

The News

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GOOD USE OF TECHNOLOGY: A man is cleaning peanuts with the help of a fan at Ganjmandi in Rawalpindi. — Hanif Khattak

IMPLEMENTATION OF

Banks, offices have highest level of compliance

Shahina Maqbool
Islamabad

Banks, followed by offices, have the highest level of compliance of tobacco control laws. Public service vehicles and restaurants, on the contrary, are conspicuous for maximum violation of sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002, reveals a survey carried out in 36 cities of Pakistan.

The survey, which has been conducted by the Coalition for Tobacco Control (CTC) Pakistan, covered 25 districts in all. Its purpose is to monitor the implementation of tobacco control statutes during the month of October 2010 and to provide the Tobacco Control Cell with an evidence-based report regarding the current status of implementation of the 2002 Ordinance. Similar surveys will be conducted on an ongoing basis every three months to observe the changes in the situation of implementation of tobacco control laws.

Members of CTC were sent pre-tested survey forms and were asked to visit various locations for an assessment of the implementation of tobacco con-

trol statutes. The forms contained both observational and asking questions. No open-ended questions were asked. The implementation of Sections 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Ordinance were observed at all locations including 140 restaurants, 165 offices, 134 banks, 280 public transport vehicles, 36 commercial areas, 144 cigarette selling outlets and 139 educational institutions.

According to the survey, only 30.7 per cent of the restaurants (43 out of 140) had displayed a 'No Smoking Zone' while 69.3 per cent (97 out of 140) had no such sign; people were seen smoking in 50 per cent of the restaurants. The staff of less than one-eighth of the total restaurants was aware of the ban on smoking in restaurants.

In 30.5 per cent of the offices (18 out of 59), people were seen smoking in the 'No Smoking Zone' despite the fact that the staff of 74.4 per cent (121 out of 165) of the offices was aware of the ban on smoking in public places. 35.7 per cent (59 out of 165) offices surveyed had a No Smoking Zone board visible, while 64.3 per cent did not.

As high as 79.8 per cent banks (107 out of 134) surveyed had a 'No Smoking Zone' board

visibly displayed while 20.2 per cent did not. In 14.9 per cent (16 out of 107) of the banks, people were seen smoking in the 'No Smoking Zone.' The staff of 88.8 per cent of the banks (119 out of 134) was aware of the ban on smoking in public places while the staff of 11.2 per cent of the banks did not know that smoking was banned in public places. In 72.1 per cent (202 out of 280) of the vehicles observed, people (including the driver and assistant) were smoking while there was no smoking in 27.1 per cent of the vehicles. The drivers and conductors of approximately 61 per cent of the vehicles did not know that smoking in public service vehicles was banned. In 39.1 per cent of the vehicles (79 out of 202), the driver and conductor were aware of the ban on smoking in public service vehicles.

Of the 36 commercial areas observed, 8 (22.2%) had billboards displaying a tobacco advertisement while 28 did not. Three were located near shopping areas and two were on main roads. Four of these billboards were 10 feet or more in width, while one was less than 10 feet wide.

At only 19 out of 144 outlets, cigarette packs without warning

were being sold. Sales to minors were taking place at 77 per cent (111 out of 144) of the cigarette sales outlets. Moreover, merchandise for children was being sold at 88 per cent (127 out of 144) of the cigarette sales shops.

Sixty-six per cent (92 out of 139) of the educational institutions had a cigarette sales outlet in close vicinity. Nine educational institutions, out of 139, had cigarettes available in their canteen for sale. There was presence of cigarette advertising near approximately 17 per cent (24 out of 139) of the educational institutions.

In conclusion, the report observes that the compliance of the tobacco control statutes at different public settings is directly related with the level of awareness of the group of people involved. Smoking Zones are still allocated in restaurants to facilitate smokers in complete violation of the law. "An in-depth analysis of the reasons for accepting tobacco laws (other than just awareness) may be helpful in promoting a smoke-free environment. In this regard, the federal and provincial health authorities should play a role by facilitating and monitoring future interventions," the report recommends.