



**ASSESSMENT OF CIGARETTES AND OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS ACT (COTPA)
IMPLEMENTATION IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A STUDY FROM HILL
STATE OF NORTH INDIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: The tobacco consumption accounts for almost a million of deaths every year in India. The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA, 2003) was passed to curb the menace of tobacco. In Himachal Pradesh, the tobacco consumption has become quite evident particularly among adolescents and youth. **Aim and objectives:** (i) to determine implementation status of Section 4 (Prohibition of smoking in public places) around educational institutions and (ii) to determine implementation status of section 6b (Prohibition of sale of tobacco products near educational institutions) under COTPA in district Bilaspur. **Methodology:** The secondary data was taken about implementation of guidelines under COTPA in educational institutions situated in Block Markand, district Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh during months of November and December 2021. Twenty-five educational institutions were evaluated with the help of checklist. The data analysis was done. **Results:** All the 25 educational institutions were found to have 90 or more score (out of 100) regarding implementation of COTPA guidelines. Nodal Officer from the educational institution was appointed in all. Displays of “Tobacco free area” signage and “Tobacco free Education Institution” signage was found in all educational institutions. Tobacco control activity was organized in all the educational institutions during last six months. Tobacco monitors were designated in all the educational institutions. Out of 25, only 04 educational institutions did not have marking of 100 yards. No significant difference was found between mean scores of high schools and senior secondary schools regarding implementation of COTPA guidelines for educational institutions. **Conclusion:** The implementation of section 4 and section 6a under COTPA was found to be satisfactory in block Markand, Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh.

KEYWORDS: COTPA, Educational Institutions, Tobacco, India.

INTRODUCTION

The use of tobacco is a leading cause of preventable death all over the world. World Health Organization (WHO) has established MPOWER to help countries fulfill the obligations under FCTC (Framework Convention on Tobacco Control), the policies of which are proven to reduce tobacco use.^[1] India is a signatory to the FCTC. In 2003, the Government of India passed the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA, 2003).^[2] In India, tobacco accounts for almost a million of deaths every year. Nearly 28% of population aged 15 years and above consume some form of tobacco in India as per Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2017.^[3] As per Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2019, 8.5% of students aged 13 to 15 years currently used any tobacco product. The lowest prevalence was found in

Himachal Pradesh (1.1%) whereas highest prevalence was found in Arunachal Pradesh & Mizoram (58.0% each). Regarding school policy, 85.0% and 83.0% of school heads were aware of COTPA 2003 and the policy to display ‘tobacco free school’ board, respectively.^[4]

Substance abuse particularly among adolescents and youth has become quite evident in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the form of alcohol, tobacco products, cannabinoid and opium extracts. The patterns of substance use have evolved constantly, and from ceremonial or occasional use historically, it has now become a regular part with the impact of globalization, urbanization, industrialization, media influence and changing lifestyle. The stress and anxiety, low self-esteem, susceptibility to peer pressure and problems associated with education or career has become ideal catalyst for adolescents and youth to get trapped in the

substance abuse. This hilly state is worldwide known tourist destination. The floating population of tourists in Bilaspur has flare up the problem who caught various times carrying drugs with them in the state. Bilaspur share its border with the state capital Shimla and the state of Punjab where studies have reported alcohol and tobacco use among adolescent and youth.^[5-8] The state has already declared as tobacco free in the year 2013.^[9] However, 16% of population still consume tobacco in the state. Although it has been reported that tobacco consumption reduced significantly in state of Himachal Pradesh by 24% as per GATS 2017 report.^[3]

State has set targets to reduce tobacco consumption to less than 10% and 5% by years 2024 and 2030, respectively. National Health Mission, Himachal Pradesh scaled up and sustained anti-tobacco efforts in educational institutions (EIs) of the state to protect the vulnerable population especially the adolescents and college going young adults from exposure to tobacco use. The directions were issued to stakeholders to take all necessary measures to start special campaign to provide momentum to implementation of tobacco control initiatives among adolescents and young adults and to make all free education institutions Tobacco free. The present study was done with **aim and objectives** (i) to determine implementation status of Section 4 (Prohibition of smoking in public places) around educational institutions and (ii) to determine implementation status of section 6b (Prohibition of sale of tobacco products near educational institutions) under COTPA in district Bilaspur.

METHODOLOGY

Study area, Study design, Study period

The present study was conducted in Block Markand, District Bilaspur of the state Himachal Pradesh, a hilly state in north India. The secondary data about implementation of guidelines under COTPA in educational institutions as per check list obtained during month of November and December 2021 was taken from the public health, medical record section of Civil Hospital Markand.

Sampling technique

Twenty-five schools were visited during the study period to check implementation of guidelines under COTPA.

