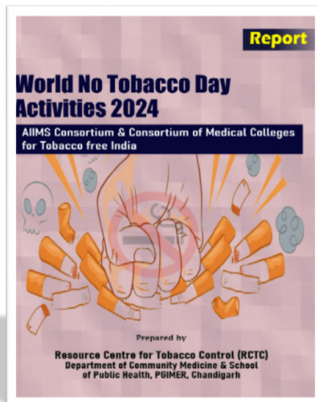
The policy brief highlights India's progress in implementing WHO-FCTC Article 5.3 across states and districts, with a focus on strengthening tobacco control measures nationwide. It identifies key gaps in implementation and offers targeted recommendations for national and state-level strategies to address Tobacco Industry Interference (TII).



The Launch of the World No Tobacco Day Activities 2024- AIIMS Consortium & Consortium of Medical Colleges for Tobacco Free India

The World No Tobacco Day Activities 2024—AIIMS Consortium & Consortium of Medical Colleges for Tobacco Free India—have been launched by the RCTC at the “Regional Consultation for Key Stakeholders and Networking Partners to Develop

a Roadmap for Effective Implementation of Tobacco Control Measures in India,” which took place at the NAMS, New Delhi, from August 6 to 8, 2024. This report highlights the various medical institutes initiatives on tobacco control efforts, including the implementation of Tobacco-Free Educational Institution guidelines, organizing national-level awareness programs such as poster-making and slogan-writing competitions, youth awareness campaigns, and the publication of a special newsletter focusing on tobacco control themes. Moreover, many institutions have adopted a “No Conflict of Interest” declaration on their official websites to reinforce their institutional integrity in tobacco control efforts.



National Webinar on Leading the Fight: The Role of Medical Institutes in India's Tobacco Control

The RCTC, in collaboration with the Strategic Institute for Public Health Education & Research (SIPHER), hosted a webinar on June 26, 2024, titled “National Webinar on Leading the Fight: The Role of Medical Institutes in India's Tobacco Control.” The webinar emphasized the pivotal contributions of medical institutions to tobacco control in India, particularly through education, research, and advocacy. These institutions promote tobacco-free campuses, integrate tobacco control into academic curricula, and establish Tobacco Cessation Centers. By partnering with government agencies and health bodies, they contribute to national tobacco control policies, conduct community outreach, and engage in policy advocacy. Their involvement in programs like the National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) ensures sustainable and impactful tobacco cessation efforts nationwide.



In the series of webinars, **A National webinar on, “The Missing Pieces: Unravelling the Challenges and Prospects in Enforcing WHO-FCTC Articles 9 and 10”** is organized by the RCTC, PGIMER, Chandigarh. The series aims to enhance the understanding and implementation of the WHO-FCTC.

The webinar held on September 5, 2024, under the chairmanship of Dr. Leimapokpam Swasticharan, Additional Deputy Director General of Health Services, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India with Guests of Honours Mr. Ranjit Singh, Legal Expert, Supreme Court of India; Dr. Sitanshu Sekhar Kar, Professor and Former Head, Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, JIPMER, Puducherry; Dr. Rana J. Singh, Director – Tobacco Control, Vital Strategies (South East Asia); Dr. Prakash C. Gupta, Director, Healix Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, Mumbai; Dr. Avinash Sunthlia DADG - NTCP, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

The webinar focused on the global status of implementing WHO-Framework Convention on Tobacco Control articles 9 and 10, which are critical for regulating the composition of tobacco products and ensuring information disclosure. Article 9 mandates the testing and control of harmful chemicals and additives in tobacco products, while Article 10 requires transparency in disclosing these ingredients to the public. Experts discussed the progress of various countries, highlighting successes but also challenges, such as resistance from the tobacco industry and weak regulatory frameworks that hinder consistent testing and enforcement. The webinar showcased successful case studies where countries have implemented robust testing protocols and scientific analysis of tobacco products, leading to stronger public health outcomes. India's efforts under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) were also explored, with discussions on the country's progress, challenges in enforcement, and the need for enhanced testing practices. The session concluded with future directions, stressing the importance of global collaboration, technological innovations for testing, and stronger regulatory practices to improve tobacco product regulation and transparency.

Five collaborative webinars between RCTC and SIPHER:

The SIPHER and the RCTC collaborated to provide a five-part webinar series under the theme **“Good Replicable & Innovative Practices in Tobacco Control.”**

The first webinar, held on 2nd August 2024, focused on **“Tobacco-Free State Police Academy at Jaipur, Rajasthan,”** with Dr. Rakesh Gupta, President of the Rajasthan Cancer Foundation, as the esteemed presenter. The discussion highlighted the critical role of school teachers in tobacco control efforts, sharing successful strategies and experiences from Bihar.

