

*The tobacco pandemic is a communicated disease. It is spread through advertising, through the example of smokers and through the smoke to which non-smokers – especially children – are exposed. Our job is to immunize people against this pandemic.*

*Gro Harlem Brundtland, Former Director- General World Health Organization.*

Survey Report

**Impact of tobacco promotion  
on  
the smoking patterns/ behaviors  
among young adults**

Conducted by

**Tobacco Free Initiative- Pakistan**



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**Introduction:**

An overwhelming majority of independent and peer reviewed studies have established tobacco promotion as a cause of increased tobacco consumption. Although the tobacco industry knows this, it continues to indulge in its unethical marketing practices promoting its products to all sections of the society. The concept of civil society empowers individuals with a generalized responsibility to act with regard to the interests and collective life of the community. Tobacco promotion not only undermines these interests but also disrupts the collective life adding to the problem of increasing tobacco consumption.

Every year, tobacco kills 4.9 million people worldwide -- about 500 million people alive today will eventually be killed by tobacco. More than half of these people are now children and teenagers. By 2030, tobacco is expected to be the single biggest cause of premature deaths, accounting for about 10 million deaths per year.

With trade barriers being curtailed to liberalize global trade, the tobacco industry has found a haven in many developing countries, where there are often no laws designed to regulate and monitor their activities. There is also an enhanced competition amongst the makers of tobacco products to capture these emerging markets, resulting in lower prices, greater advertising and promotion expenditures, and other similar activities that stimulate demand for their product.

The tobacco industry, like all other profit making industries, depends upon consumers for its growth. Advertisements offer a means to create a positive image of tobacco products and link them to desirable personal traits. Their objective is to stimulate and increase demand for the product and broaden the base of people using it.

The tobacco industry pours billions of dollars into promoting its cigarettes around the world. Advertisements form a central part of these campaigns and are carefully designed and based on the habits, tastes and desires of targeted potential customers. These campaigns also take into consideration social and cultural aspects and include slogans that are specific and appealing to each society or intended age group.

Countries like Australia, Finland, France, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, Thailand and Turkey recognized the increasing threat of tobacco consumption and have imposed bans on all kinds of promotion of the tobacco products. The European Union aims to phase out all types of tobacco promotion by the year 2006. But countries like Pakistan, dependent on the perceived economic gains from the tobacco industry, are still deliberating on how to tackle the issue focusing on the economic argument rather than its health impact.

The Government of Pakistan promulgated the ordinance entitled 'Prohibition of Smoking at Public Places and Protection of Non-Smokers Health Ordinance 2002' aimed at placing restrictions on the promotional campaigns of the tobacco industry. These restrictions though partial in nature, are the first statutory move towards the regulation of these promotional campaigns.

Pakistan has also ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). FCTC is the world's first global agreement devoted entirely to tobacco control. Issues addressed in FCTC include tobacco advertising and promotion, smuggling, taxes, cessation and treatment, passive smoking and tobacco product regulation.

Tobacco Control activists and researchers across the world have advocated for a comprehensive ban on all kinds of tobacco promotion. According to World Bank Report, 'Curbing the epidemic' "Bans on advertising and promotion prove effective, but only if they are comprehensive, covering all media and all uses of brand names and logos."

Tobacco Free Initiative - Pakistan, (TFI-Pak) a project of TheNetwork for Consumer Protection carried out a nationwide survey to assess the following:

1. The impact of tobacco advertising on the smoking behavior of youth (15-24 years) who are the most vulnerable to these promotional claims
2. The perception by youth of the various promotional campaigns of the tobacco industry undertaken under its corporate social responsibility drive.

**Survey methodology:**

**Survey scope:**

Nationwide survey

**Resource team:**

TFI team at TheNetwork (Islamabad) and regional resource teams at provincial capitals (Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta)

**Data collection technique:**

Direct interviews through enumerators

**Data collection tool:**

Designed questionnaire

**Sampling technique:**

Stratified simple random sampling

**Study subjects (respondents):**

Young adults of age 15-24 years

**Sample size determination:**

**Sample size calculation:**

$$S = \frac{z^2 \{p(1-p)\}}{d^2}$$

where S= sample size

z= percentile of the standard normal distribution (95% CI: z=1.96)

d= one half the width of the desired sample confidence interval

p= population proportion

For sample size determination, we assumed that 30% of young adults are influenced by the direct or indirect promotional tactics used by tobacco manufacturing companies. And we are interested

in determining the sample size that if large number of samples are taken, 95% of the proportions obtained in the sample will fall between 5 to 55 percent (worst acceptable confidence limits), if the true mean is 30%. It is also true that 95% confidence limits calculated for each of these samples will include 30%, 95% of the time.

