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TOBACCO CONTROL



”Azad: For an effective implementation of anti-smoking law, there is a need to enhance resources and create more awareness

The Networks for Consumer Protection
Executive Coordinator **Dr Arif Azad**

Public vehicles, restaurants worst in implementing anti-smoking law

A survey finds compliance to tobacco laws directly related to level of awareness

CORRESPONDENT
ISLAMABAD

Scores of people continue to smoke in offices and public places, oblivious to the law that strictly prohibits the practice.

A recent survey underscored the flaws in the administrative machinery implementing the “Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002”.

The Coalition for Tobacco Control - Pakistan (CTC-PAK) carried out a survey in 25 districts of the country under which different public places, including 140 restaurants, 165 offices, 134 banks, 280 public

transport vehicles, 36 commercial areas, 144 cigarette selling outlets and 139 educational institutions were monitored.

The survey aimed to provide evidence-based reports to the Tobacco Control Cell of the Ministry of Health.

The compliance to the tobacco laws was found to be the highest in banks, followed by offices, while the most violations were observed in public service vehicles and restaurants.

According to statistics, only 30.7% of the restaurants displayed “No Smoking Zone” signboards. Where offices were concerned, 30.5% had people smoking in prohibited zones.

At only 19 out of 144 cigarette selling points, packs were being sold without warning. Sales to minors was taking place at 77% of the cigarette sales outlets. Educational institutions presented a bleak picture as well, with 66% having a cigarette-sale outlet close to their building.

The survey found out that the compliance of tobacco control laws was directly related to the level of awareness among people.

Talking to the *Express Tribune*, The Networks for Consumer Protection Executive



HEALTH HAZARD: Health official found smoking in the ambulance. PHOTO: EXPRESS TRIBUNE

Coordinator Dr Arif Azad blamed lack of monitoring and weak implementation of the law by the Ministry of Health.

“Many people do not know where to complain if a person is violating the law,” he added.

He said the heads of all the organisations should read the anti-smoking law and implement it in their offices.

For an effective implemen-

tation of the law, there is a need to enhance resources and improve the medium of communication for creating awareness among the general public, Dr Azad said.

Waqar Sheikh, a regular smoker, said, “I know I affect other people by smoking in the public. But then where should I go? There is no area designated for smoking.”

Talking to the *Express Tribune*,

Ministry of Health Director General Tobacco Control Cell Yousaf Khan said they are making all out efforts to effectively implement the anti-smoking law, but it will take time.

“From May 30, 2010, we started effective enforcement of tobacco control laws in the country. Since then, there has been an improvement,” he said.

30.7

percentage of the restaurants displayed 'No smoking Zone' signboards