The second webinar, conducted on 9th August 2024, addressed **“Strategies to Promote Tobacco Cessation Among Students,”** presented by Nikita Sood, Head of the Department of Counselling and Senior Cell at Learning Paths, Mohali.

The third webinar on 14th August 2024 explored the **“Recognition of the Section 5 Committee in Tamil Nadu to Control Tobacco Advertising: A Case Study,”** presented by Mr. Cyril Alexander,





Executive Director of the Mary Anne Charity Trust (MACT), Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

The fourth webinar on 21st August 2024 explored the **“Sub-national adoption and implementation of WHO-FCTC Article 5.3 policies in Uttar Pradesh, India,”** presented by Mr. Vivek Awasthi, Executive Director, Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Health Association.

The fifth webinar with SIPHER and ECHO India, held on 11th September 2024, focused on **“Tobacco-Free Char Dham Yatra 2022 in Uttarakhand,”** where with Mr. Awadesh Kumar, Executive director and Founder, Balajee Sewa Sansthan, Uttarakhand as the esteemed presenter presented a case study of Uttarakhand.

Planning cum Review Meeting with Consortium of AIIMS & Medical Colleges:

The RCTC, conducted a virtual meeting on September 12, 2024 with AIIMS Consortium & Consortium of Medical Colleges for Tobacco Free India. The primary focus of the meeting was to review the progress of tobacco control initiatives previously planned in an earlier meeting. Representatives from various AIIMS institutions and medical colleges provided updates on their ongoing efforts to integrate tobacco control into institutional frameworks, including teaching, research, and campus policies.



Institutions shared updates on short-term achievements, such as the formation of tobacco control working groups and progress towards declaring campuses as tobacco-free zones. Additionally, updates on mid- and long-term objectives, including collaboration with state tobacco control programs and research activities, were discussed. Nodal persons for each AIIMS institute as well as other medical colleges provided detailed progress reports. AIIMS Raebareli and AIIMS Bibinagar highlighted their efforts in maintaining conflict-of-interest disclosures and tobacco cessation clinics, while AIIMS Bhubaneswar and AIIMS Rishikesh emphasized compliance with tobacco control regulations and research developments. The meeting concluded with discussions on overcoming existing challenges and innovative strategies for strengthening tobacco control initiatives. Participants were encouraged to continue their efforts towards establishing a tobacco-free environment in their respective institutions.

“The Missing Pieces: Unravelling the Challenges and Prospects in Enforcing WHO-FCTC Articles 9 and 10”

Background: Globally, Tobacco use is responsible for approximately 8 million deaths annually, a figure expected to double by 2025. Tobacco is one of the leading causes of preventable death worldwide, significantly contributing to the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Tobacco products contains a plethora of hazardous chemicals that pose significant health risks to users and non-users alike. Cigarette smoke alone is composed of over 7,000 chemical compounds, with at least 69 identified as carcinogens, including tobacco-specific nitrosamines, formaldehyde, and benzene. The presence of these toxicants is not limited to traditional smoking; smokeless tobacco products also harbour a variety of harmful substances, including heavy metals such as cadmium and lead, which contribute to their carcinogenic potential. Furthermore, the combustion of tobacco generates a complex mixture of harmful by-products, including carbon monoxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, which exacerbate the health risks associated with tobacco use. The cumulative exposure to these hazardous chemicals is linked to a range of serious health conditions, including cancer, respiratory diseases, and cardiovascular disorders, underscoring the urgent need for public health interventions aimed at reducing tobacco consumption and exposure to its toxic constituents.

In response to the growing global threat posed by the tobacco industry, the World Health Organization (WHO) introduced the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2005. As of now, 186 countries have ratified it till date, making it one of the most widely accepted treaties in the history of the United Nations. This landmark treaty represents the first global public health initiative dedicated exclusively to tobacco control, aiming to combat the global tobacco epidemic. Its primary objective is to safeguard current and future generations from the health, social, environmental, and economic harms caused by tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke. The treaty is comprised of 38 articles, which cover both demand and supply-reduction strategies to curb tobacco use and limit exposure to tobacco smoke. Among these articles of the convention, articles 9 and 10 specifically address the regulation of tobacco product composition and the requirements for disclosing information about tobacco products. However, the approaches and implementation of these articles vary across nations due to differing socio-legal frameworks, infrastructure, and political factors.