**Adjusted sample size:**

Upward adjustment of sample size is done to allow margin for non-response and other factors that decrease the yield of useable response.

It is assumed that the expected non-participation would be 40%, and 10% would be the non-response to any given question. So, S (adjusted) is determined by multiplying it by 100/50.

**Sampling assumption:**

Samples must be simple random or representative of population

**Population distribution:**

Population distribution of young adults (15-24 years) is as follows: (Table 1)

**Table 1: Population distribution (15-24 years)**

Regions	Total (15-24 years)	
	N	%
Islamabad	175282	0.71
Punjab	13933490	56.4
Sindh	5986330	24.3
NWFP	3355001	13.5
Balochistan	1235052	5.0
Total	24685155	100

*(Note: Population of FATA is excluded)*

*(Source: Population Census Organization, 1998)*

**Sampling plan: (Considering entire population of age 15-24 years of Pakistan)**

Calculated sample size: 323

Adjusted sample size at 50%: 646~ 650

Adjusted sample of size 650 is distributed on the basis of percentage of population of age 15-24 spread among four provinces and federal capital. (Table 2)

**Table 2: Sample distribution**

Area	Adjusted sample size
Islamabad	5
Punjab	367
Sindh	158
NWFP	88

Balochistan	32
Total	650

### **Results:**

A total of 650 interviews were conducted from the four provincial capitals and surrounding suburbs and the Islamabad Capital Territory. The sample size distribution was based on the percentage of population in the five study areas. (Table 3)

**Table 3: Province wise distribution of study sample:**

Sr.	Region	Number of interviews conducted	%age of interviews
	Balochistan	32	4.9%
	Punjab	367	56.5%
	NWFP	88	13.5%
	Sindh	158	24.3%
	Islamabad	5	0.8%

The mean age of interviewees was 20 years (range 14-26). Eighty seven percent (n = 564) were males. The educational background varied from illiterate to 16 years of schooling with the most common group being those who had finished five years of schooling. The details are given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Educational Background of interviewees:**

	Educational Status	No of interviewees (650)	%age
1	Illiterate	44	6.8%
2	Class 1-5	36	5.5%
3	Class 6-10	231	35.5%
4	Intermediate	181	27.8%
5	Bachelors	108	16.6%
6	Masters	32	4.9%
7	Any other	15	2.3%

Overall, the incidence of smoking amongst the respondents was 36.3 % (n = 236/650). Forty percent amongst male respondents were smokers (n = 225/564) while amongst females the incidence of smokers was 12.8 percent (n =11/ 75). Both these results were statistically significant to a p-value of 0.000.

