

ADVOCACY NEWSLETTER ON TOBACCO Control Reforms

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It was depressing to hear policy makers crowing about the progress Pakistan Tobacco board have made in terms of attracting foreign exchange of 454.1 million and initiating a project worth four hundred forty million rupees at a policy meeting the other day. When such praise is heaped upon tobacco industry, totally ignoring the health costs and mountain of tobacco deaths, which stand at 100,000 deaths annually, one tends to fall into ever more depressing mode. With such stark figures of mortality resulting from tobacco use, exhorting more revenue generation from tobacco sounds so bizarre and out of joint, to say the least.

These bald exhortations brought home to me the huge challenge Tobacco Free Pakistan has become for public health professionals and tobacco control advocates alike. Though the government has responded to the challenge of tobacco use reduction through a variety

Tobacco Control: Bridging the Research Policy Gap

of measures, the goals have remained unmet due to multiple issues of inadequate funds, abysmally low literacy rate, growing smoking prevalence among health professionals and youth – all powered by financial and PR muscle of the tobacco industry in the developing world.

Despite apparent policy measure like banning cigarette advertisement, restricting tobacco use in many places, disincentives in terms of higher taxes, a robust, multi-stranded country specific tobacco control strategy remains an urgent priority. Worse, whatever we have in the name of tobacco control policy is rendered ineffective due to poor enforcement mechanism, poor coordination among various stakeholders and lack of joined up action between different actors.

It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that health and economic productivity of Pakistan faces serious threat from growing tobacco consumption. For more than a decade TheNetwork has been engaged in raising alert and awareness about the issue of tobacco consumption from Tobacco Free Initiative to Bloomberg Grant Initiative. TheNetwork is engaged in public health education, through its policy research, advocacy, networking, lobbying, publication and mobilizations

to beef up governmental efforts at tobacco control. Future success shall require more policy advocacy backed up by evidence-based policy research. Furthermore, more collaborative efforts between civil society and government are crucial to achieving tobacco control efforts.

TheNetwork, as a leading advocacy and research organization, is firmly and, historically, of the view that a fine balance of public health education, public awareness and policy advocacy can go a long way in persuading people to wean away from smoking and helping government in winning public health battle of tobacco reduction.

A campaign has been launched by The Network for Consumer Protection with the support from Bloomberg Grant Initiative with a view to knitting packaging reforms into the existing tobacco laws through appropriate amendments. As part of this initiative, TheNetwork seeks to produce and disseminate a series of newsletters to wider community of those with a stake in the tobacco control issues. The newsletter will showcase consolidated information, research findings, and best practices in tobacco control efforts.

Tobacco Control Law Swirls Up in Smoke;



hotels & restaurants and educational Institutions. The survey that spanned over three weeks during the month of April covered a sample of 20 sites that included 4 bus terminals, 6 educational institutions, 3 hospitals and 7 restaurants & hotels.

State of Implementation Prohibition of Smoking & Protection of Non-Smokers' Health Ordinance, 2002 came into effect from 30th of June, 2003. The ordinance takes into account a complete ban on smoking at all public places, institutions and public service vehicles. It prohibits sale of cigarettes to under 18 and restricts the sale and advertisements of tobacco products within 50 meters of any educational institution.

State of the implementation of Prohibition of Smoking & Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002 in twin cities, Rawalpindi & Islamabad

Lack of awareness, inadequate implementation mechanism and political will, business interests and wily tobacco industry's vigorous promotional campaigns remains stumbling blocks in the way of effective implementation of the tobacco law: TheNetwork's monitoring survey;