WHAT IS TOBACCO PRODUCT REGULATION?

Tobacco product regulation refers to the regulation of any aspect of the contents, design or emissions of tobacco products, as well as any related regulatory or public disclosure of information.

Definitions from the Partial Guidelines on Implementation of Articles 9 & 10 of the WHO-FCTC

Contents means constituents with respect to processed tobacco, and ingredients with respect to tobacco products. Ingredients include tobacco, components (e.g. paper, filter), including materials used to manufacture those components, additives, processing aids, residual substances found in tobacco (following storage and processing), and substances that migrate from the packaging material into the product (contaminants are not part of the ingredients).

Design feature means a characteristic of the design of a tobacco product that has an immediate causal link with the testing and

measuring of its contents and emissions. For example, ventilation holes around cigarette filters decrease machine-measured yields of nicotine by diluting main stream smoke.

Emissions are substances that are released when the tobacco product is used as intended. In the case of cigarettes and other combustible products, emissions are the substances found in the smoke. In the case of smokeless tobacco products for oral use, emissions are the substances released during the process of chewing or sucking, and in the case of nasal use, the substances released by particles during the process of snuffing.

What is WHO's Guidance on Regulating tobacco Products?



Technical support to countries is made available by WHO to aid the implementation of the Partial Guidelines at the country level. These include WHO expert advisory and regulatory groups, such as the WHO Tobacco Laboratory Network (WHO TobLabNet), which develops methods for testing tobacco products, the WHO TobReg, which puts forward evidence-based policy recommendations on tobacco product regulation, and the Global Tobacco Regulators Forum (GTRF), which serves as a platform for regulators to share experience and facilitate information exchange.

The Partial Guidelines on the implementation of Articles 9 and 10 of the WHO-FCTC set out policy recommendations regarding the attractiveness of tobacco products, as well as the disclosure of information on the contents of tobacco products. The Partial Guidelines were adopted by COP4 in 2010, to assist Parties in meeting their treaty obligations.

Article 9 - Regulation of the contents of tobacco products

The Conference of the Parties, in consultation with competent international bodies, shall propose guidelines for testing and measuring the contents and emissions of tobacco products, and for the regulation of these contents and emissions. Each Party shall, where approved by competent national authorities, adopt and implement effective legislative, executive and administrative or other measures for such testing and measuring, and for such regulation.

Article 10 - Regulation of tobacco product disclosures

Each Party shall, in accordance with its national law, adopt and implement effective legislative, executive, administrative or other measures requiring manufacturers and importers of tobacco products to disclose to health authorities information about the contents and emissions of tobacco products. Each Party shall further adopt and implement effective measures for public disclosure of information about the toxic constituents of the tobacco products and the emissions that they may produce

The Partial Guidelines recommend the following for the regulation of tobacco product ingredients. Parties should:

- prohibit or restrict ingredients that may be used to increase palatability in tobacco products;
- prohibit or restrict ingredients that have colouring properties;
- prohibit ingredients in tobacco products that may create the impression that they have a health benefit; and
- prohibit ingredients associated with energy and vitality (e.g. stimulants).



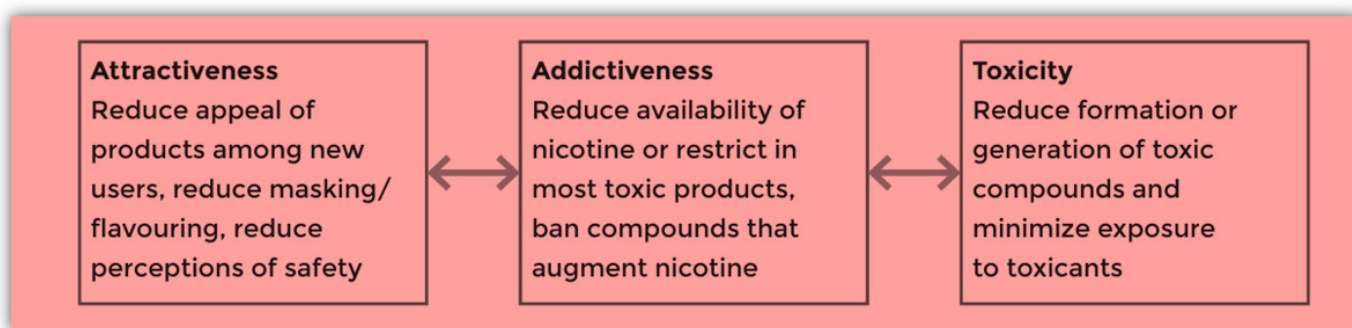
How can tobacco Product Regulation Improve Public Health?

