

ACT - India News

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

FCTC UPDATE

EDITORIAL

When the FCTC closed for signatures on 29th June 04, there were in all 169 signatories with 32 countries having ratified the convention. India led the efforts throughout the process. ACT-India can proudly take a large share of the credit for this since the Indian representation at the FCTC negotiations in Geneva was mainly the AFTC (Advocacy Forum for Tobacco Control) that was convened by ACT-India.

AFTC is composed of the following:

*P. C. Gupta (Vice President ACT-India)
Convener*

ACT-India – S. S. Shastri

CERC, Ahmedabad- M. Shah

CPAA, Mumbai - A. Kapadia

PATH Canada (India)- S. John

HRIDAY SHAAN, Delhi - S. Reddy/M. Arora

Salaam Bombay - P. Somani

M. Aghi - Independent Consultant, Delhi

VHAI, Delhi – T. R. Roy

Rajasthan Cancer Society, Jaipur - R. Gupta

School of Preventive. Oncology, Patna - D. Sinha

VOICE, Delhi - B. Mishra

ISAS, Lucknow - B. Ramakant

Sanrakshan, Delhi – R. Khanna

The challenge before us now is to see that “The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement & Regulation of Trade, Commerce, Production, Supply & Distribution) Act” 2003 is implemented to the last word.

Dr. Surendra Shastri **Dr. Nilesh Ingole**
Editor **Asst. Editor**

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco control (FCTC), a global treaty which requires member countries to impose restriction on Tobacco advertising, promotion & sponsorship, establish clean indoor air, and new packaging of Tobacco products was closed for signature on 29th June 2004.

Till date 169 countries have signed the treaty & 32 have ratified. 8 more ratifications are required to make the track clear for the convention to become a binding international law. The treaty will enter into force and become law for the countries that are parties to FCTC, 90 days after the 40th ratification.

The regional breakdown for ratification is as follows:

- Americas, AMRO (4 of 35): Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay;
- European, EURO (6 of 54): Hungary, Iceland, Malta, Norway, San Marino, Slovakia
- African, AFRO (4 of 46) Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles
- Eastern Mediterranean, EMRO (2 of 22): Jordan, Qatar
- Southeast Asian, SEARO (6 of 11): Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Sri Lanka
- Western Pacific, WPRO (10 of 27): Brunei, Dar-e-Salaam, Cook Islands, Fiji, Japan, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Singapore, Solomon Islands

You will notice that the South East Asian Region is far ahead in terms of both

signing as well as ratification of the FCTC. Whereas countries like Australia and Canada, which have fairly stringent provisions against tobacco advertisement are yet to ratify. The UK and European Union countries are expected to ratify soon. The United States of America, China and Brazil, which account for over 80% of the world production of tobacco, have not made any progress in the process of ratification.

APACT

The 7th Asia Pacific Conference on Tobacco or Health (APACT) was held in Kyongju, South Korea between 15-18 September 2004. Hundreds of Public Health advocates from 39 countries participated in the conference. A Declaration called Kyongju Declaration-Korea 2004 was made during the APACT, where in governments, business & individuals in Asia were called upon to:

1. Protect non-smokers from exposures to second hand smoke by expanding smoke free areas in all Public places, Work place including Restaurants, Bars, & places frequented by children. This includes all international & national sporting events such as Beijing Olympics, Southeast Asian games & ASEAN Para games.
2. Ratify & implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control by not later than mid 2006 including the articles recommending protection from exposures to tobacco smoke, taxation policy, effective pictorial health warnings, cessation support, control of smuggling and removal of duty free sales of tobacco products.
3. Recognize the unique harmful aspects of tobacco and place on public health in all free trade agreements.
4. Exclude the Tobacco companies from all Tobacco control policy committees & anti smoking campaigns.

5. End all forms of direct and indirect Tobacco advertising, promotion, sponsorship & other marketing activities including the sponsorship of sporting events such as formula 1 racing, adventure activities & ASEAN art awards.

