



TOBACCO-FREE Times

www.rctcpgi.org

Issue XXXXI : February 2026

RNI Title Approval No : CHAENG01153

Tobacco-Free Vendor Licensing (TVL): A Smarter Way to Regulate Tobacco Sales

Capacity Building in Tobacco Control through RCTC's Flagship Online Courses



RCTC conducts two flagship online courses in tobacco control: the Basic Course in Tobacco Control (BCTC), a structured three-month programme, and the Advanced Course in Tobacco Control (ACTC), a six-month programme. Across four batches of each course, RCTC has trained a total of 377 participants to date, engaging more than 40 experts. BCTC equips health professionals, policymakers, law enforcement officials, and civil society advocates with comprehensive knowledge of tobacco control policies, cessation strategies, behavioural interventions, COTPA, WHO-FCTC, and approaches to counter tobacco industry interference. Building on this foundation, the ACTC addresses advanced thematic areas such as the economics of tobacco control, behaviour change communication, second-hand smoke, managing vulnerable groups, multistakeholder engagement, monitoring and evaluation, and emerging trends. Both courses strengthen participants' capacity to design, implement, and advocate for effective tobacco control programmes while promoting professional networking and collaboration.

EDITOR'S SPEAK



This edition of Tobacco Free Times focuses on Tobacco-Free Vendor Licensing (TVL) as a strategic and practical pathway to strengthen tobacco control. Regulating where and how tobacco is sold is critical to protecting youth, reducing accessibility, and improving enforcement of existing laws.

Drawing on national experiences and global best practices, this edition highlights TVL as a powerful tool to bring accountability, transparency, and order to the tobacco retail environment. As India advances toward endgame goals, TVL offers a timely, scalable, and evidence-based approach to accelerate progress toward a tobacco-free future.

- Dr Sonu Goel,

Chief Editor, Tobacco Free Times

Director, RCTC, Dept of Community Medicine & School of Public Health

EXPERTS SPEAK

The RCTC has emerged as a comprehensive, single-point resource hub for the entire public health community, particularly for professionals engaged in tobacco control. It provides streamlined access to a wide range of high-quality tobacco control materials, guidelines, reports, and tools sourced from countries across the world as well as from every state in India. By centralizing this diverse information, the RCTC enables practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and programme managers to stay informed, enhance capacity, and strengthen evidence-based tobacco control initiatives.



Dr. Rakesh Gupta,

President, Rajasthan Cancer Foundation, Jaipur



RCTC is doing commendable work in advancing tobacco control efforts and strategically moving toward the tobacco endgame. Its consistent leadership, innovation, and commitment are making a meaningful public health impact. The Centre's evidence-based initiatives and capacity-building efforts are strengthening the national tobacco control movement. Wishing RCTC continued success and strength in its outstanding mission.

Dr. Prakash C Gupta,

Director, Healis Sekhsaria Institute of Public Health, Mumbai



Plenary Session at IAPSM Young Leaders National Conclave (YLNC) 2025

A plenary session titled “Youth at the Forefront of Tobacco Control: Leveraging Digitalisation and Research for a Tobacco-Free India” was held on 7 December 2025 (11:00–11:45 AM) at Goa Medical College during the Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine Young Leaders National Conclave (YLNC) 2025. The session was attended by 80+ participants, including public health professionals, young leaders, researchers, and students. The session was moderated by Prof. Sonu Goel (Director, RCTC & Professor, Department of Community Medicine & School of Public Health, PGIMER Chandigarh) who emphasized the importance of youth leadership, digital innovation, and evidence-based approaches in tobacco control. The panel discussion, chaired by Dr. Abhilash Sood (HoD, Professor, DCM, Dr. Radhakrishnan Government Medical College, Hamirpur, HP) and Dr. Nitin Dhupdale (Assistant Professor, DCM, Goa Medical College), featured Dr. Manish Singh (Secretary, IAPSM, Professor, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences), Dr. Upendra Singh Bhadauria (Technical Specialist, Cessation- Vital Strategies), Prof. Abhijit Nadkarni (Co-Director, Addictions & Related-Research Group Sangath), and Roland Martins (Coordinator, GOACAN). The panel discussion focused on strengthening youth-centric tobacco control through effective utilization of MIS, digitalisation, and evidence-based research, with emphasis

on improving reporting, accountability, and service delivery of tobacco cessation services. The deliberations highlighted the critical role of academic institutions, professional bodies, and civil society in engaging youth as active leaders, rather than passive recipients, of tobacco control initiatives. The panel also underscored the

need for research-informed policy action, inter-institutional collaboration, and youth-driven communication strategies to advance sustainable and impactful tobacco control efforts. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A, reinforcing the pivotal role of young professionals in advancing India’s tobacco control agenda.



National Webinar on “Youth Against Tobacco: Building a National Movement for Change in India

A National Webinar on “Youth Against Tobacco: Building a National Movement for Change in India” was organized on 20 November 2025, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM (IST), by the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER, Chandigarh. The webinar witnessed the participation of 315 attendees, including youth leaders, public health professionals, policymakers, representatives from government departments, NGOs, academic institutions, CSR organizations, and civil society.