The devastating public health impact of tobacco products is due to a combination of three main factors: attractiveness, which results from product characteristics that encourage the use of tobacco products by a large proportion of the global population; addictiveness, which results mainly from the active drug nicotine contained in tobacco products, that makes users unable to limit consumption or quit tobacco use; and toxicity, which results from users exposure to toxic compounds that are contained in or generated by tobacco products, even when used as intended. Policies could target:

- attractiveness by banning the use of candy or other flavours that appeal to youth, eliminating design features (e.g. ventilation) that support ease of use or reduced perceptions of risk (e.g. ban on use of spices and herbs such as cinnamon,

ginger and mint used to improve the palatability of tobacco products);

- addictiveness by limiting nicotine content of tobacco, regulating aspects of product chemistry such as tobacco pH or factors relating to nicotine absorption, regulating the use of non-nicotine compounds that enhance the effects of nicotine or support nicotine dependence, and/or eliminating nicotine with in the most toxic categories of tobacco products (e.g. combusted products); and
- toxicity by seeking to reduce or eliminate known tobacco toxicants (e.g. tobacco-specific nitrosamines generated during tobacco fermentation), placing limits on the use of toxic additives, reducing emissions, and/or barring the introduction of new products that pose unknown health risks.



Global status of implementation of WHO-FCTC Article 9 and 10

Several countries have taken significant steps towards regulation of tobacco product contents (Article 9) and the disclosure of tobacco product information (Article 10). Notably, 87 Parties (48%) currently regulate emissions, a figure unchanged since 2020. As of the latest reports, approximately half of the Parties to the WHO-FCTC have implemented measures for regulating, testing, or measuring the contents and emissions of tobacco products. While the number of Parties testing tobacco product contents has increased since 2020, there has been no corresponding rise in those measuring and regulating emissions.

Australia, for instance, introduced reforms in November 2022, while EU Member States continue to align their national legislation with the EU's Tobacco Products Directive. Malaysia, Mauritius, Turkey, Georgia, Uruguay, and Armenia have also introduced measures regulating tobacco product contents, emissions, and import restrictions, with implementation ongoing in various regions. Countries like Colombia and Mexico are advancing regulatory processes, particularly concerning flavourings and additives in tobacco products, with a focus on health impacts.

There has been progress in the testing of tobacco products, with 95 Parties (52%) now reporting that they have implemented measures for testing contents. However, testing emissions remains stagnant, with only 48% of Parties conducting this work. Access to laboratories for testing remains a challenge, though many Parties have established national or reference laboratories to manage this process. Regarding the regulation of tobacco product disclosures, 70% of Parties

require the disclosure of content information to government authorities, though fewer (62%) mandate the same for emissions. Public disclosure of product content is becoming more common, reported by 58% of Parties, while only 47% report public disclosure of emissions.



SECTION D				
Article 9. Regulation of the contents of tobacco products	Number of countries	%	Number of countries	%
Testing and measuring the contents	95	52	88	49
Testing and measuring the emissions	88	48	88	49
Regulating the contents	na	na	103	57
Regulating the emissions	87	48	87	48
Article 10. Regulation of tobacco product disclosures	Number of countries	%	Number of countries	%
Requiring disclosure on the contents to government authorities	127	70	124	69
Requiring disclosure on the emissions to government authorities	112	62	110	61
Requiring public disclosure on the contents	106	58	102	56
Requiring public disclosure on the emissions	86	47	85	47

Source: Global Progress Report, WHO-FCTC, 2023

CASE STUDIES: DIFFERENT COUNTRIES EXPERIENCES IN REGULATING TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Canada: In Canada, the Tobacco Act has been amended several times to limit the sale of flavoured tobacco products. The first change in October 2009 banned flavoured cigarettes but allowed menthol cigarettes. Later amendments in 2015, 2017, and 2018 removed the menthol exemption and banned flavour-related images on e-cigarette products. However, flavoured e-cigarettes are still legal. Despite this, Canada has made significant progress in aligning with FCTC articles 9 and 10 by regulating tobacco testing, ingredient restrictions, health warnings, and public disclosures. Ongoing efforts will help close remaining gaps and strengthen Canada's tobacco control measures.



