

TOBACCO CONTROL IN SIKKIM



Problem Statement

Tobacco is a major risk factor for Non Communicable diseases such as Cardio – Vascular Diseases, Respiratory Diseases and Cancer. In Sikkim, smoking tobacco is the most common form of tobacco product used and was prevalent throughout the State. At a point of time smoking cigarettes was indeed considered to be a fashion statement.

Programme Description

The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Product Act 2003 were implemented in the State in the Year 2008. During the initial stages awareness campaigns were conducted and No Smoking signages were put up in public places such as Government Offices. A series of sensitization and training workshops were conducted for Programmes Officers, Law Enforcers including Police Officers, Medical Officers and Health Personnel, Members of the Civil Society and Non-Government Organizations in both urban and rural areas. Within two years Sikkim was declared Smoke Free State.

To ensure the gains made through tobacco control are maintained have been a challenge for the State. There have been efforts to maintain the same rigor through orientation trainings, workshops, awareness programs to Law Enforcers, Health Officials, Members of the Civil Societies, Faith Based Organizations and Non – Government Organizations along

with constant monitoring and supervision by the Tobacco Control Cell. Radio spots / TV spots are being given prime importance to generate mass awareness.

There is also a special enforcement squad, at the State and District level, comprising of Designated Nodal Officers of different departments. To enforce this act at the rural level School Principals, teachers, Panchayats MPHW Male/female, Health Assistants are given the designated powers.

In 1997, Sikkim passed the “Sikkim Prohibition of Smoking and Non Smokers Health Protection Act, being one of the few states to do so. Smoke free Public Place is only small component of overall Tobacco Control. Currently, the State is working towards achieving a comprehensive tobacco control including Tobacco Free Sikkim. This effort includes mass awareness campaigns, coalition building with special focus on tobacco and integrating tobacco mitigation efforts in other routine activities. This effort is fortified with continuous monitoring and enforcement strategies. To curtail the supply tobacco products such as gutka have been banned. There is no advertisement or visibility of tobacco products

Program Impact

The efforts in tobacco control has led to total ban on smoking in all indoor public places, outdoor public places such as roads and markets. It has resulted in no smokers in public places.

Though there are cases of smoking in Public places as it is social laws has been dramatic changes in prevalence of smoking in Public Places and perception of common men on tobacco has changed dramatically.

Scalability

The Health Departments in all States need to collaborate with other departments for comprehensive tobacco control and enforcement of COTPA in all States. Despite many challenges in maintaining the efforts, tobacco free environment is the first step towards a tobacco free society and is an attempt towards comprehensive tobacco control.

For further details contact

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