The webinar commenced with welcome remarks by Prof. Sonu

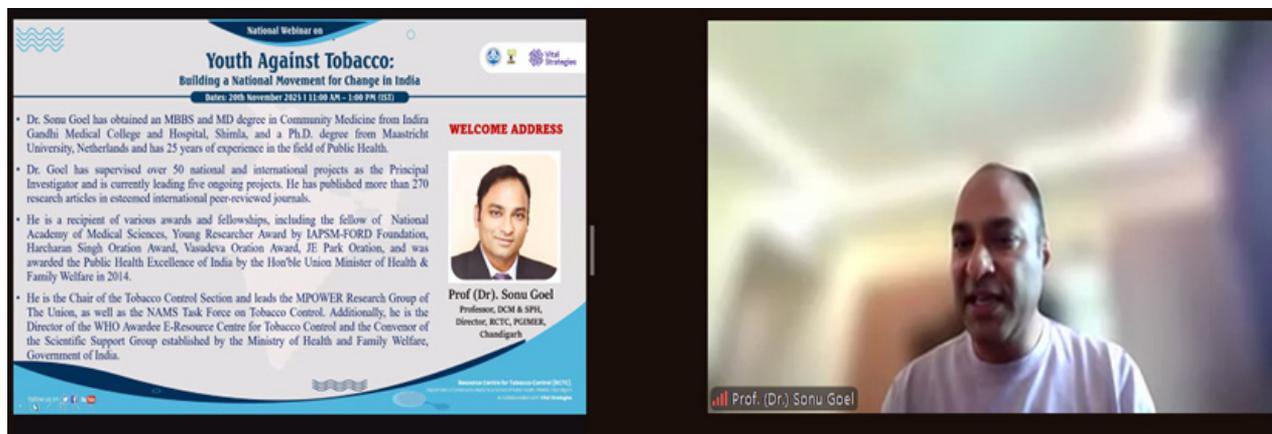
Goel, who emphasized the critical role of youth as drivers of sustainable tobacco control. Special addresses were delivered by Ms. Tshering D. Bhutia, Senior Vice President & Chief Innovation Officer, Salaam Bombay Foundation, Mumbai; Dr. Rakesh Gupta, President, Rajasthan Cancer Foundation, Jaipur; and Mr. Ashish Pandey, Director (Tobacco Control – South East Asia and Eastern Mediterranean Regions), Vital Strategies. The keynote address highlighted successful youth-led initiatives and digital advocacy models.



The panel discussion titled “Youth Power to Policy Power: Designing India’s First Youth Tobacco-Free Roadmap” was chaired by Dr. Rakesh Gupta, and Ms. Radhika Shrivastav, (Senior Director, HRIDAY, New Delhi) and moderated by Mr. Rajeev Kumar (Project Coordinator, RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh). The panel featured Dr. Shivam Kapoor (Technical Advisor – STOP India & Global Monitoring, Tobacco Control, Vital

Strategies), Mr. Lalit Dogra (Social Activist & Young Professional, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India), Dr. Hansa Kundu (Technical Advisor – Enforcement, Vital Strategies), Dr. Aarushi Sabarwal (State Consultant – NTCP, Haryana), Mr. Dikshant Sharma (DDR Field Expert, Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyaan, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India), and Ms. Deeksha (Coordinator – CSR, Honda

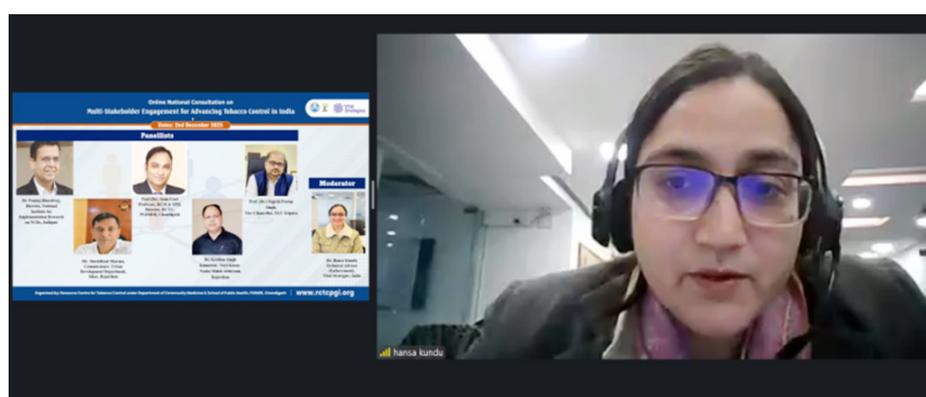
Motorcycles). The deliberations focused on strengthening youth-led enforcement, digital monitoring, curriculum integration, policy advocacy, and multi-sectoral collaboration to advance India’s tobacco control agenda. The webinar concluded with an interactive Q&A and a reaffirmed commitment to developing India’s first Youth Tobacco-Free Roadmap.



An Online National Consultation on Multi-Stakeholder Engagement for Advancing Tobacco Control in India (2nd December 2025)

An Online National Consultation on Multi-Stakeholder Engagement for Advancing Tobacco Control in India was conducted on 2 December 2025, from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm, jointly organized by the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER Chandigarh, in collaboration with Vital Strategies. The consultation witnessed participation from 233 attendees, including representatives from central and state ministries, academic institutions, research organizations, law universities, NGOs, and public health bodies.

The session opened with welcome remarks by Prof. (Dr.) Sonu Goel, who highlighted the evolving nature of tobacco control and underscored the importance of institutionalized engagement across government, academia, and civil society. This was followed by opening remarks from Dr. Amit Yadav, Deputy Director (Tobacco Control), Vital Strategies, who highlighted the timeliness of the consultation and underscored the importance of a whole-of-government approach, particularly in addressing emerging challenges such as novel nicotine products and tobacco industry interference. The Chief Guest address was delivered by Dr. L. Swasticharan, Deputy Director General, National Tobacco Control Programme, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, who emphasized tobacco control as a shared national responsibility. Technical and policy perspectives were provided by



Dr. P. C. Gupta (Director, Healis-Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, Navi Mumbai), Dr. K. Madan Gopal (Advisor, Public Health Administration, NHSC, New Delhi), and Mr. Ram Singh (Deputy Director, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India).