Brazil: Brazil is a global leader in implementing a comprehensive ban on additives that alter the taste and aroma of tobacco products, including menthol, making it the most extensive ban in the world. This ban, introduced by ANVISA, Brazilian regulatory legal body to oversee tobacco products, through the Collegiate Board Resolution (RDC) 14/2012, was based on scientific evidence and aligned with the principles of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Despite strong opposition from the tobacco industry, which used tactics like legal action, flawed science, and misinformation, Brazil's Supreme Court ruled in favor of ANVISA in 2018. This case highlights the challenges countries may face when implementing similar bans and the need to prepare for strong resistance from the tobacco industry.



India: Similar to articles 9 and 10, the Indian law namely, COTPA (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco products Act) 2003 has following provision for tobacco product regulation:

<p>Section 7: Display of pictorial health warning and nicotine and tar content on tobacco products packs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 7 (5): No person shall, directly or indirectly, produce, supply or distribute tobacco products unless every package produced, supplied or distributed by him indicates on its label, the nicotine and tar content along with the maximum permissible limits.
<p>Section 11: Central Government shall by notification in the Official Gazette grant recognition to such testing laboratory, for testing the nicotine and tar contents in cigarettes and any other tobacco products.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Tobacco Testing Laboratories [NTTLs] are notified under Section 11 of COTPA 2003, as Regulatory as well as Research laboratories.



Indian status of implementation of WHO-FCTC Article 9 and 10

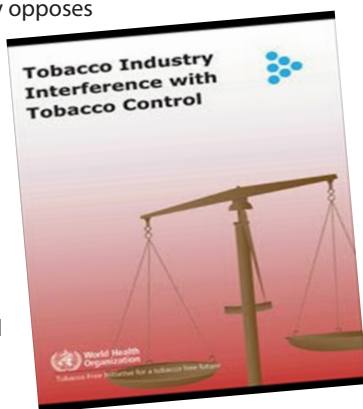
India has made notable progress in implementing WHO-FCTC Articles 9 and 10, driven by strong political will and technical support from various stakeholders. Individual states have enforced food safety regulations, particularly Section 2.3.4 of the 2011 Food Safety and Standards Act, which prohibits the use of tobacco and nicotine in food products. This has led to a nationwide ban on guthka and pan masala containing tobacco, two of the most widely consumed smokeless tobacco products. Additionally, subnational bans on flavoured and packaged smokeless tobacco products have been introduced to further curb consumption. In 2019, India formally recognized three National Tobacco Testing Laboratories (NTTLs) under section 11 of the COTPA Act, 2003, which now test nicotine and tar levels in various tobacco products. India's collaboration with the WHO Tobacco Laboratory Network (TobLabNet) has provided access to global expertise, data, and resources, advancing its efforts to meet the objectives of articles 9 and 10. This partnership enables India to enhance its research capabilities and technology development in tobacco control.

These countries set a strong example for tackling challenges and moving toward a tobacco-free future.

Implementation and Potential Challenges for WHO-FCTC Article 9 and 10

i. Tobacco Industry Interference

The tobacco industry actively opposes and seeks to undermine the implementation of strong regulations on product contents and emissions. This can manifest in the form of lobbying, litigation, or misinformation campaigns aimed at delaying or weakening the enforcement of articles 9 and 10. The tobacco industry's engineering of cigarettes, including filter venting and nicotine optimization, enhances addiction and alters toxicant exposure while masking harm, making it harder to regulate under tobacco control policies. This strategy complicates efforts to reduce smoking initiation and control health risks. The tobacco industry uses additives in tobacco products to attract non-smokers and amplify nicotine effects, while falsely promoting these additives as beneficial. Internal documents reveal that additives are a key strategy for expanding their market.



ii. Diverse variety of Tobacco Products

The significant diversity of smokeless tobacco products across regions, including forms like snus, guthka, and snuff, presents a challenge for the regulation of product contents and emissions under WHO-FCTC Articles 9 and 10. Variations in ingredients, processing methods, and cultural usage lead to different chemical compositions and health risks, making it difficult to develop a standardized, globally applicable method for evaluating hazardous substances in these products. This necessitates tailored regulatory approaches to effectively manage the diverse range of smokeless tobacco products.



iii. Regulating the attractiveness, addictiveness, and toxicity of tobacco products

One major challenge in implementing articles 9 and 10 of the WHO-FCTC is the regulation of the attractiveness, addictiveness, and toxicity of tobacco products, particularly with emerging products like e-cigarettes. Existing guidelines focus on reducing attractiveness but provide limited direction on mitigating toxicity and addictiveness, and many countries lack the technical and regulatory capacity to effectively enforce these product regulations.



