

# Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Regarding Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act among Adults in Bangalore City

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## Abstract

**Background:** India was one of the first few countries that ratified the FCTC. The Government of India formulated “The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Act (COTPA)” on May 18, 2003. The implementation of this law remained largely ineffective in the initial years. The Government of India reviewed the situation and revised the law, with effect from 2nd October 2008, making additional provisions to improve the implementation of smoke free law. **Materials & Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among adults aged 18 years and above to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding cigarettes and other tobacco products act (COTPA). A total of 430 subjects were determined based on an anticipated awareness level of 30%. The subjects were randomly selected from the wards in the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Municipal Corporation in Bangalore, Karnataka. It focused in particular on specific issues of tobacco control, including burden of tobacco, prevalence of its use, production and control. **Results:** Among 430 subjects of the study 227 (52.7%) were males. The mean age of the study population was  $39.57 \pm 15.8$  (range 18-72), majority (54.8%) belonged to 18-40 age group. Regarding awareness about Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 43.2% of the participants were aware of any Act/Legislation related to tobacco products. Regarding use of tobacco products, more than half (66.7%) of the study population was found to be exposed to tobacco products either in past or present. **Conclusion:** The policy makers should consider newer options such as starting a help line for quitting tobacco to regulate the use of tobacco with consideration that most of the smokers were reluctant in quitting tobacco even after the implementation of various anti-tobacco measures under COTPA.

## Key Words

Knowledge; attitude; practices; COTPA

## INTRODUCTION

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death and more than five million people die globally from the effects of tobacco every year.<sup>[1]</sup> Every eight seconds someone, somewhere in the world, dies as a result of tobacco use.<sup>[1]</sup> It is reported that by the year 2030, the death toll is likely to exceed eight million people a year.<sup>[2]</sup> Awareness about hazardous health effects of tobacco has increased over time owing to widespread campaigns in media, but its role alone towards attainment of tobacco free India

remains questionable. Although the tobacco industry claims it creates jobs and generates revenues that enhance local and national economies, the industry's overriding contribution to any country is suffering, disease, death - and economic losses. Tobacco use currently costs the world hundreds of billions of dollars each year.<sup>[3]</sup> Several negotiations later, the World Health Assembly in May 2003 finally adopted the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which has provisions for members to have comprehensive

**Table 1: Awareness about COTPA and tobacco related health problems (n=430)**

Awareness about tobacco related health problems	Numbers	Percentage
Awareness about Act/Legislation regarding tobacco products (COTPA)	186	43.2
Awareness about penalty for violation of Act	134	31.1
Awareness about ban on selling tobacco products near educational institutes	67	15.5
Ban on sale of tobacco products to minors	73	16.9
Health warnings on tobacco products	68	15.8
Awareness of any tobacco related health problems	418	97.2
Cancer	190	44.1
Respiratory disease	157	36.5
Heart disease	73	16.9
Tuberculosis	94	21.8
Hypertension	48	11.6
All of the above	69	16
Awareness of the harmful effects of second hand smoke	284	66

**Table 2: Attitude towards COTPA (n=430)**

Attitude toward COTPA	Numbers	Percentage
Positive attitude towards ban on smoking	320	74.4
Positive attitude towards ban on selling tobacco products to minors	278	64.6
Positive attitude towards ban on selling tobacco products near educational institutes	234	54.4
Positive attitude towards health warnings on tobacco products	239	57.9
Object others smoking in public places in their presence	108	25.1

**Table 3: Practices of tobacco use (n=430)**

Practices of Tobacco use	Numbers	Percentage
Ever use of tobacco product	287	66.7
Current use of tobacco product	265	61.6
Currently smoking	196	45.5
Current use of smokeless tobacco	84	19.5
Anyone in family using tobacco product	189	43.9
Did this act change your preferences towards tobacco products	210	48.8

legislation to curb the tobacco epidemic.<sup>[4]</sup> India was one of the first few countries that ratified the India was one of the first few countries that ratified the FCTC. The Government of India formulated “The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Act (COTPA)” on May 18, 2003. In 2004, the rules regarding COTPA provisions were notified. As per the act, smoking is prohibited in all public places, ban is placed on advertisements of tobacco products, and prohibition of sale of tobacco products to minors and within 100 yards of educational institutions.<sup>[5]</sup> The implementation of this law remained largely ineffective in the initial years. The Government of India reviewed the situation and revised the law, with effect from 2nd October 2008, making additional provisions to improve the implementation of smoke free law<sup>6</sup>.

Not many studies have been done on awareness and attitudes of the general public regarding Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA). For effective implementation of Tobacco control knowledge regarding the awareness, attitudes and practices of the population towards tobacco control is necessary. Hence the present study was undertaken among adults in Bangalore city with an aim to find the awareness, attitudes and practices regarding Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA).