Two panel discussions were conducted during the consultation. The first panel, “Collective Impact: Experiences of State Coalitions in Tobacco Control,” was moderated by Dr. Chandravali Madan (Technical Specialist – Networking, Vital Strategies) and featured Dr. Upendra Bhojani (Faculty & Lead, Cluster on Chronic Health Conditions & Public Policies, Institute of Public Health, Bengaluru), Mr. Prem Taneja (Chairman, Uttarakhand Tobacco Free Coalition), and Dr. P. C. Gupta, highlighting state-level coalition models from Karnataka, Uttarakhand, and Maharashtra. The second panel, “Institutionalizing Stakeholder

Engagement under NTCP” was moderated by Dr. Hansa Kundu (Technical Advisor – Enforcement, Vital Strategies) and included Mr. Shashikant Sharma (Commissioner, Urban Development Department, Sikar, Rajasthan), Dr. Krishan Singh Kumawat (Nayi Kiran–Nasha Mukti Abhiyaan, Rajasthan), Dr. Pankaj Bhardwaj (Director, NIIRNCD, Jodhpur), Prof. (Dr.) Yogesh Pratap Singh (Vice Chancellor, NLU Tripura), and Prof. (Dr.) Sonu Goel. The discussions focused on institutionalizing inter-sectoral coordination, strengthening enforcement, integrating tobacco control into municipal and educational systems, leveraging research and legal institutions, and countering emerging nicotine product challenges. The consultation concluded with closing remarks by Dr. Amit Yadav, reaffirming the need for sustained, accountable, and multi-sectoral collaboration to advance India’s tobacco control agenda.



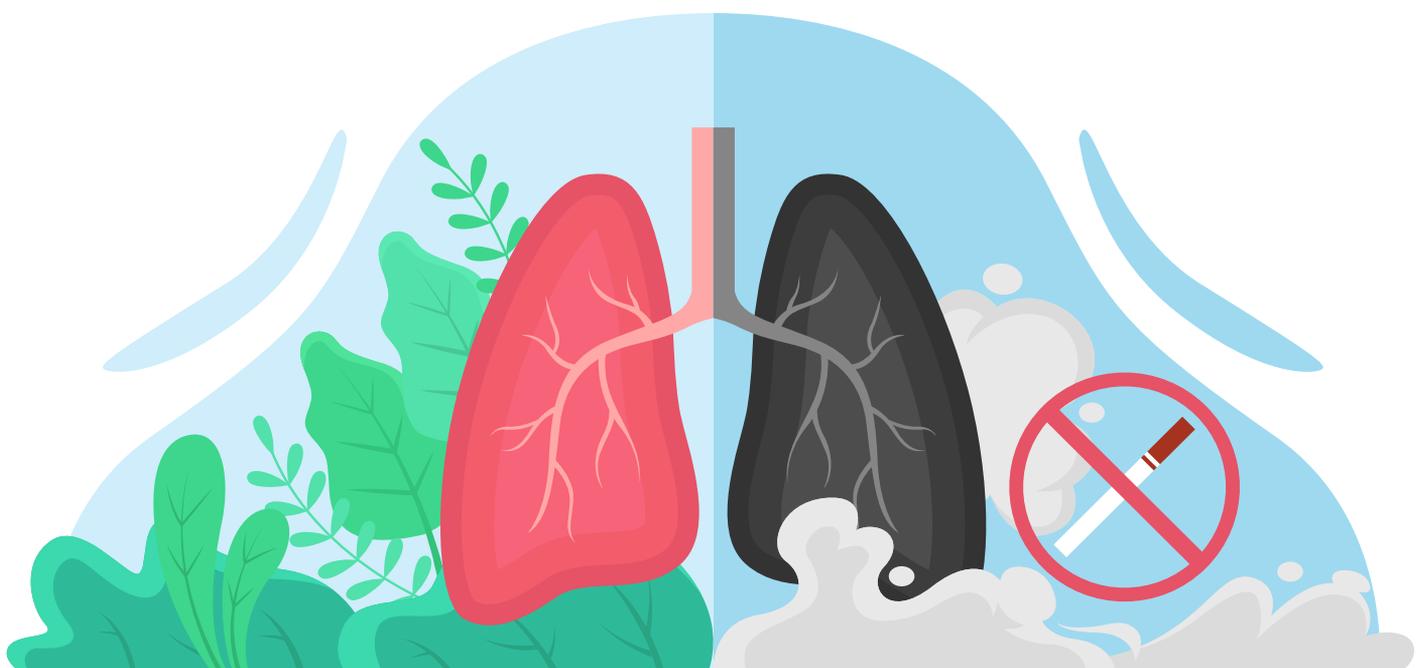
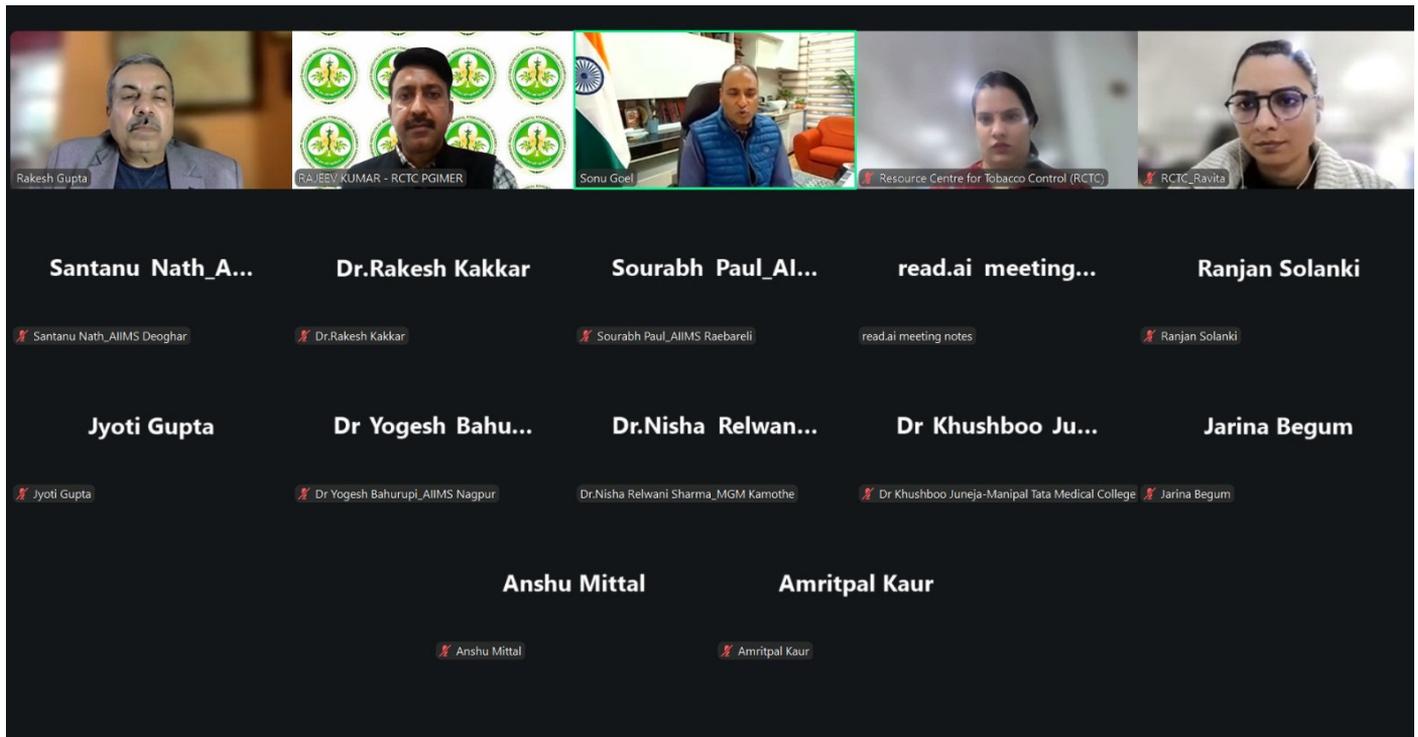
Planning-cum-Review Meeting of AIIMS and Medical Colleges Consortium for Tobacco Control