This declaration presents an excellent opportunity for us particularly in Asia Pacific region to take action locally.

TOBACCO COMPANIES MANIPULATED NICOTINE

The US government opened a \$280 billion civil trial against the giants of tobacco industry arguing that they manipulated the nicotine for decades to keep the smokers hooked on cigarette.

The government alleges that cigarette makers conspired for decades to deceive the public about the dangers of smoking and addictive nature of nicotine and marketed cigarettes illegally to children. Former Food and Drug commissioner Mr. David Kessler said that tobacco companies controlled nicotine levels by blending different kinds of tobacco leaves to get the nicotine needed to satisfy a smoker's addiction. He also stated that cigarette makers secretly kept nicotine levels high even in "low tar" brands and also added ammonia to enhance the addictive effect.

The tobacco companies are fighting the allegations that they committed a fraud by hiding about the dangers of smoking. If they lose, the tobacco industry would become bankrupt. This suit was first filed by the Clinton administration and has taken five years to reach the trial and government has spent \$135 million on the case so far.

The defendants in this case are Marlboro maker Phillip Morris USA Inc and its Parent, Altria Group Inc; R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company; Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company; British American Tobacco Ltd.;

Lorillard; Leggett group Inc; Council for Tobacco research – U.S.A.; and Tobacco Institute.

TOBACCO AND YOUTH

Smoking stars influence teenage smoking?

Yes, a three-year study published in the American Journal of Public Health concluded, teenager girls who have never smoked a single puff of cigarette are more likely to start smoking if their favourite movie star smokes in the movie.

Seeing the movie stars smoking in the film is one of the ways of glamourising the habit and thus encouraging the teens to smoke. This attitude of On-screen tobacco use by popular actors, celebrities could undermine the efforts to keep children away from tobacco use.

I am sure you must have noticed how Indian film stars, notably Shah Rukh Khan and Ajay Devgan are seen smoking particular brands of cigarettes in almost every frame in their movies. We also see Akshay Kumar and Jackie Shroff advertising for Red & White bravery awards which is nothing but surrogate advertising. There are historical references that Hollywood film stars usually top guns are paid large amounts to smoke in their movies. I am sure, Bollywood would not remain back in copying even this aspect of Hollywood.

TOBACCO AND HEALTH

Smoking during pregnancy could cause Cleft lip / Palate

Findings from UK study have confirmed previous reports which link smoking during pregnancy with an increased risk of the cleft lip and cleft palate. Maternal smoking during the first trimester of pregnancy increased the risk of cleft lip by 1.9 fold and risk of cleft palate by 2.3 fold. The risk was directly related to the amount smoked.

Childhood Exposures to Tobacco Smoke may increase risk of back pain in the later life

Exposures to the second hand smoke in the child hood may increase the risk of developing back and neck problems in the later life, says a new study carried out at University of Oslo, Norway.

The study showed that adults exposed to tobacco smoke are more likely to take long sick leave due to spinal problems. But what extent of exposure to Tobacco smoke could lead to work disability during adult hood is not known.

Father's smoking is also harmful to the offspring

A study reported in American Journal of Epidemiology says, fathers who are exposed to "Significant levels" of chemicals found in cigarette smoke & air pollution are at a higher risk of having children who develop brain tumors. These chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are found in tobacco Smoke & Industrial byproducts.

TOBACCO CESSATION

Personalised medicines for quitting

Smoking is the principal avoidable cause of premature deaths in UK. One in two smokers dies prematurely. Dr. Rob Walton of Dept of Clinical Pharmacology of Oxford University carried out a research which focuses on personalised medicine designed to enhance people's chances of Quitting Smoking.

A single Nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) have been identified that have highly predictive association with nicotine addiction and Tobacco Consumption. These SNPs can help individuals decide which specific cessation methods would be effective thus offering personalized treatment to the smoker, increasing their chances of quitting.