Data collection

A team consisting of Medical Officer, Pradhan Gram Panchayat and Representative from Educational Institution did evaluation of every educational institution as per check list provided by Department of Health & Family Welfare, Mission Director (NHM) Himachal Pradesh vide letter no. NHMHP-NCD0GEN/4/2019-NCD-11539, 24358 dt. 13.09.2021. The check list had 09 criteria, and each criteria was given weightage points (maximum points were 100). If any educational institution obtained 90 or more points, then it was certified as Tobacco Free Educational Institution by

concerned Block Medical Officer which remain valid for one year.

The data of each check list was entered and analysed with the help of Microsoft Office Excel 2007 version. Descriptive analysis was represented as number, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The comparison between score obtained by educational institutions was done using t test, taking p value <0.5 as significant.

Ethics: The ethical approval to conduct the study was taken from Department of Health & Family Welfare, State of Himachal Pradesh vide letter No. Health-A-B(15)3/2021-2757.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

All the 25 educational institutions were found to have 90 or more score regarding implementation of COTPA guidelines as shown in Table 1. Nearly one third of them (09/25) had scored 100 *i.e.* maximum achievable. Nodal Officer from the educational institution was appointed in all.

Display of "Tobacco free area" signage was found inside the premises of all educational institutions. Similarly, display of "Tobacco free Education Institution" signage was found at entrance/boundary wall of all educational institutions. The name, designation and contact numbers were mentioned in all the signages. No evidence of use of tobacco products inside the premise was found in any of the educational institutions. Awareness materials like posters on harm of tobacco was displayed in premises of all the educational institutions. Tobacco control activity was organized in all the educational institutions during last six months. Tobacco monitors were designated in all the educational institutions. There was inclusion of 'No Tobacco Use' norm in code of conduct guidelines of all the educational institutions.

Marking of 100 yards area from the outer limit of boundary wall/fence was found in 21 educational institutions. Rest four educational institutions (all senior secondary schools) did not have marking of 100 yards. However, no shop was found to be selling tobacco products within 100 yards of any of the educational institutions.

The mean, standard deviation (S.D.) and range of score obtained according to implementation of COTPA guidelines is given in Table 2. No significant difference was found between mean scores of high school and senior secondary school regarding implementation of COTPA guidelines for educational institutions (Table 3).

Table 1: Distribution of scores obtained by educational institutions regarding implementation of COTPA guidelines.

Final Score	Educational Institutions		Total N=25
	High School N=10	Senior Secondary School N=15	
90	0	1	1
91	0	1	1
92	0	2	2
93	1	5	6
94	1	1	2
95	2	0	2
97	2	0	2
100	4	5	9

Table 2: Score (Mean, Standard deviation and Range) according to implementation of COTPA guidelines (N=25)

Criteria	Max. Score	Score obtained			
		Mean	S.D.	Minimum	Maximum
Overall Score	100	95.80	3.55	90	100
1a. Display of Tobacco Free Area signage inside the premise	10	9.88	0.33	9	10
1b. Name/ Designation/ Contact number mentioned in the signage	10	9.88	0.33	9	10
2a. Display of Tobacco Free Education Institution signage at the entrance/ boundary wall	10	9.88	0.33	9	10
2b. Name/ Designation/ Contact number mentioned in the signage	10	9.88	0.33	9	10
3. No evidence of use of tobacco products inside the premises	10	9.88	0.33	9	10
4. Poster or other awareness materials on harms of tobacco displayed	9	8.76	0.44	8	9
5. Organization of at least one tobacco control activity during last 6 months	9	8.52	0.87	6	9
6. Designation of Tobacco Monitors	9	8.52	0.82	6	9
7. Inclusion of 'No Tobacco Use' norm in code of contact guidelines	9	8.36	1.25	4	9
8. Marking of 100 yards area from the outer limit of boundary wall/fence	7	5.44	2.60	0	7
9. No shop selling tobacco products within 100 yards	7	6.72	0.79	4	7

Table 3: Comparison of education institutions regarding implementation of COTPA guidelines.

Criteria	Educational Institution*	N	Max. Score	Score		P
				Mean	S.D.	
Overall Score	HS	10	100	97.10	2.77	0.114
	SSS	15		94.93	3.87	
1a. Display of Tobacco Free Area signage inside the premise	HS	10	10	10.00	0.00	0.082
	SSS	15		9.80	0.41	
1b. Name/ Designation/ Contact number mentioned in the signage	HS	10	10	10.00	0.00	0.082
	SSS	15		9.80	0.41	
2a. Display of Tobacco Free Education Institution signage at the entrance/ boundary wall	HS	10	10	10.00	0.00	0.082
	SSS	15		9.80	0.41	
2b. Name/ Designation/ Contact number mentioned in the signage	HS	10	10	10.00	0.00	0.082
	SSS	15		9.80	0.41	
3. No evidence of use of tobacco products inside the premises	HS	10	10	10.00	0.00	0.082
	SSS	15		9.80	0.41	
4. Poster or other awareness materials on harms	HS	10	9	8.80	0.42	0.712

