



Report
A Coordination Meeting
With
Anti Tobacco Groups and like minded Journalists
(Hyderabad, November 11th, 2010)

As an objective ***“Strengthening Journalists’ Anti Tobacco Groups and liaison with the media persons at national level for mass awareness”***, Coalition for Tobacco Control – Pakistan (CTC-Pak) of SAMAR organized a coordination meeting with media persons from Sindh province on November 11, 2010 at Hyderabad press club, Hyderabad.

The agenda of the meeting was “Tobacco Control and Role of Media” and 25 participants represented print and electronic media attended this meeting. After the introduction, CTC-Pak shared the issue of rise of tobacco consumption, especially smokeless tobacco among youth, and related health hazards. The participants were informed how smokeless tobacco goes unregulated in the open market and is available in various forms such as *paan, main puri, Gutka, naswar* etc to anyone regardless of age. The other issue shared was the increasing popularity of ‘Sheesha smoking’ which has become a social activity among youth and families alike as various ‘cafes’ have been opened where people visit to enjoy. It was highlighted how children are treating these as any other sweets and adults, too, are uninformed the diseases associated these products. CTC-Pak pointed out that influence of media in today’s era cannot be ignored as it plays a critical role in the daily lives and if used carefully, life saving information on these epidemics can be reached to larger audience in a very little time through media. CTC-Pak also informed the participants that CTC-Pak has a dedicated resource center on tobacco control where information is readily available for media persons to use and additional information on any specific issue can be provided on request.

The participants were in the agreement that this new form of tobacco has indeed escaped the attention of common person and consumption of above mentioned are not considered as health hazard in general perception until it’s too late. They also shared that since before this meeting they had no information on the issue it had not been on the priority of media as compared to other health issues. One of the participant informed that many of the girls are using ‘*main puri*’ which is a form of smokeless tobacco prepared from waste of beetle nut and tobacco waste among other contents. He added that these girls are using *main puri* without the knowledge that they are getting addicted to tobacco.

Many of the journalists were of the view that as their social responsibility, there is a need of coordinated effort where information on tobacco and tobacco control must be disseminated among public on regular basis. This shall help both, old and young, to understand how the use of tobacco, smoke and smokeless, is dangerous not only to their health but the health of people around them.

‘Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) is an advocacy based organization working on a project **“Supporting and monitoring implementation of tobacco control laws by strengthening Civil Society Organizations and supporting government authorities at sub-national levels”** under a grant approved by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), USA. The purpose of this project is to; i) monitor the implementation of tobacco control laws and to provide technical support to the Tobacco Control Cell, Federal Ministry of Health (MoH), ii) focus on coalition building to seek support of CSOs and iii) liaison with the media to highlight the need of effective tobacco control in Pakistan.’