IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BAN ON SURROGATE ADVERTISEMENTS

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Track
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40% of Indians use smokeless tobacco in various forms

The most common form of smokeless tobacco used is ‘Gutka’ which contains tobacco, acreca nut, lime, condiments, etc.

It is especially popular among youth and children because of its cheap and easy accessibility with attractive packaging.

To add to the complexity the Tobacco Industry also manufactures ‘Pan Masala’, a product similar to Gutkha but without Tobacco, which is also proven to be harmful.

There is a law in India (COTPA 2003) that forbids advertising of Tobacco Products.

Tobacco Manufacturers circumvent this law by advertising Pan Masala of the same brand name and similar packaging as Gutkha.

Public transport buses, BEST were targeted by gutkha industry to advertise pan masala.
Objectives

• To understand whether the advertisements of Pan masala with name similar as Gutkha was really the advertisements of the intended products or was it a surrogate advertisements of their tobacco counterpart

• To conduct an evidence based advocacy with policy makers (BEST, FDA) for effective implementation of Tobacco Control Law
Methodology:

- The study was carried out by children in Mumbai city.
- Sample size selected for the study was 3000 which includes 1500 adults and 1500 children:
  - Children: 12 to 18 years of age
  - Adult : 19 to 50 years of age

- Flash cards were shown to the respondents
- The Flash cards were a mix of gutkha, pan masala, chocolates, wafers and other products to avoid bias by the respondents to tobacco products
- A structured questionnaire was used as a tool to understand the product association of the respondents with the brand
Disclosure of Interest: None Declared
A demand charter was submitted by the children to BEST, FDA and advertising companies for immediate action

- Meeting with Superintendent of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) License & Advertisement Department and the Chairman of Outdoor Media, urged the removal of pan-masala advertisements on the BEST bus panels

July, 2011:
Municipal Corporation issued an official letter restricting display of any surrogate advertisements for tobacco products
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Impact

Advertisements of Pan Masala on bus panels

Within a month, all the advertisements of pan masala promoting tobacco products were removed and replaced with tobacco control messaging.

Conclusion

Context-relevant evidence coupled with targeted advocacy results in compelling decision-makers for better implementation of tobacco control law.