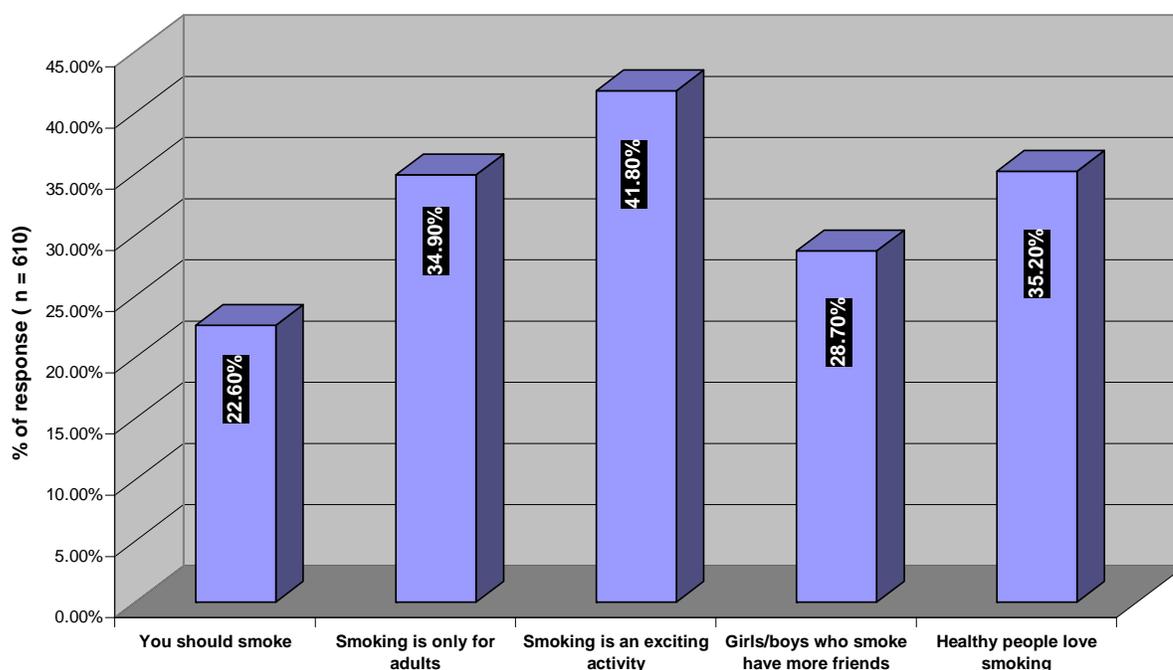
Ninety four percent (n= 610/650) of respondents had seen or heard advertisements related to tobacco. Electronic media was the most common media for seeing tobacco advertisements followed by billboards and cigarette sales outlets. The frequency of these, in descending order is given in Table 5.

**Table 5: Sources of seeing or hearing tobacco advertisements:**

Sr.	Question	Yes	%age (n=610)
1	Electronic media (TV)	605	(99.2%)
2	Billboard	507	(83.1%)
3	Cigarettes Outlets	490	(80.3%)
4	Sponsoring Massages	459	(75.2%)
5	Newspaper	433	(71.0%)
6	Radio	412	(67.5%)
7	Magazine	401	(65.7%)
8	Internet	181	(29.7%)

Those who responded positive for having seen tobacco advertisements through one or more media were asked about their perceptions about the messages being conveyed to them by these advertisements. 41.8 percent indicated that the message they had received was that smoking is an exciting activity. The details are given in picture I.

**Picture 1: Messages perceived from tobacco advertisements**



The mean age of respondents who had seen or heard tobacco advertisements was 21 years. All the smokers belonged to the group who had seen tobacco advertisements (n = 236/610, 38.6%, p = 0.000). When asked about the duration of smoking, 22.5 percent (n = 53/ 236) had been smoking for more than 5 years and 39.4 percent (n = 93/236) had been smoking for a period between one to five years.

The study population was also assessed for the impact of exposure to tobacco promotion on smoking behaviors. All the 40 interviewees who had not seen tobacco advertisements on any media belonged to the non-smokers' group. Amongst the smokers, 26.7 percent (n = 63/236) reported as being inspired by a tobacco advertisement to take up smoking, while 6% of the non-smokers (n = 25/414) expressed the intention of taking-up smoking in future.

The smokers were also asked for their intention of switching over brands after seeing or hearing the tobacco advertisements of a particular brand. Positive response came from 12.3% smokers (n = 29/236).

The study also analyzed the impact of the campaign undertaken by the tobacco industry in Pakistan to support the government's efforts to ban underage selling of tobacco products. 57.4 percent (n = 373/650) believed that underage selling restrictions do not work and 47.8 percent (n = 311/650) admitted that they thought that the message they had received from this campaign was that it was alright to smoke after eighteen years of age.