The Planning-cum-Review Meeting of the AIIMS Consortium for Tobacco Control and the Consortium of Medical Colleges for a Tobacco-Free India was successfully conducted on 3 December 2025 under the leadership of the Resource Centre for Tobacco Control (RCTC), PGIMER, Chandigarh. The meeting brought together nodal representatives from 12 Medical Colleges Consortium members and 8 AIIMS institutions, reflecting strong national

commitment toward strengthening tobacco control efforts.

The session focused on reviewing ongoing institutional initiatives and planning future strategies to accelerate progress toward a tobacco-free India. Participants shared experiences related to strengthening tobacco cessation services, integrating brief advice into routine clinical care, expanding capacity-building activities, promoting evidence-based research, and advancing

policy advocacy within their respective institutions. The discussion emphasized inter-institutional collaboration, sharing of best practices, and aligning academic medical institutions with national tobacco control priorities. The meeting concluded with reaffirmed commitment from consortium members to sustain impactful, evidence-driven actions and collectively contribute to the national tobacco control agenda.



Tobacco-Free Vendor Licensing (TVL): A Smarter Way to Regulate Tobacco Sales

Across the world, cities and governments are realizing that controlling where and how tobacco is sold is just as important as controlling what is sold. **Tobacco-Free Vendor Licensing (TVL)** is emerging as a powerful, practical, and community-friendly tool to regulate tobacco retail environments. It enables Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to control the sale of tobacco products within their jurisdiction. TVL holds the potential to complement the existing tobacco control laws (COTPA, 2003) by bringing order, accountability, and transparency to a largely unregulated sales ecosystem and reducing availability and accessibility to children and youth.



What is Tobacco-Free Vendor Licensing (TVL)?

TVL, a licence-based regulatory system, is a simple yet transformative idea that regulates who is permitted to sell tobacco, under what conditions and subject to what penalties.

Any shop or vendor that wants to sell tobacco must first obtain a license from the local authority— municipal corporation, panchayat, or urban local body.

This license acts as a gatekeeper to regulate informal, unregulated tobacco points of sale. It:

- Identifies all tobacco sellers in a jurisdiction
- Sets clear rules they must follow
- Ensures tobacco is sold responsibly and legally
- Allows authorities to monitor, regulate, and, if needed, penalise violations

In short, TVL turns tobacco retailing from an informal, loosely monitored market into a structured and accountable system, preventing frequent violations

Why TVL Matters: A Quick Look at Its Importance

TVL plays a crucial role in strengthening local and national tobacco control measures by:

- Reducing accessibility of tobacco products, especially for minors.
- Preventing violations of COTPA provisions such as sales near schools and the display of tobacco advertisements.
- Creating accountability among vendors and ensuring they operate responsibly.
- Empowering local bodies with the authority to monitor, regulate, and penalize illegal sales.
- Promoting a shift toward compliance and awareness, encouraging vendors to be partners in public health.



Ultimately, TVL helps protect youth, safeguard communities, and reduce the burden of tobacco-related diseases, contributing directly to the vision of a tobacco-free society. The Core Components of an Effective TVL System are described in Table 1.