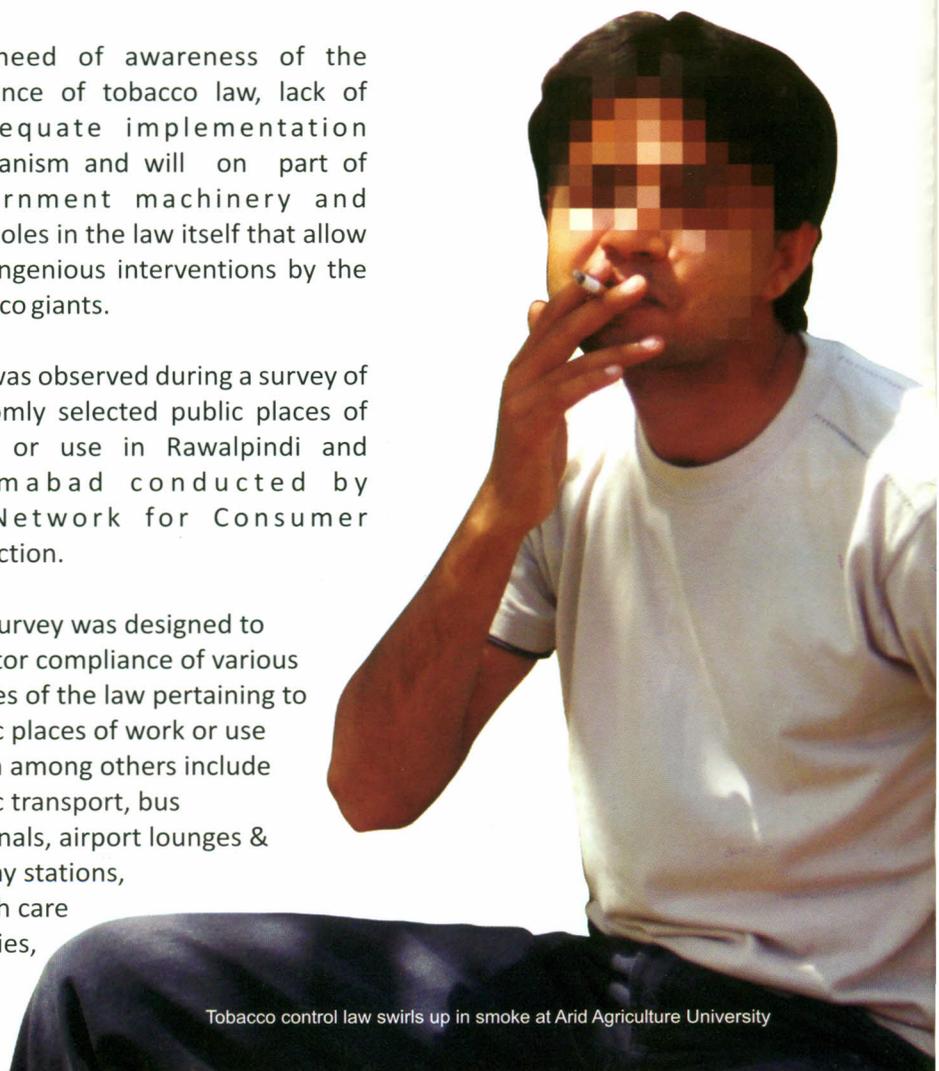
Highlight

Prohibition of Smoking & Protection of Non-Smokers' Health Ordinance, 2002 that came into effect nearly six years ago still remains to be fully enforced in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The educational institutions, hospitality industry, public and private hospitals, offices and bus & wagon terminals do not observe the law for

the need of awareness of the existence of tobacco law, lack of inadequate implementation mechanism and will on part of government machinery and loopholes in the law itself that allow for ingenious interventions by the tobacco giants.

This was observed during a survey of randomly selected public places of work or use in Rawalpindi and Islamabad conducted by TheNetwork for Consumer Protection.