Teens use Nicotine Replacement Product While Smoking

A disturbing trend of misusing Nicotine replacement products is seen among the teenagers in U.S while they are still smoking. According to a study conducted in US, 75% of teenagers admitted to using NRT products for reasons other than quitting. NRT is used by these teens in situation where they could not smoke e.g. while in school. Nicotine being a powerful, addictive drug, overdose of nicotine can happen if misused leading to unpleasant side effects.

Want to prevent smoking? Have a banana

According to research done at the National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO) in Kawanda, Uganda. Eating Bananas as a part of a regular diet could save many smokers from their habit of smoking. The researchers have proved that bananas can help people to quit smoking because of their high levels of Vitamins C, A, B₆, B₂ as well as potassium & magnesium found in them.

'QUIT Tobacco Clinic' at Tata Memorial Hospital

The Department of Preventive Oncology at Tata Memorial Hospital has a quit tobacco clinic that combines behavioral therapy with pharmacotherapy to help people quit tobacco. This clinic has been in operation since 31st May 2002 and 750 nicotine addicts have benefited from the services till date. ACT-India members are encouraged to refer tobacco users (all kinds – smokers / chewers), who are desirous of quitting tobacco to this clinic. Appointments can be scheduled between 9.30 am to 5.30 pm, Monday – Friday on telephone no. 24154379

Tobacco Companies Funding Medical Schools in Canada

A Survey conducted in Canada reported that almost half the University Medical Schools admitted that they accept funds

from tobacco industry. These were either in form of research funds or donation.

Medical schools accepting money from tobacco companies means helping the tobacco industry to sell their products and make people sick, whereas Medical Schools are for improving people's health. Shouldn't these schools have certain policies and rules which would make it difficult for the faculty or institution to accept tobacco money?

Eau de Fags: Tobacco scented aftershave – don't miss the stink

A new fashionable addition has emerged in the men's face care range in Scotland, an aftershave with the scent of tobacco.

As Scotland is moving ahead to ban smoking in public places, a departmental store is selling this aftershave and people are coughing upto £ 48 for a bottle.

INDIAN SCENARIO

One more communist bastion falls

There is a ban now on smoking in the parliament premises. Certain specified areas where smoking will not be allowed since they are public places are Central Hall, the corridors & lobbies. This decision was taken at an all-party meet convened by the Loksabha Speaker Mr. Somnath Chatterjee. This is one call the left parties can't publicly protest against. Indeed charity begins at home.

Should Tobacco Products have Pictorial warnings?

India ratified the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in Feb 2004. This does not compulsorily require a pictorial warning on tobacco products packs but the health ministry wants to do so. There should be pictures of Skull & bones along with new statutory warnings like 'Tobacco kills' or 'Tobacco causes cancer'.

The Cigarette Companies are asking a three year time period for Implementation as they need so much of time to get over the logistics changes required for the new packaging requirements. Singapore has recently told their cigarette makers that they will need to put pictorial warnings on their tobacco products, as a result newly designed cigarette packs carrying gruesome pictures to show deadly efforts of tobacco have begun appearing on the packs two weeks ahead of the government deadline.

'Wills' loses its name

'Wills' one of the largest selling cigarette brands in India is about to lose its name. ITC has decided to separate the brand name wills from its cigarette business so as to promote its wills lifestyle stores, its apparel retail venture without facing charges of surrogate advertising following the recent law on ban on all forms of tobacco advertising from 1st May 2004.

ITC has decided to sell and promote its Wills brand name as 'Navy Cut' that means they will have to part from their famous ad line "Made for Each other".

Courting Contempt

What an irony, the law is broken in a place where it is supposed to be preached and practiced. It looks as if breaking rules is the right of lawyers. How does one explain the apathy shown by the legal experts and Litigants towards the orders of the Supreme Court on ban on Smoking in public places, which also includes court premises? This is a clear violation of the Cigarette & Tobacco products (Prohibition of advertisement and regulation of trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act 2003. Dear friends this is the right time for all anti -tobacco activists to write to the Bar associations & administration of the courts to take a legal action against the offenders and make the court premises smoke free.