iv. Testing Infrastructure and Standardized Global Protocols

A significant challenge in implementing effective tobacco control regulations is the lack of specialized human resources and fully equipped testing laboratories, particularly in low-resource countries. Establishing these laboratories requires substantial financial investment in equipment and infrastructure, which many nations struggle to secure. This shortage impacts the ability to adopt internationally recognized tobacco testing standards, thereby affecting the accuracy and reliability of regulatory efforts. Furthermore, variations in methodologies, units of measurement, and reporting formats for harmful substances like nicotine and tobacco-specific nitrosamines (TSNAs) across different regions complicate data comparison. This inconsistency hinders the development of a globally applicable database, which is essential for effective regulation and reducing health risks. To meet the objectives of Articles 9 and 10 of the WHO-FCTC, standardized protocols and global harmonization of testing standards are crucial.



v. Legal Frameworks



One of the key challenges is the lack of comprehensive legislation that addresses all tobacco products, including dissolvable tobacco, smokeless tobacco, cigars,

snus, and electronic nicotine delivery systems. Current laws often focus only on cigarette content disclosure and testing, neglecting other tobacco products. Additionally, many countries lack robust regulations on flavors and packaging, making it difficult to enforce consistent standards. Expanding these regulations requires overcoming hurdles such as political resistance, scientific complexities, and industry interference.

The current legal frameworks for tobacco control face several limitations in India. Regulations such as COTPA sections 7 and 5 primarily focus on the disclosure of tar and nicotine content, but they lack strong enforcement mechanisms or penalties for non-compliance. Additionally, there are no clear regulations addressing the use of flavoring in tobacco products, nor are there standardized procedures for sample collection and analysis, creating significant gaps in regulatory oversight. Furthermore, many comprehensive tobacco control laws remain inadequate, often failing to extend to newer tobacco or nicotine products, which leaves these emerging products largely unregulated.

vi. Varied Environmental Influences and Microbial Toxins

Environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, soil composition, and regional processing methods significantly influence the chemical makeup of tobacco, including the levels of harmful substances like Tobacco-Specific Nitrosamines (TSNAs) and Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs). These variations across regions make it challenging to develop a single global standard for regulating the harmful substances in tobacco products. Additionally, the role of microbes, enzymes, and viruses in generating carcinogenic chemicals within tobacco products remains poorly understood, further complicating the regulation of tobacco content and emissions under WHO-FCTC Articles 9 and 10. The variability in microbial activity, driven by regional differences in climate and processing, adds complexity to the establishment of uniform standards for the safe evaluation and control of hazardous substances in smokeless tobacco products, necessitating region-specific regulations.

vii. Global Baseline Data

The lack of global baseline data on harmful chemicals in tobacco products creates a significant challenge for the effective implementation of WHO-FCTC Articles 9 and 10. Without standardized data, it becomes difficult to track changes in tobacco product composition, compare products across regions, or evaluate the success of regulations. While some countries have set limits on harmful substances, global differences in product composition and the constant introduction of new products make it hard to apply these standards universally. This data gap hinders the development of evidence-based policies and regulations needed to reduce tobacco-related harm worldwide.

Recommendations

The key recommendations for implementing articles 9 and 10 of the WHO-FCTC requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach. First, updating legislation to encompass emerging tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes and flavored tobacco, is essential. This involves closing legal loopholes by regulating all tobacco products, not just traditional cigarettes. Countries must develop robust guidelines to reduce the toxicity, addictiveness, and attractiveness of tobacco products, while expanding regulatory frameworks to cover flavoring agents and packaging specifications.

To address the lack of technical resources, building and upgrading tobacco and nicotine testing laboratories with advanced equipment is critical for accurately assessing tobacco/nicotine product contents and emissions. Training programs must be introduced to build the capacity of laboratory staff, regulators, and law enforcement to ensure effective implementation of testing methodologies and regulatory standards. International collaboration will be key to harmonizing testing procedures, establishing global standards for data collection, and creating a comprehensive database that accounts for regional variations in tobacco products and cultural practices.

Additionally, investing in research to better understand the role of microbes, enzymes, and environmental factors in forming hazardous substances like Tobacco-Specific Nitrosamines (TSNAs) is crucial. Expanding global research programs on these topics will help fill knowledge gaps and guide evidence-based policymaking. Developing internationally validated biomarkers for assessing health impacts and establishing baseline concentrations for harmful chemicals will support more accurate evaluations of tobacco product risks.