The Survey was designed to monitor compliance of various articles of the law pertaining to public places of work or use which among others include public transport, bus terminals, airport lounges & railway stations, Health care facilities,



Bus Terminals:

Commuters and bus staff flout the tobacco law alike; Islamabad Traffic Police does little and acts as a spectator; taxis wrest complete immunity from the law; situation calls for strict enforcement and vigorous informational campaign.

terminals except Daewoo were witnessed grossly violating the tobacco law. The open violation is due to loopholes in existing tobacco control law as it does not ensure a monitoring mechanism of the enforcement. The law enforcers in this case i.e Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP), bus/van conductors and drivers, the adda managers as notified through an SRO (Statutory Regulatory Order) **SRO 654(1) 2003** are either not fully aware of law or are not equipped to handle various situations arising from time to time.

Educational Institutions:

A mayhem as for as the tobacco law goes Cigarette sale, storage and advertisement within 50 meters of educational institutions is on rise;

Article 6 of the law relates to the prohibition of smoking in public service vehicles and categorically states that no person shall smoke or use tobacco in any other form in any public service vehicle. To monitor this, TheNetwork survey team visited the four busiest bus terminals in the twin cities: Golra Bus Stand, Aabpara, Skyways Faizabad, in Islamabad and Sammi Daewoo in Rawalpindi. The general bus

Article 9 prohibits storage, sale and distribution of cigarettes or any other smoking substance within an area of 50 meters from any college or school or educational institution. Hamdard University, Bahria University & Quaid-i-Azam University, SKANS and F.G College for Men H-9 Islamabad, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Gordon College and Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi were visited to

observe the situation.

A visit to Hamdard University F-8 Campus, Islamabad reveals cigarette sale within 50 meters of university campus. Posters of a newly introduced and other cigarette brands are pasted on walls of stores. These posters carrying attractive offers of gifts for smokers were meant to lure the youth studying at the university.

SKANS, just a few yards away from the Hamadard University campus is a case in point. SKANS is declared a smoke-free college by the administration.

Bahria University Islamabad is with a designated smoking area within the campus. Although smoking is not allowed in cafeterias of the university but administration has announced a Designated Smoking Area adjacent to class rooms. This raises a question has University provided a room to students for puffing at the campus.

The situation at Quaid-i-Azam University and Arid Agriculture University is rather deteriorating. The blatant violation of Tobacco Control Law by Teachers and Students remains a challenge for the ministry of health.

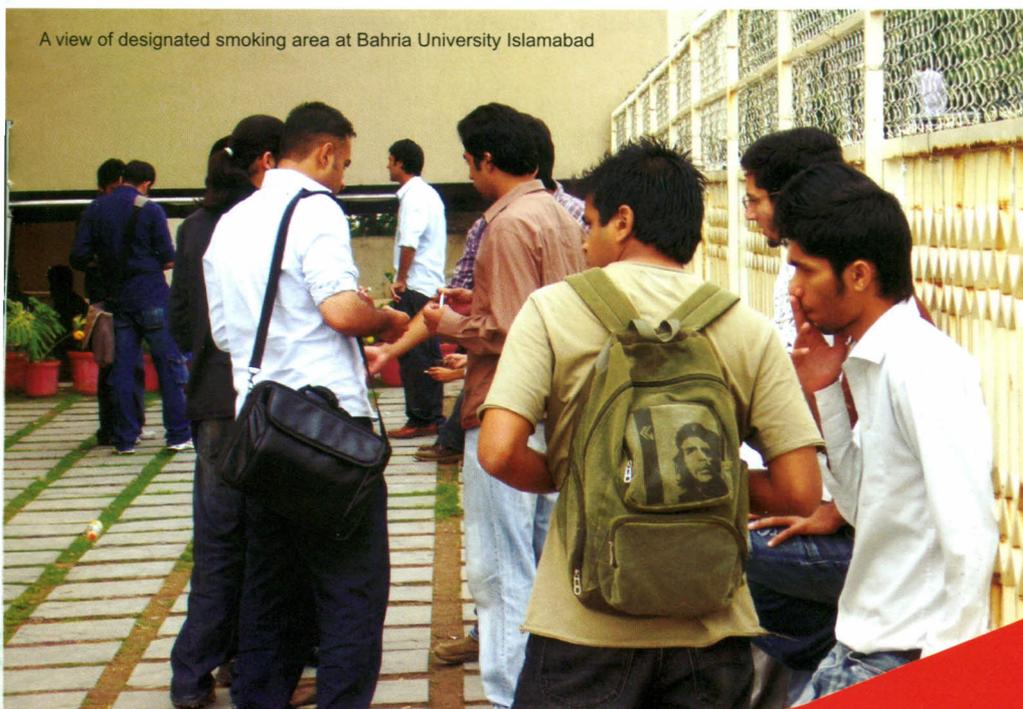
Health care Facilities:

Tobacco law remains shrouded in smoke in Healthcare facilities?????

Article 5 deals with public sector hospitals being the places visited by hundreds of patients and their attendants who are ever more in need of a healthy environment. The two hospitals visited were Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital, Rawalpindi and Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences, Islamabad. The situation at



A view of designated smoking area at Bahria University Islamabad





Blatant violation of tobacco control law by doctors and visitors was observed at RGH

the two health facilities was unsatisfactory and not up to the scratch. The observations follow:

Tobacco control law remains shrouded in smoke at Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital. Although No Smoking signs are conspicuously placed at hospital but are disregarded. Smoking is an unrestricted practice by doctors and visitors while many visitors were seen smoking right under the sign of "No smoking". The two waiting areas **Muhammad Ismail & Sardar Begum Waiting areas** for attendants have a tuck shop that sells cigarettes and tempts the attendants to violate the law. Empty packs and cigarette butts were found scattered not only in the waiting areas but in front of Operation Theater of the hospital.

The same situation of blatant violations exists at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences Islamabad.

Hotels & Restaurants:
Hospitality industry puts down tobacco control law;

Article 5: Prohibition of smoking and

other tobacco use – no person shall smoke or use tobacco in any place of public work or use. McDonalds, F-9 Islamabad, KC Grill, F-7 Islamabad, Pappasallis, F-7 Islamabad, Savour Foods, Jahangir, Namak Mandi, Rawalpindi: KFC Rawalpindi, Pearl Continental, Best Western, Holiday Inn and Serena Hotels were visited to observe the state of implementation of tobacco control law. Most of the dining places have postured No Smoking signs at a visible spot but compliance goes with minimal standards. Smoking is ban at

McDonalds and has established a good example. Few restaurants have established Designated Smoking Areas and compliance go hand in hand at Pappasallis, KFC and Pizza Hut to comfort their customers. Not a single sign of No Smoking was seen at Pearl Continental Hotel. People can smoke in the cafés and halls. Though hotel administration has declared few tables as Designated Smoking Area again violating the law is not enough to achieve the smoke-free environment. Hotel Best Western, Serena and Holiday Inn



International fast food chains have their own standard

have more or less same opinion on issue of indoor smoking as PC Hotel Rawalpindi.

Deadly consumer product like tobacco is being sold in the name of drugs?

A famous drug store in blue area Islamabad was observed selling a wide variety of cigarette brands, tobacco products and sheesha along with flavored tobacco.

It is a matter of grief and apprehension that the promoters of tobacco products have no concern about exploitation of the ethics and violation of national law. Only concern is related to the maximization of their income anyway. A pharmacy chain in



Rawalpindi and Islamabad has established separate corner for the sale of Sheesha, imported brands of cigarettes and other tobacco products where each and every sort of Sheesha is available. Most throbbing aspect of the issue is that they have decorated best quality cigarettes and other tobacco products in a shameless manner. What a link between the life saving drugs and the business of selling death. The question arise here that what is the criteria of issuing license to drug and chemist stores? Are drug stores allowed to sale and store tobacco products in the name of drugs?