The study also analyzed the various perceptions of youth regarding the promotional campaigns of the tobacco industry under its corporate social responsibility drive. The perceptions about other messages related to tobacco industry's promotional messages are given in Table 6

**Table 6: Interviewees' perception about tobacco industry's corporate social responsibility campaigns:**

Sr.	Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	Is planting trees by tobacco manufacturing companies a kind of tobacco promotion technique?	407(62.6%)	241(37.1%)
2	Mobile dispensaries set by tobacco companies a kind of tobacco promotions	479(73.7%)	166(25.5%)
3	Do lucky gift schemes stimulate you to start or increase smoking?	226(34.8%)	421(64.8%)
4	Have you ever received a free sample from any tobacco company during last one year?	60(9.2%)	585(90%)

### **Discussion:**

Our study has revealed striking relationship between how tobacco industry is behaving in changing attitudes of young adults through its promotional campaigns. Ninety four percent of respondents having seen or heard of tobacco advertisements shows the belligerent marketing of tobacco products to Pakistani youth across the country.

Tobacco kills a smoker every 8 second. In Pakistan alone, 0.1 million people die annually due to tobacco related illnesses. The tobacco industry in order to maintain its market

constantly needs new smokers. The advertising and promotion of tobacco products are therefore mainly focused on young people, who the tobacco industry sees as the source of replacement smokers. According to the tobacco industry itself, “They [young people] represent tomorrow’s cigarette business. As this 14 - 24 age group matures, they will account for a key share of the total cigarette volume for at least the next 25 years”. This was written by one of the industries executives, J.W.Hind of R.J Reynolds Tobacco, now owned by the Japan Tobacco in an internal memorandum, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1975

Having thirty six percent smokers in our study sample is by itself a significant finding as it corresponds to similar prevalence in the entire adult Pakistani population in the studies conducted before. But more alarming is the upward trend in the use of tobacco amongst the females compared to the national figures available that are estimated to be 9% by the World Health Organization, whereas it stands at thirteen percent in our study group.

The tobacco industry, in order to undermine tobacco promotion bans has since long been arguing on the grounds that their advertisements are designed to convince existing smokers to change brands and not to initiate smoking; an argument that is convincingly rejected by the findings of our study. All the respondents who claimed not to have seen a tobacco advertisement were non-smokers. On the contrary, more than one fourth of the smokers ingenuously admitted for being inspired by tobacco adverts to initiate smoking. However, not more than twelve percent of smokers favoured of being convinced enough to switch over brands through the advertising glamour. This relationship was statistically significant and indicates the linkage between smoking and tobacco promotion. 41.8 percent also reported that the advertisement they had seen gave them the message that smoking was an exciting activity.

Various studies have established the age of initiation of smoking amongst the youth as 14 – 20 years. The study also confirms this as the mean age of the smokers was 21 years and 22.5 percent had been smoking for more than five years thus a significant population initiated smoking at the age of 17 years. These results should be considered while developing future strategies for tobacco control in Pakistan as the young are still vulnerable to this habit and we need to focus on this age group..

The tobacco industry in Pakistan has also undertaken a campaign in which they claim that they do not sell cigarettes to under 18s. A majority of the respondents (63 percent) in our study did not believe that under age selling restrictions work in Pakistan. The responses of the youth in the study and their perceptions of this campaign substantiate the stance taken by various segments that this campaign reinforces the idea that it is alright or normal to smoke once you are eighteen years of age.

The tobacco industry across the globe is now claiming to be ‘Socially responsible’ and have launched various media campaigns to this effect. Anti-tobacco activists have opposed these campaigns labeling them as mere promotion of tobacco rather than anything else. The tobacco industry in Pakistan in recent past has used planting of trees, setting up of mobile dispensaries and other activities for their social responsibility drives.

The reporting of a significant number of respondents (62.6 percent for tree plantation drive and 73.7 percent for mobile dispensaries) that they perceive these as promotional

tactics of the tobacco industry indicate that these should be brought under the ambit of existing regulations for tobacco promotion and regulated on the same principles.

There have been recent advances in regulating tobacco promotion in Pakistan through legislations and ratifying international treaties but these now need to effectively implemented and strategies need to be put in place for chalking out a road map to achieve comprehensive bans on all kinds of tobacco promotion in Pakistan.

**Conclusion:**

Tobacco promotional campaigns continue to affect our youth and directly affect their attitudes towards initiation of smoking. The increase in the prevalence of smoking in females indicates that more needs to be done in terms of developing a comprehensive policy towards achieving a decrease in tobacco consumption in Pakistan.

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*\*References are available on request.*