A coordinated international network of research institutions and public health bodies will facilitate knowledge sharing and standardization, ensuring consistency across countries. Implementing global monitoring systems to track changes in tobacco product composition and related health effects will enable ongoing research and policy adaptation.

By addressing the existing gaps in legislation, technical infrastructure, research, and global cooperation, the global community can strengthen the implementation of WHO-FCTC articles 9 and 10. This will lead to more effective regulation of tobacco products, reducing their health impacts and advancing global tobacco control efforts.



Global Focus: Campaigns Drive Quit line Calls



A recent report from the Global Health Equity Academy (GHEA) emphasizes the effectiveness of targeted tobacco control campaigns. The CDC's "Tips From Former Smokers" campaign has been highlighted for significantly boosting calls to quitlines. This success underscores the importance of such initiatives in promoting smoking cessation on a global scale. However, concerns have been raised about the lack of compliance with regulatory warnings on tobacco-branded social media posts, which continue to influence younger demographics worldwide.

Source: (<https://www.geohealthequity.org/tobacco-control-news-research-september-2024/>)

WHO Urges Stronger Tobacco Control to Protect Millions from Asthma Risks

The World Health Organization (WHO) has published a new report highlighting the harmful link between tobacco use and asthma. It reveals that smoking during pregnancy and second-hand smoke exposure increase the risk of asthma in children. For those with asthma, smoking worsens symptoms and makes treatment less effective. The report also warns that e-cigarettes pose similar risks. WHO calls for comprehensive smoke-free policies, better support for quitting tobacco, and stronger regulations to protect vulnerable groups, particularly children and pregnant women, from the harmful effects of tobacco. Asthma currently affects 262 million people globally, causing over 455,000 deaths annually.



Source: (<https://www.who.int/news/item/30-07-2024-who-publishes-new-tobacco-and-asthma-knowledge-summary>)

Paraguayan Tobacco Giant Tabesa Faces Sanctions Over Illegal Trade

In a significant move to curb illicit tobacco trade, Tabacalera del Este S.A. (Tabesa), Paraguay's largest tobacco company, has been sanctioned for its alleged involvement in smuggling cigarettes into Brazil and other neighboring countries. The illegal activities attributed to Tabesa have resulted in substantial tax revenue losses for these countries. Authorities in the region are intensifying their efforts to crack down on such illegal trade practices, aiming to enforce stricter regulations and accountability within the tobacco industry. This sanction marks a critical step in the ongoing battle against the illicit tobacco trade in South America.

Source: <https://tobaccoreporter.com/books/tobacco-reporter-september-2024/>



Supermarket Tobacco Ban Boosts Tobacconist Sales: Netherlands

Following the Netherlands' recent ban on tobacco sales in supermarkets, tobacconists across the country have reported a significant 40% increase in sales. The ban, which took effect on July 1, 2024, is part of a broader public health initiative aimed at reducing the accessibility of tobacco products. As a result, over 100 new tobacco shops have opened this year alone, reflecting a shift in the retail landscape. While the ban has effectively limited the availability of tobacco in supermarkets, it has simultaneously bolstered sales at specialized tobacco outlets, sparking discussions about the impact of such regulations on tobacco consumption patterns.

Source: <https://tobaccoreporter.com/books/tobacco-reporter-september-2024/>



Indonesia Bans Single Stick Cigarette Sales to Curb Smoking Rates



In a significant public health move, Indonesia has implemented a ban on the sale of single stick cigarettes, along with raising the legal smoking age from 18 to 21. These new regulations, which also include stricter controls on tobacco advertising and sales near schools, are part of the government's broader efforts to reduce the country's high smoking rates. Indonesia, which has one of the highest smoking prevalence rates in the world, is hoping that these measures will discourage youth from starting to smoke and help reduce overall tobacco consumption.

Source: <https://tobaccoreporter.com/books/tobacco-reporter-september-2024/>

SWM International Focuses on Innovation Under New Ownership



SWM International (HQ at Singapore), a major supplier of cigarette paper, is intensifying its focus on innovation and sustainability following its acquisition by Evergreen Hill Enterprise. Now privately owned, SWM is prioritizing the development of reduced-risk products and sustainable solutions, including new filters and lightweight paper, with its plastic free products goal at the forefront. Filtrona's new filter technology allows for a sustainable RYO option. The company remains committed to its core values of innovation, integrity, and excellence while operating independently and enhancing its strategic growth. SWM has also joined the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTI) to reduce its environmental impact, signalling a strong commitment to sustainability in the tobacco industry.