Campaign for Advocacy & Awareness:

Letters to Hotels & Restaurants:

The Government of Pakistan has promulgated "Prohibition of Smoking and Protection of Non-Smokers' Health Ordinance 2002". The Ordinance prohibits smoking in public places i.e. offices, hotels, restaurants, educational institutions, hospitals and public service vehicles etc, and prohibits sale and promotion of tobacco products in and around educational institutions vide section 5 and 6.

Under section-10 of this Health Ordinance 2002, the Owner or Manager or In-charge of public place shall display the board both in and out side the premises at prominent place stating "Smoking is an offence" and declaring the area as "No smoking Zone." Any person who contravenes the provisions of section-10 of the Ordinance shall be punishable with fine which may extend from one thousand (1000) to one lac (100,000) rupees.

TheNetwork for Consumer Protection initiated a campaign of letter writing to hotels & restaurants of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in April 2009. The campaign focused on advocacy & awareness for the effective implementation of tobacco control law. TheNetwork requested the hoteliers to declare their dining areas a smoke-free place.

Letters to High Government Offices:

It was observed that special cigarettes in attractive packing with the monogram of Aiwan-e-Sadar are being purchased. These cigarette packs were being presented to the distinguished guests of Aiwan-e-Sadar occasionally. This practice was also being carried out at the Prime Minister & Governor Houses. TheNetwork in this regards wrote to the President, Prime Minister and four Governors to discourage the purchase/supply of special cigarette packs in pursuit of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and goal of a smoke free Pakistan.

It was a great success of TheNetwork's advocacy & awareness campaign that few days after dispatching the letter, President of Pakistan passed an order on June 10, 2009 to stop the purchase of special cigarette packs for Aiwan-e-Sadar¹. The President marked a history at a time when tobacco industry in Pakistan was trying to influence the decisions of Ministry of Health. Governor Balochistan and Governor N.W.F.P also responded TheNetwork that the tradition of purchase of special cigarette packs is ended up there.



¹ Daily Jang, June 11, 2009 (page 1)

National Advocacy Conference on Tobacco Control

Wednesday, 28th October, 2009
Islamabad Hotel

Organized by



Tobacco Control Cell
Ministry of Health



The Network
for Consumer
Protection



World Health
Organization



Mehnaz Ajmal, Mrs. Shaheen Masud, DG Health Dr Rasheed Jooma, Dr. Khaleef Bille Country Representative WHO, Dr. Arif Azad

National Advocacy Conference to Form a Grand Alliance for Tobacco

A National Advocacy Conference for Formulation of Grand National Alliance for Tobacco Control was organized by The Network for Consumer Protection in collaboration with National Tobacco Control Cell, Ministry of Health on Wednesday, October 28, 2009 at Islamabad Hotel. Director General Health, Dr. Rasheed Jooma chaired the Inaugural session of the conference. Health professionals, representatives of relevant ministries, legal experts, media persons, tobacco control advocates, legislators and a large number of people from other walks of life gathered to participate the conference.

The overarching objectives to organize the National Advocacy

Conference were to place tobacco control on policy and legislative agenda through sensitizing and



Director General Health Dr. Rasheed Jooma is addressing

informing the policy –makers, opinion formers, tobacco control advocates and legislators to form a grand alliance for more collaborative and focused efforts for effective

tobacco control. The overall goals to achieve were

- Over viewing the state of implementation of the tobacco control law in the country
- initiating a debate to identify and remove the lacunas of tobacco control legislation 2002 for its effective implementation
- discussing the role of policy makers in policy formulation and implementation
- sensitizing and informing policy makers about tobacco control legislation and advocacy campaigns
- Building up a grand alliance of

stakeholders on tobacco control

Welcoming remarks and conference objectives were presented by Dr. Arif Azad, Executive Coordinator TheNetwork for Consumer Protection. Mrs. Shaheen Masud, DG Implementation (FCTC) shared the



Dr. Arif Azad Executive Coordinator
TheNetwork for Consumer Protection

efforts and achievements of Tobacco Control Cell regarding effective tobacco control. Director General Health, Dr. Rasheed Jooma chaired the inaugural session of the conference. Other speakers of the inaugural session were Dr. Khalif Bille, Country Representative WHO and Dr. Fouad Aslam, Technical Officer The Union.