Table 1: Core Components		
Component	Description	Implementation Example
Legal and Policy Framework	Establishes the legal authority and governance structure for TVL, ensuring coherence with existing tobacco control and municipal laws.	Incorporate TVL provisions under COTPA or State Municipal Acts; designate ULBs or DTCCs as licensing authorities.
Licensing Procedures	Defines the process for application, renewal, and eligibility criteria to obtain a vendor license.	Annual online/offline registration; eligibility screening (age ≥18, fixed business premises); nominal but meaningful fee structure.
Regulatory Conditions for Vendors	Specifies mandatory compliance with tobacco control laws and operating standards for vendors.	Prohibit sale near educational institutions; ban sale to minors; restrict loose or single-stick sales; ban co-sale with food or medicines.
Digital Monitoring and Vendor Registry	Ensures transparent, real-time tracking of licensed vendors through a centralized digital platform.	GIS-enabled vendor mapping; unique license ID; integration with NTCP and municipal dashboards for compliance tracking.
Enforcement and Compliance Mechanisms	Provides structured systems for inspections, penalties, and inter-departmental enforcement.	Routine inspections by health/police officials; tiered penalties (warning → fine → suspension → cancellation); online complaint redressal portal.
Public Health and Community Integration	Promotes awareness and participation of communities and vendors in supporting tobacco control goals.	Vendor training on legal compliance; IEC dissemination; NGO involvement in monitoring; public campaigns on rationale of TVL.
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	Establishes periodic review mechanisms and data-driven adjustments for TVL implementation.	Annual evaluation of vendor density and compliance rates; use data to identify hotspots; incorporate feedback from field officers and vendors.
Governance and Sustainability	Strengthens institutional and financial sustainability of the licensing system.	Create a TVL Coordination Cell under NTCP; utilize license fees for enforcement; hold stakeholder consultations; link TVL to tobacco endgame goals.

Tobacco Vendor/ Retail Licensing in various countries

TVL has now been widely accepted and implemented concept in countries like Hungary, Bangladesh, Singapore, and various parts of India. The compliance rules of TVL of various countries are described in Table 2.

Table 2: Tobacco Vendor Licensing Rules and enforcement mechanisms					
Country / City	Licensing System	Key Eligibility & Location Rules	Compliance Requirements	Enforcement Mechanism	Scale / Outcomes
Bangladesh	Mandatory annual renewal of retail license	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No shops within 100 meters of educational & healthcare institutions Local authorities can declare additional tobacco-free zones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to model tax schedule License must be publicly displayed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection, monitoring, and enforcement by local authorities 	Implemented in 29 municipalities; 4,150 licenses issued, with major share in Jeneda, Magura & Khulna
Hungary	State-controlled National Tobacco Shop concession system through public tender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail sales restricted to authorized shops only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralized control of retail supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State regulation through concession contracts 	Retail outlets reduced from ~40,000 to <6,000



Singapore	Retail licensing (since 1998); importer & wholesaler licensing (since 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No licenses for temporary stalls, medical facilities, youth-centric venues, rehabilitation homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory age verification • Transaction record-keeping • Employee compliance responsibility • Reporting of new products (importers/wholesalers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections • Public reporting • Police collaboration • Penalties: fines, suspension, revocation 	Comprehensive supply-chain regulation with strong compliance controls
India – Sikar	Municipal tobacco vendor licensing (TVL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant must be Indian citizen, 18+ • Aadhaar mandatory • Non-transferable license • No shops within 100 yards of schools/temples/ghats (as notified) • Permanent or temporary shops allowed; no mobile vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with COTPA 2003 & PECA 2019 • No TAPS at POS • No loose cigarettes • No sale to/by minors • No lighters/ashtrays at POS • Compliance with other applicable laws (JJ Act 2015, FSS Act 2006, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challans & monetary penalties • Dedicated Tobacco Control Cell for monitoring • IEC through Swachh Bharat platform & mass outreach 	406 applications, 366 licenses issued Revenue: ₹15,88,000 13 challans (₹700–₹7,600)

In India, Municipalities are empowered under the provisions of the State Municipalities Act to introduce bye-laws or rules for the implementation of TVL by issuing a gazette notification Table 3.

Table 3: Example of penalties from various cities/States in India

State/City	Penalty for selling without a license	Penalty for Non-Compliance / Breach of Rules
Rishikesh	First time- Rs. 2000/- plus seizure of material Second time- Rs. 5000/- plus seizure of material Third time- Rs. 10000/- plus FIR	First time- Warning Second time- Rs. 1000/- Regular violation- Cancellation of license
Lucknow	First time- Rs. 2000/- plus seizure of material, Second time- Rs. 5000/- plus seizure of material, Third time- Rs. 5000/- plus seizure plus FIR	First time- Warning, Second time- Proceedings for suspension of license, Third time- License suspension
Karnataka- Municipal corporation	Penalty amounts up to Rs.4000/- and up to Rs.100 per day for continuing the breach from the day of the conviction of the first breach	Penalty amounts up to Rs.4000/- and up to Rs.100 per day for continuing the breach from the day of the conviction of the first breach
Karnataka- BBMP	Penalty amounts up to Rs.5000/- and rupees up to Rs.100 per day for continuing the breach from	Penalty amounts up to Rs.5000/- and rupees up to Rs.100 per day for continuing the breach from
Karnataka- Municipal councils	Penalty amounts up to Rs.3000/- and up to Rs.100 per day for continuing the breach from the day of the conviction of the first breach	Penalty amounts up to Rs.3000/- and up to Rs.100 per day for continuing the breach from the day of the conviction of the first breach
Sikar, Bharatpur...	2000 first time & seizure, 5000 second time and seizure, third time 10000 seizure & FIR	First time warning, second time suspension proceedings by municipality, third time- seizure, revoking license & non issuance of license
Jhunjhunu	500 first time & seizure, 2000 second time and seizure, third time 5000 seizure & FIR	First time warning, second time suspension proceedings by municipality, third time- seizure, revoking license & non issuance of license

How Can TVL Be Implemented across India? — A Roadmap

Tobacco-Free Vendor Licensing (TVL) is emerging as a powerful tool to regulate tobacco sales, improve enforcement of existing laws, and protect communities especially youth from tobacco exposure. Here's how India can implement TVL effectively.

1. Legal and Policy Pathway: States can choose between:

- Amending existing laws like COTPA to allow licensing with clear sanctions.
- Creating new state/local rules under Municipal Acts or Shops & Establishments Acts.