Source: <https://tobaccoreporter.com/books/tobacco-reporter-september-2024/>

FDA Implements New ID Verification Rule for Tobacco Purchasers Under 30



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has introduced a new regulation requiring all tobacco retailers to check the ID of buyers under 30 years old to ensure they meet the age requirement for purchasing tobacco products. This measure aims to strengthen the enforcement of age restrictions on tobacco sales and reduce underage tobacco use. The rule extends the age verification requirement beyond the previous threshold, highlighting the FDA's ongoing commitment to combat youth smoking and tobacco use.

Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2024/08/29/health/fda-id-checks-tobacco-products/index.html>

Study Uncovers Alarming Variability in Toxicity of Smokeless Tobacco Products

A groundbreaking study by Tata Memorial Centre's ACTREC, Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, and the University of Minnesota has unveiled disturbing findings about the contents of smokeless tobacco products in India.

Analyzing 321 samples from various brands, researchers found a staggering 2,500-fold variation in nicotine levels and a 1,100-fold variation in TSNA, a highly carcinogenic substance. The study, published in *Lancet Regional Health: Southeast Asia*, highlights the inconsistency in toxicant levels across different products, posing significant public health risks. "These findings reveal that consumers of some brands are exposed to extremely high levels of addictive and cancer-causing chemicals," said Dr. Pankaj Chaturvedi, ACTREC director. The study underscores the urgent need for regulatory oversight on smokeless tobacco products to protect the 20 crore Indians who use them.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/local-manufacturing-process-ups-cancer-risk-among-smokeless-tobacco-users-finds-study/articleshow/112933920.cms>

DUMMY HEADING RRRRRR RRRRR

- ▶ India is home to nearly 70% of all smokeless tobacco users worldwide
- ▶ In India, smokeless tobacco-induced oral cancer is a leading cause of cancer-related death among men
- ▶ Doctors at Tata Memorial Centre's ACTREC in Kharghar analysed 321 samples of smokeless tobacco
- ▶ They studied the levels of nicotine and tobacco-specific N-nitrosamines (TSNA) that play key roles in addiction and carcinogenicity, respectively
- ▶ Nicotine sustains tobacco addiction by binding to certain receptors in the brain and facilitating the release of dopamine, glutamate, gamma-aminobutyric acid, serotonin, and other neurotransmitters
- ▶ Two TSNA are considered key causative agents for tobacco-induced cancers, according to International Agency for Research



India Set to Expand FDI Restrictions in Tobacco Sector

India is planning to extend its existing ban on foreign direct investment (FDI) in the tobacco industry to include franchise tie-ups, trademarks, brand names, and management contracts. This move aims to close loopholes that allowed foreign brands to indirectly participate in India's tobacco market, which facilitated smuggling and non-compliant business practices. The initiative reflects broader health policy goals and aligns with global commitments to reduce tobacco use and exposure.

Source: <https://www.millenniumpost.in/business/india-plans-to-impose-comprehensive-curb-on-foreign-direct-investment-in-the-tobacco-sector-577874>



Teachers Take the Lead in Maharashtra's Fight Against Tobacco



In a ground breaking move to combat tobacco use, Maharashtra has empowered teachers to spearhead anti-tobacco campaigns in schools through the "Tobacco-Free Teachers, Tobacco-Free Society" program. Launched in collaboration with the Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, this innovative initiative positions educators as key influencers in the fight against tobacco addiction. The program aims to reduce tobacco consumption by educating students about its dangers and promoting cessation efforts among teachers themselves. By focusing on schools, the program hopes to create a ripple effect, fostering a tobacco-free culture that extends beyond classrooms to entire communities. Maharashtra's initiative demonstrates a unique approach to public health, harnessing the power of education to address one of the state's most pressing health issues.

Source: (<https://mtinews.in/addressing-the-tobacco-menace-in-india-innovative-programme-empowers-teachers-to-lead-the-change/>)

Delhi Launches New Initiative to Combat Tobacco Use



In 2024, AIIMS Delhi opened a new "Tobacco Cessation Clinic" at the New RAK OPD as part of the "TOBACCO FREE AIIMS" initiative. Starting weekly from September 10, the clinic provides comprehensive support to those struggling with tobacco addiction, including pharmacotherapy, psychosocial assistance, and educational programs. This effort aligns with the National Tobacco Control Program's goal to reduce tobacco use, a significant public health issue in India.

Source: (<https://www.republicworld.com/india/aiims-delhi-to-start-tobacco-cessation-clinic-from-tuesday>)

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