Session 1

Global and Regional Perspectives on Tobacco Control/MPOWER-Lessons for Pakistan

Key speakers of the session were Ms. Noor Amna Malik, Higher Education Commission, Prof. Dr. Nusrat Araa Majeed, Cardiologist and Head of Medicine Rawalpindi General Hospital and Holy Family Hospital, Dr. Fazal-Qayyum, Director Health Services, N.W.F.P, Mr. Noor Ullah, Provincial Coordinator Tobacco Control Balochistan, Mr. Shahzad Alam Khan, National Officer Tobacco Control, WHO, Dr. Javid A. Khan, Pulmonologist and chairperson National Alliance for Tobacco Control.



Yasmin Rehman and Mr. Shafqat Muneer

Session 2

Implementation and Policy Making in Tobacco Control

Key speakers of the session 2 were Mr. Majid Bashir, Director Legal Press Council Pakistan, Mr. Shahfqt Muneer, Development Journalist and Ms. Yasmeen Rehman, Member National Assembly, Member Parliamentary

After the concluding session, a resolution was passed by the participants of the National Advocacy Conference to submit to the legislators for effective policy making for tobacco control.

A Grand alliance was formed to work together for effective tobacco control in Pakistan.



Mr. Majid Bashir, Director Press Council Pakistan

Dr. Zia Udin Islam, Dr Syeda Batool Mazhar, Noor Amna Malik, Shahzad Alam Khan

SYRIA: Tough new law against killer tobacco

President Bashar al-Assad has signed a much tougher anti-smoking law in Syria in December 2009 which will come into force in early 2010. This law bans smoking on all public places and covers all tobacco products including cigarette, cigar and traditional Shisha as well. According to the Syrian Society for Countering Cancer, 60 percent of adult men and

23 percent of women smoke; 98 percent of people are said to be affected by passive smoking. The more serious health effects which the measures hope to reduce include lung and mouth cancer, as well as respiratory diseases. The levels of these diseases are not documented in the country, but doctors report an increase in the number of people exhibiting symptoms associated with them.

The Syrian government has already passed several laws regulating the tobacco industry and smoking. A 1996 decree banned tobacco advertising and in 2006 Syria banned smoking in government offices and public transport. The new law envisages a 2,000 SYP (US\$44) fine on the violators of law.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=87304>

Research at Waterloo University proves the effectiveness of pictorial warnings on cigarette packs:

University of Waterloo Review has published a research regarding effectiveness of pictorial warnings on cigarette packs in Canada. The article states that shocking pictures of diseased lungs, a brain damaged from a stroke and other disturbing images that appear on cigarette packs are effective to inform people about the harms of smoking and motivate smokers to quit.

Canada was the first country to introduce pictorial warnings in 2001 and, over the past nine years, 30 other countries have introduced similar Canadian-style pictorial warnings on tobacco packaging. Many other countries are considering doing so.

Although smoking rates have declined in Canada, as they have in



many high-income countries such as Australia and those in Western Europe, smoking still remains by far the biggest killer in Canada.

Currently, 37,000 Canadians die each year of smoking - more than AIDS, car accidents and illegal drug use combined

Health warning labels on tobacco

packaging are the most cost-effective tool for educating smokers and non-smokers alike about the health risks of tobacco use. This is especially important in low- and middle-income countries, where there are few other sources of information about the health risks.

"Canada was the shining example for the world when their pictorial warnings came out," Fong said. "Many years later, we know that the effectiveness of the Canadian warnings have declined considerably. We hope that when Canada's new warnings are introduced, they will again lead the world in their innovation and effectiveness."

http://insciences.org/article.php?article_id=6347

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