Licensing fees & penalty amounts can be decided by the respective municipalities and can be either same of all types of vendors or different for temporary, permanent and wholesalers. For e.g.:

It is same for all types of vendors in MP (Rs.300/-), Karnataka (Rs.500/-), Himachal Pradesh (Rs.500/-)

It is different for different types of vendors in:

- Jharkhand (As per built area- 100 sq ft- Rs 500/annum, 1000 sq ft- Rs 1500/annum, beyond 1000sq ft- Rs. 2500/annum)
- Rajasthan ranges from Rs. 1000 for temporary kiosks, Rs. 1200-2400 for permanent kiosks & Rs. 25000 for wholesalers
- UP- Rs. 200 for temporary kiosks, Rs. 1000 for permanent & Rs. 5000 for wholesalers.
- Rishikesh- Rs. 1500 for temporary kiosks, Rs. 5000 for permanent & Rs. 20000 for wholesalers.

2. Clear Objectives & Scope: TVL should aim to:

- Reduce youth access and vendor density.
- Strengthen enforcement of point-of-sale (POS) rules.
- Map vendors and track compliance.

Scope decisions include which products (cigarettes, beedis, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes) and vendor types (fixed shops, kiosks, mobile vendors) to cover.

3. License Rules & Vendor Conditions:

- Vendor ≥ 18 (Minimum Legal Age) years old with a fixed location.
- No sales near schools or to minors.
- Ban on POS advertising; optionally, no loose/single-stick sales.
- Annual renewal based on compliance.

Sanctions should be graduated: warning → fine → suspension → cancellation.

4. Pilot Implementation: Start with 1–3 districts or a medium-sized city to:

- Test digital systems and inspection workflows.
- Assess vendor acceptance and enforcement logistics.
- Generate evidence for statewide scale-up.

5. Digital Backbone: A modern TVL system requires:

- Centralized GIS-enabled vendor registry with unique IDs and compliance history.
- Public dashboard for transparency.
- Integration with NTCP and municipal enforcement systems.

6. Fees & Financial Sustainability

- Modest licensing fees, scaled by urban/rural setting and vendor size.
- Revenue reinvested into inspections, training, and community awareness.
- Balance deterrence of informal sales with fairness to small vendors.

7. Enforcement Architecture

- Licensing authority: ULB/District Tobacco Control Cell/State Health Department.
- Inspection teams: Health inspectors + municipal/police officers.
- Sanctions: Structured administrative system with due process.

8. Vendor Engagement & Training

- Orientation on legal obligations and health harms.
- IEC materials and visible license display.
- Recognition certificates or reduced fees for compliant vendors.

9. Equity Safeguards

- Fee exemptions or reductions for small vendors.
- Monitor closures to prevent economic harm.
- Spatial controls (density caps, school buffers) prevent sales from shifting to informal markets.

10. Communication & Public Support

- Engage schools, NGOs, youth groups, and vendor associations.
- Use simple messages: “Protecting our children,” “Healthier neighborhoods,” “Legal compliance.”
- Transparency builds trust and reduces resistance.

11. Monitoring & Evaluation (Track):

- Number of licensed vendors and renewal rates.
- Compliance with school-buffer zones.
- Youth tobacco access (GATS/GYTS or local surveys).
- Enforcement actions taken.

12. Scale-Up & Continuous Improvement

- Refine legal instruments, fees, and enforcement protocols based on pilot results.
- Expand GIS registry and training statewide.
- Develop national guidance while allowing local adaptation.



Table: 5 Possible Approaches to Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL) and Their Potential Impacts

Licensing Approach	What the Policy Does	Potential Public Health Impact
High license fee	Requires retailers to pay a substantial fee to sell tobacco products.	Discourages casual or opportunistic sellers; may reduce the total number of tobacco outlets and generate funds for enforcement.
Annual renewal of licence	Retailers must regularly renew their licence to continue selling tobacco.	Creates ongoing accountability; enables removal of non-compliant retailers and improves compliance with tobacco laws.
Penalty for selling without a licence	Prohibits tobacco sales without a valid licence, with fines or closure for violations.	Prevents illegal sales and strengthens overall control of the retail market.
Minimum distance from schools	Prohibits tobacco outlets within a fixed distance of schools or youth spaces.	Reduces youth exposure and access to tobacco; supports prevention of initiation.
Minimum distance between tobacco outlets	Limits how closely tobacco shops can be located to each other.	Reduces outlet density, which is linked to lower smoking prevalence and initiation.
Restriction to specific outlet types	Allows tobacco sales only in designated shop types (e.g., specialty tobacco shops).	Reduces everyday visibility and normalisation of tobacco products.
Cap on number of licences	Sets a maximum number of tobacco retailers based on population or area.	Directly reduces outlet density and limits expansion of tobacco retail.
First-come, first-served licensing	Licences issued in order of application until the cap is reached.	Simple to implement, but may favour existing retailers and limit equity.
Lottery or auction system	Licences allocated through a lottery or competitive bidding process.	Can ensure transparency and reduce market saturation; auctions may discourage low-profit retailers.
Compliance-linked licence retention	Retailers must comply with age-of-sale, display bans, and promotion rules to keep their licence.	Strengthens enforcement; incentivises compliance and reduces violations.
Use of licence fees for enforcement	Earmarks licensing revenue for inspections and compliance checks.	Improves sustainability of enforcement and monitoring systems.



Therefore, TVL has the potential to strengthen enforcement, reduce tobacco availability, support behaviour change, and contribute to the long-term denormalisation of tobacco use, making it a promising structural tool within comprehensive tobacco control strategies.

Conclusion

Tobacco Vendor Licensing (TVL) offers a structured and enforceable mechanism to regulate the retail environment in which tobacco products are sold. Evidence from international settings and emerging experiences within India demonstrate that TVL can strengthen compliance with existing laws, reduce youth access, improve vendor accountability, and support more effective enforcement at the local level.