#### **MATERIALS & METHODS**

A cross-sectional study was conducted among adults aged 18 years and above to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding cigarettes and other tobacco products act (COTPA). Written informed consent was obtained from all the participants and they were free to opt in or out of the study. A total of 430 subjects were determined based on an anticipated awareness level of 30%.The

subjects were randomly selected from the wards in the jurisdiction of Bruhat Bangalore Municipal Corporation in Bangalore, Karnataka. A tool was developed to understand the context-specific needs of tobacco control in the state. Data on awareness about any tobacco control law in India, tobacco related health problems, perceptions about secondhand smoke, attitude towards the tobacco control law and information about use of tobacco was collected. It focused in particular on specific issues of tobacco control, including burden of tobacco, prevalence of its use, production and control, targeted health services, communication media, public education, health budget and infrastructure, and control priorities of the state. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire in local language. Information on socio-demographic variables, highest level of education, occupation and monthly household incomes was obtained and recorded verbatim. Socio-economic status (SES) was assessed using Kuppaswamy's SES scale. The Likert scale was used to assess attitude towards COTPA, which had 5 choices i.e., strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The choices were given a score from 1 to 5, 1 for strongly disagree rising to 5 for strongly agree. The choices of strongly agree and agree were taken as positive responses and the other choices of neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree were considered as negative responses. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 11.0, after entering the data in Microsoft Office Excel, 2007.

## RESULTS

Among 430 subjects of the study 227 (52.7%) were males. The mean age of the study population was  $39.57 \pm 15.8$  (range 18-72), majority (54.8%) belonged to 18-40 age group. Literacy rate among the participants was very high at 87.3%, with 34.5% having education upto intermediate or more. Regarding awareness about Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 43.2% of the participants were aware of any Act/Legislation related to tobacco products (Table 1). About 134 (31.1%) of the participants were aware about penalty for violating the Act. Only 73 (16.9%) and 67(15.5%) were aware about ban on sale of tobacco products to minors and ban on selling tobacco products near educational institutions respectively (Table 1). A huge majority (97.2%) of the participants were aware of some health problem associated with tobacco use. With regard to

awareness about specific health problems, (44.1%) were aware that tobacco use can cause cancer, 36.5% knew about tobacco related respiratory problems, 21.8% said that tobacco use can cause Tuberculosis and only 16.9% knew that tobacco use can cause heart problems. Majority (66%) were aware of the harmful effects of exposure to second-hand smoke (Table 1). Regarding attitude towards COTPA, more than half the participants were having a positive attitude towards COTPA. A vast majority (57.9%) favoring display of health warnings on tobacco products, more than half (74.4%) favored ban on smoking in public places and 64.6% favored ban on selling tobacco products to minors (Table 2). Though a vast majority of the participants were having a positive attitude towards COTPA, only 108 (25.1%) of them said that they would personally object to smoking in public places in their presence citing poor implementation of the Act (Table 2). Regarding use of tobacco products, more than half (66.7%) of the study population was found to be exposed to tobacco products either in past or present. Out of the 61.6% participants currently using some form of tobacco products, 45.5% were current smokers and 19.5% currently using smokeless tobacco. About 43.9% of the participants had someone in family currently using some form of tobacco products. About 48.8% of the subjects said that this act (COTPA) has changed their preferences towards tobacco products (Table 3).

## DISCUSSION

In the study population 43.2% of the participants were aware of any tobacco related law/act, which is in the accordance (45.7%) to the observations of Sharma *et al.*<sup>[8]</sup>. Its pivotal to improve the awareness among the public to abandon the smoking habit by effective embodiment of legislation. In the present study a vast majority (97.2%) of the subjects were aware about tobacco related health problem, which was similar to the observations of a study done in Assam and Gujarat,<sup>[8,9]</sup> but contrast to the study done in Kolkata where it was only 75%.<sup>[10]</sup> Awareness about specific health problems because of tobacco use, viz., cancer, respiratory disease and heart problems was similar to some older studies.<sup>[8,11,12]</sup> In general there was a positive attitude towards COTPA, despite of having lower awareness regarding the same. Majority of them favored use of pictorial health warnings, followed by ban on sale of tobacco products to minors and near educational institutions.

These findings of the present study concurred with that of other studies.<sup>[13,14]</sup> Regarding tobacco practices in the current study about 66.7% participants reported an ever use of any tobacco product, while 61.6% were current users of whom 45.5% were smokers. Nearly 19.5% of the participants were currently consuming smokeless form of tobacco and was in accordance with the study done by Sharma *et al.*<sup>[8]</sup> The weak enforcement of provisions of COTPA demand an urgent action by the state government for informing the bureaucrats, policy makers and opinion leaders about the provisions of COTPA and ensuring its effective implementation. A comprehensive mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the compliance with COTPA and FCTC needs to be developed and put in place. The law enforcement agencies of the State ought to take this up on priority.

#### CONCLUSION

The policy makers should consider newer options such as starting a help line for quitting tobacco to regulate the use of tobacco with consideration that most of the smokers were reluctant in quitting tobacco even after the implementation of various anti-tobacco measures under COTPA. Apart from these steps, counseling sessions have to be arranged for those tobacco users who are reluctant to quit. To conclude, the steps taken by the government bodies in the future should be strictly followed and it should be continuously monitored. Also the Act should be implemented in true spirit so as to dissuade the population from falling victims to the Tobacco epidemic.

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