Mobile Smoking Lounges (courtesy Godfrey Phillips)

Smoking in public places and advertisement of the tobacco products are banned by the government. But the Tobacco Industry seems to have gone a step ahead. Godfrey Philips (India) Ltd. a cigarette manufacturing company had stationed a ' Mobile Smoking Lounge' outside popular shopping Malls in Gurgaon & Mumbai. The argument given by the company was that this kind of a concept has been tried for the first time & it is just a Consumer Service and not a Promotional Campaign. But the fact is the lounge is stationed in public place and is used by many people, which amounts to violation of the law.

A major setback – SC says Maharashtra and Andhra State Governments cannot Ban Gutka

The Supreme Court recently passed an order lifting the ban on production and Sale of Gutkha and Pan Masala in the State of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. The Supreme Court in its judgement said the state governments do not have the power to prohibit manufacture and Sale of Gutkha and Pan Masala products, this power is solely with the Central Government and the state only has a ' transitory ' power to ban these products for a short period.

This judgement has come as a big setback to anti tobacco groups and Medical Professionals but the Pan Masala and Gutkha manufacturers have welcomed the supreme courts ruling. The ban had succeeded in keeping Gutkha & Pan Masala from the children's reach, now Gutkha will be sold near the schools and the children may have an easy access to it.

As the state ban was lifted on the technical and jurisdiction grounds, it is the time for everyone working towards tobacco control to come together and oppose the SC order and advocate to the central government to bring a central ban on Production and Sale of Gutkha and Pan Masala in the interest of Public

Health. Although the Health Ministry official said if these two States approach us, we can think of any action atleast for the states concerned.

ACT - India Elections

It is election season and ACT-India is not far behind. We would like to remind you that the ACT-India 'Organisational Elections' & 'General Body Meeting' will be held on 25th Oct 2004 at 6.00 p.m. in the lecture hall 2nd floor, Golden Jubilee Bldg., Tata Memorial Hospital. All of you must have received election related communications (nomination form and notice of election) from the Election Officer, Dr. Aparna Bagwe that we sent you along with the last newsletter in August. The last date for filing nominations is 11th October. Don't fail to perform you duty.

The elections will be held for the post of President (one post) & Executive Committee Members (ten positions). After elections the newly elected Executive Committee will select 6 office bearers (Vice President, Secretary, 2 Joint Secretaries, Treasurer & Joint Treasurer) from amongst themselves in consultation with the President.

Members living outside headquarters area (Mumbai) should note that they may file nominations provided they are willing to attend the elections and (if elected) the Executive Committee meetings, in person, in Mumbai, at their own cost. ACT-India is also considering the formation of National Council, which shall comprise of Board of Trustees including Managing Trustees, Executive Committee Members at head quarters and atleast one representative from different states and Union territories of India having branches of ACT-India. The term of National Council will be two years and they shall meet atleast once a year, possibly at the time of Annual General Body Meeting. Members desirous of representing the National Council from outside headquarters area are requested to send letters of intent to the secretary.

ACTivities

1. A study on smokeless tobacco use, birth weight, & gestational age: population based, prospective cohort study of 1217 women in Mumbai, India by Dr. P.C Gupta was published in British Medical Journal, June 2004, Vol. 328:1538. This Study concluded that Consumption of Smokeless tobacco during pregnancy decreases the gestational age at birth and birth weight independent of gestational age.
2. A Refresher Training Programme on Verbal Autopsy was conducted for the sample Registration System Supervisors from 12th - 16th July 2004 in Mumbai

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

1. ACT -India organizational Elections and General Body meeting will be held on 25th October 2004 at 6.00 p.m. in the lecture hall, 2nd floor Golden Jubilee Bldg. Tata Memorial Hospital.
2. A National Training Workshop for Medical doctors on 'Assigning the cause of death' will be held from 28-30th October 2004 at Tata Memorial Hospital.

ACToons



"I'll never ask to be transferred to an office that allows smoking again."