As states and urban local bodies explore or initiate TVL frameworks, it becomes clear that the approach is both feasible and adaptable across diverse administrative settings. The growing interest from health departments, municipalities, academic institutions, and civil society further underscores the relevance of TVL as a practical tool for advancing public health objectives.

Moving forward, sustained inter-departmental coordination, capacity building, digital vendor registries, and clear enforcement protocols will be essential to ensure successful adoption and scale-up. By integrating these elements, TVL has the potential to significantly strengthen India's tobacco control architecture and contribute to long-term reductions in tobacco use and its associated harms.



Kawardha Launches COTPA Enforcement to Promote Tobacco-Free Community

In a proactive step to strengthen tobacco control, Kawardha district in Chhattisgarh initiated targeted enforcement action under the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003. Local officials have begun conducting regular inspections of shops, public spaces and vending points to curb the sale and use of tobacco near sensitive areas such as schools and health facilities. During the campaign, teams issued multiple challans and warnings to vendors found selling tobacco products in violation of legal provisions — particularly those operating within 100 metres of educational institutions or without proper licensing. The initiative also includes awareness outreach to shopkeepers and community members on the harms of tobacco use and the requirements of COTPA compliance. District authorities say such

enforcement drives are essential to reduce tobacco access, protect youth and support a tobacco-free environment.



Source: <https://www.naidunia.com/chhattisgarh/kawardha-challan-action-started-in-kawardha-to-make-tobacco-free-7163305>

Himachal Pradesh empowers officials to strictly enforce tobacco sale ban

The Government of Himachal Pradesh has taken a decisive step to tighten tobacco control by empowering multiple departments to act against the open sale of cigarettes, beedies and other tobacco products under state law. According to a notification issued in late December 2025, officials — including Panchayat Secretaries, police officers (ASI and above), food safety inspectors, drug inspectors, and urban and rural development authorities — can now issue on-the-spot fines up to ₹5,000 to vendors selling loose or unpackaged tobacco products in violation of regulations.

The move aims to strengthen compliance with the Himachal Pradesh Prohibition of Sale of Loose Cigarettes and Beedies Act, 2016, reduce easy access to tobacco, especially for minors, and protect public health by curbing informal, unregulated tobacco sales across urban and rural areas.



Source: <https://www.jagran.com/himachal-pradesh/shimla-himachal-pradesh-panchayat-secretary-can-action-on-cigarette-sal-openly-tobacco-products-40086584.html>

Parliament Passes Key Tobacco Taxation Bills to Sustain High Levy Regime

India marked a significant policy milestone in December 2025 with the passage of two major tobacco-related fiscal bills in Parliament—the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and the Health Security to National Security Cess Bill, 2025. Together, these legislations overhaul the existing taxation structure for tobacco products as the GST compensation cess nears its scheduled conclusion. The Central Excise Amendment introduces revised excise duties on cigarettes, hookah tobacco, chewing tobacco, and related products, ensuring continued high price deterrence. The new Cess Bill adds a production-capacity-based levy on pan masala and other designated goods, strengthening public-health financing mechanisms while curbing affordability of harmful products. Public health experts have welcomed the move as a long-awaited alignment of fiscal policy with national tobacco-control objectives, particularly in reducing consumption and limiting industry influence.

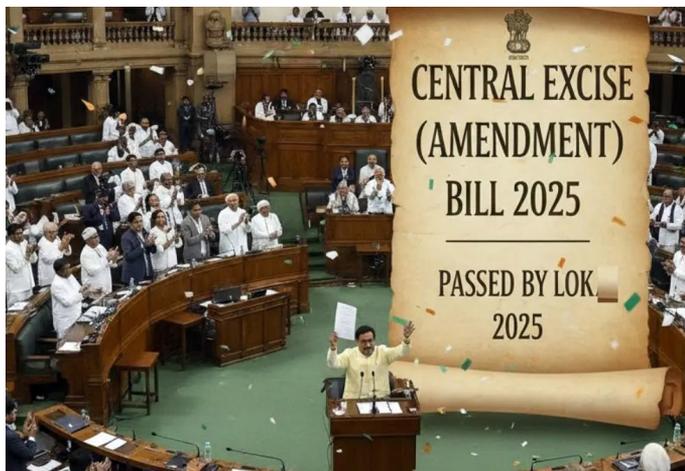


Source: <https://www.newsonair.gov.in/parliament-passes-central-excise-amendment-bill-2025-to-raise-tobacco-duties>



Lok Sabha Clears Central Excise (Amendment) Bill to Maintain High Tobacco Taxation

The Lok Sabha, on 3 December 2025, passed the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025, marking a pivotal development in India's fiscal approach to tobacco control. The Bill revises the excise duty structure for "sin goods," including cigarettes, bidis, pan masala, and chewing tobacco, as the Government prepares for the expiry of the GST compensation cess. By introducing a revised duty framework, the legislation aims to preserve high tax incidence on tobacco products—widely recognised as one of the most effective measures to reduce consumption, discourage youth initiation, and generate predictable public-health revenue. The revamped structure also aligns with global best practices that recommend regular, inflation-adjusted tax increases to curb affordability. Public health advocates welcomed the move, noting that sustained taxation is essential for achieving India's long-term tobacco control and NCD prevention targets.



Source: <https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/policy/lok-sabha-passes-central-excise-amendment-bill-ahead-of-gst-cess-phaseout-on-sin-goods/articleshow/125743855.cms>

Government Reaffirms Complete Ban on E-Cigarettes to Protect Youth

The Government of India has reiterated its nationwide ban on e-cigarettes, reinforcing its strict stance under the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2019. The reaffirmation, issued in December 2025, comes amid growing concerns over rising youth experimentation with vaping devices and nicotine products. Officials emphasized that the manufacture, sale, import, distribution and advertising of e-cigarettes remain strictly prohibited across all states and Union Territories. The government has also urged state enforcement agencies to intensify surveillance, conduct regular inspections and curb the supply of illicit vaping products entering retail and online markets. This renewed focus underscores India's commitment to safeguarding adolescents and preventing early nicotine addiction through strong regulatory enforcement.