of tobacco displayed	SSS	15		8.73	0.46	
5. Organization of at least one tobacco control activity during last 6 months	HS	10	9	8.30	1.06	0.355
	SSS	15		8.67	0.72	
6. Designation of Tobacco Monitors	HS	10	9	8.50	0.97	0.928
	SSS	15		8.53	0.74	
7. Inclusion of 'No Tobacco Use' norm in code of contact guidelines	HS	10	9	8.20	1.23	0.609
	SSS	15		8.47	1.30	
8. Marking of 100 yards area from the outer limit of boundary wall/fence	HS	10	7	6.50	1.08	0.056
	SSS	15		4.73	3.08	
9. No shop selling tobacco products within 100 yards	HS	10	7	6.80	0.63	0.668
	SSS	15		6.67	0.90	

*HS = High School; SSS = Senior Secondary School

In present study, the section 4 and section 6a under COTPA were found to be adequately enforced in the educational institutions except for 04 where violation of 6b was found. Goel et al. also found that best compliance was shown by educational institutions in Chandigarh which could be due to good administration followed in educational institutions. Educational institutions also performed well with regards to implementation of Section 6 of COTPA. However, some violations occurred in and around the campuses, which may be due to lack of proper monitoring by administrators within the institutions and also a lack of strong policies to keep in check the violating factors outside the campuses.^[10]

Pradhan et al observed in a study of COTPA implementation in educational institutions that signages were found to be appropriately displayed as per section 4. However, 44% to 90% of the educational institutions violated Section 4 of COTPA in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. The observed educational institutions in Karnataka reported on average 4% violations, whereas all the other districts reported more than 74% violations of Section 6b of COTPA.^[11] A similar study conducted among educational institutions and public places in Bangalore city showed 67% violated Section 4 and 47% violated Section 6b.^[12] A study conducted by Hriday Organisation in Delhi and Tamil Nadu also reported similar results where overall, 89% of the public places did not display the 'No Smoking Area – Smoking here is An Offence' signage at any entrance.^[13] The study by Yadav et al showed that violations of the provisions of Section 6 of COTPA were widespread around both private and government EIs in Delhi.^[14] It was found in studies conducted in states of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, and Bihar, the sale of tobacco products within a radius of 100 yards to be in range of 46% to 65% of educational institutions in 2012–2013. Similarly, the non-existence of the statutory display boards prohibiting sale of tobacco products outside schools in these states was reported in range of 71% to as high as 98% of educational institutions.^[15-19]

High compliance to Section 4 under COTPA ranging from 82% to 100% was found in surveys conducted across the country of India.^[20] However, few studies showed poor compliance to the legislation with active

smoking of 52.5%.^[21] It has been observed that tobacco products are sold to minors and within 100 yards of the school radius. The studies conducted in Mumbai and Odisha showed that 82.4% and 24.8% schools have tobacco selling establishments within the radius of 100 yards, respectively, while 36.6% respondents who were being sold tobacco products were minor.^[22-23]

Various studies have shown that there was a strong association between smoke-free campuses and students behavior toward smoking. Similarly, studies conducted globally has shown association between the attitude of school personnel toward the tobacco products usage and supportive measures on tobacco control policies. The enforcement of the smoke-free law was more vigilant by school principals who never smoke or were former smokers than those who were current smokers. They were also quite supportive on different measures for tobacco control (87%–95%).^[24-26] Several persons are authorized to enforce Sections 4 and 6b of COPTA. It is also the role of the person in-charge of affairs at the educational institution to ensure compliance.^[27-28]

Section 4 can be enforced by the active participation of the authorities at educational institutions, but Section 6b enforcement by the educational institutions authorities would require the help of police officers to deal with shopkeepers selling tobacco products near these educational institutions. Training of police officials on COTPA laws for educational institutions must be conducted with the help of the District Tobacco Control Cell.

It is joint responsibility of all the keys stakeholders' departments i.e. Health, Home, Education, Panhayati Raj, Rural and Urban Development, District administration, Health safety and regulation to work for effective implementation of tobacco free educational institute guidelines, in both public and private sector.

LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted during timings of educational institutions. The sale of tobacco products to minor beyond their timings could not be ascertained. The study involved 25 educational institutions only. The better situation regarding implementation of COTPA section 4 and section 6a could have been observed if more number

of educational institutions across the district Bilaspur were included.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of section 4 and section 6a under COTPA was found to be satisfactory in block Markand, Bilaspur. Nevertheless, students, teachers, law enforcers and the community must be made aware of the COTPA laws, and efforts must be made to ensure its compliance.

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