Source: <https://telanganatoday.com/government-reaffirms-complete-ban-on-e-cigarettes-in-india>

Rajya Sabha Members Call for Ban on Misleading Tobacco Advertisements



In a significant step toward stronger tobacco control, several Rajya Sabha members in December 2025 urged the government to impose a complete ban on misleading tobacco and liquor advertisements. Lawmakers highlighted that surrogate and indirect promotional content continues to influence youth, despite existing restrictions under COTPA and cable broadcasting rules. Members stressed that such advertisements create a false perception of safety and contribute to rising initiation among adolescents. The House called for stricter monitoring, clearer regulations on celebrity endorsements and decisive action against violators. The intervention reflects growing political consensus on eliminating deceptive marketing practices and strengthening India's commitment to protecting public health.

Source: <https://www.storyboard18.com/how-it-works/rajya-sabha-members-demand-ban-on-misleading-tobacco-and-liquor-advertisements-85384.htm>



Bangladesh Advisory Council approves strengthened tobacco-control ordinance

Bangladesh's Advisory Council has approved the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, marking a significant enhancement in the country's tobacco-control framework. The ordinance — approved on 24 December 2025 — aims to strengthen existing laws to curb tobacco use more effectively and reduce tobacco-related morbidity and premature deaths.

Key provisions include banning the sale of tobacco products within 100 metres of educational institutions, hospitals, clinics, sports venues and children's parks, and imposing fines up to Tk 5,000 for violations. The amendment is expected to reinforce protections for vulnerable populations and reduce exposure to tobacco products near sensitive areas.

Source: <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/advisory-council-approves-tobacco-control-amendment-ordinance-2025-1318311>

Public health and advocacy groups in Bangladesh have welcomed the approval, describing it as a timely step toward strengthening public health and supporting long-term reductions in tobacco use.



Global Leaders Adopt Historic UN Declaration to Accelerate Tobacco Control

In December 2025, world leaders adopted a landmark United Nations Political Declaration on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health, reaffirming global commitment to reducing tobacco use as a top public-health priority. The declaration, endorsed on 16 December 2025, outlines stronger national actions to curb tobacco consumption, expand cessation services, and address emerging nicotine products. It urges countries to scale up implementation of WHO FCTC measures, including higher taxation, comprehensive smoke-free laws, and eliminating tobacco industry interference. WHO highlighted that reducing tobacco use remains central to meeting NCD mortality targets by 2030. The declaration marks a renewed global push to accelerate prevention efforts and protect future generations from tobacco-related harms.

Source: <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-12-2025-world-leaders-adopt-a-historic-global-declaration-on-noncommunicable-diseases-and-mental-health>

China Intensifies Crackdown on Illicit Tobacco and Tightens Controls on E-Cigarette Industry

China has launched a sweeping regulatory drive to strengthen oversight of both illicit tobacco and the rapidly expanding e-cigarette industry. Following a State Council directive issued on 18 December 2025, authorities initiated a full-chain crackdown targeting illegal manufacturing, unregistered nicotine products, and unauthorized retail and online sales. In parallel, on 25 December 2025, the State Tobacco Monopoly Administration introduced stricter rules on e-cigarette production capacity, investment flows and licensing requirements to curb oversupply and eliminate non-compliant manufacturers. These combined actions mark one of China's strongest enforcement waves to date, aimed at protecting youth, enhancing product safety, and bringing discipline to a highly fragmented market. Public-health experts say the measures signal China's growing commitment to tighter regulation of novel nicotine products.

Source: <https://www.2firsts.com/news/breaking-news--china-deploys-full-chain-crackdown-on-illicit-tobacco-enforcement-storm-looms-for-illegal-tobacco-and-e-cigarettes>

WHO FCTC Global Progress Report Shows Stronger Global Tobacco-Control Measures in 2025

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) released its 2025 Global Progress Report in December, highlighting significant advancements made by Parties in strengthening national tobacco-control measures. The report documents expanded smoke-free laws, higher tobacco taxation, stronger packaging and labelling requirements, and enhanced regulation of novel nicotine products across multiple countries. Many Parties also reported improved enforcement systems and increased public-health investment to reduce tobacco-related disease burden. The findings reflect growing global momentum toward achieving the FCTC's long-term goal of reducing tobacco prevalence and protecting populations from secondhand smoke. The report serves as an evidence base for policymakers and underscores the need for continued vigilance against industry interference.

Source: WHO FCTC Global Progress Report, December 2025 <https://fctc.who.int/docs/librariesprovider12/meeting-reports/2025-global-progress-report-on-implementation-of-the-who-fctc.pdf>



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

Editorial Team : Chief Editor - Dr. Sonu Goel, Professor, PGIMER Chandigarh

Associate Editor - Dr. Rana J Singh, Director – Tobacco Control, South-East Asia, Vital Strategies

Guest Editor - Dr. Hansa Kundu, Technical Advisor (Enforcement), Vital Strategies

Assistant Editors - Mr. Rajeev Kumar Chaudhary, Project Coordinator, PGIMER Chandigarh, Dr. Jatina Vij, Technical Officer-RCTC &

Tobacco Endgame Hub, PGIMER Chandigarh, Dr. Ravita Yadav, Technical Officer-Taxation, PGIMER Chandigarh

Logistic Support - Ms Deepali Dhiman, Admin cum Finance Officer

Disclaimer: While every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the content in this newsletter, PGIMER Chandigarh will not be responsible or liable for any errors or omissions.

