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THE MARKETING AND INTERFERENCE TACTICS OF THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY AND ITS FRONT GROUPS



A Research Study on
Tobacco Industry Marketing Tactics
and Manipulation of Tobacco Control Policies
in Pakistan

Yawar Abbas

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A GLOBAL
TOBACCO
INDUSTRY
WATCHDOG

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This qualitative study is the first of its kind to highlight and understand the role of the tobacco industry (TI) and its front groups' interventions in the promotion and marketing of the novel non-combustible alternative tobacco products in Pakistan.

The study provides a clear understanding of how the tobacco industry and its front groups adopt effective, indigenous, and accessible approaches to achieve their targets. In particular, this report examines the dichotomy of the industry's tactics to raise voices to misleadingly promote alternative tobacco products as the solution to protecting people's health from combustible tobacco use in the name of tobacco cessation endeavours.

The purpose of the study was to understand exactly the tactics and activities of TI and its front groups, besides their marketing strategies to promote non-combustible alternative novel tobacco products.

The findings of the research are based on primary and secondary data sources. The secondary research sources included companies and organizations' websites, annual reports, financial reports, organizations' pipeline charts, presentations and filings, journals and conference materials, internal proprietary databases, news articles, press releases, news reports of mainstream, social media and webcasts specific to the research topic and research reports. The primary research included interactions and interviews with

stakeholders including tobacco control advocates, health professionals and other concerned officials, as well as retailers, smokers and journalists.

A large number of those interviewed for this research see the tobacco industry as a prime violator in policy-making and key administrative decisions of the government. The participants opined that the tobacco industry uses monetary and power tactics to influence policymakers in placing tobacco control in the backseat and making business for tobacco producers and vendors.

The research showed that the majority of those interviewed believe the tobacco industry forms coalitions and front groups to promote and market their businesses, particularly alternative novel tobacco products. A large number of participants believe the tobacco industry misleadingly attempts to link its novel tobacco products as harmless items with no negative effects on public health through different means of communication, including news stories and articles.

Participants were of the view that the tobacco industry produces and disseminates misleading research based on information of their need to convince and attract youth. They say tobacco industry engages directly in lobbying and influencing policymaking to avoid facing negative market results and keep continuing promotional activities without any barrier, particularly for novel products.

INTRODUCTION



Emerging novel, non-combustible tobacco products

In recent years, newer and emerging nicotine and tobacco products, like electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs), have proliferated in many markets. While the tobacco industry implies that ENDS are safer because they do not contain tobacco, sales of ENDS continue to grow the industry's customer base, attracting younger users in particular ¹.

The most common ENDS are electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes, vapes, or vape pens. Other categories of ENDS include e-hookahs, e-pipes, and e-

developed their own brands. There are now more than 30,000 ENDS (devices and e-liquids) brands sold in the European Union. In 2014, ENDS generated US\$ 2.76 billion in global sales, rising to US\$ 15 billion in 2019 ².

ENDS devices vary in shape, size, and functionality. New designs are continuously being developed. There is also a variety of generations of ENDS that differ according to technology and how they are designed to be used.

There are approximately 16,000 unique flavours available in some markets, many of them appealing to children. These flavours can mask the harshness of nicotine and play a role in a person's decision to try using



cigars. Some of the products resemble their conventional tobacco counterparts, i.e. cigarettes, while others are shaped like pens, USB memory sticks, or basic cylinder.

The early growth of the ENDS market was driven largely by companies independent of traditional tobacco companies, such as Pax Labs which developed the Juul e-cigarette. However, almost all major multinational tobacco companies, such as British American Tobacco, Philip Morris International, and Altria have purchased shares in ENDS companies or have

ENDS for the first time. Flavours can make the use of the product more pleasurable, the inhalation of aerosols easier, and change the perceived risk associated with their use ³.

Some popular flavours being offered in Pakistan are Apple, Strawberry, Red Apple Fruit, Mango Lime, Citrus Strawberry, Grape Apple, Lemon Tangerine, Pom Berry, Berry Banana, Berry KIWI, Berry Peach, Banana, sour apple, watermelon ICE, grape ICE, pineapple ICE, pistachio, caramel tobacco, Cuban cigar, Cucumber, Lychee, Spearmint, Hazelnut Coffee, Pineapple Coconut,

Lemon Tart, Coffee, Black Panther, Orange Pineapple, Cola Ice, Kiwi lemon, Menthol Berry and Menthol Melon. According to shopkeepers, some flavours being sold at cheapest rates in Pakistan makes it an ideal choice for new users as many youth cannot buy those flavours which are expensive due to low income family background but they can easily use those flavours which are sold at nominal prices. They can easily pay for these flavours from their pocket easily.

A research study claimed that fruit, sweets or beverage flavours significantly increase the probability of choosing ENDS among youth, and flavour has the most pronounced impact on their choices. Among never-users, menthol flavour also particularly increases the probability of choosing ENDS, compared with tobacco flavour⁴.

A policy concern is that misperceptions based on flavour may result in increased vaping by youths. The findings from another study support the assertion that banning fruit, menthol or mint and sweet flavours could reduce the appeal of JUULs and e-cigarettes to youth, with concomitant health protections⁵.

Many of the long-term health effects of ENDS use are still unknown, there is growing evidence to demonstrate that these products are not harmless. The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on July 27, 2021 that – the use of ENDS among children and adolescents increases the chance that they will use conventional cigarettes and other tobacco products⁶.

The emergence of ENDS may undermine tobacco control progress. ENDS proponents argue that the presence of less harmful alternatives can help reduce the prevalence of tobacco use and improve the health of the population. But while innovation in cessation products is to be welcomed, ENDS are currently marketed to attract new users (i.e. not limited to tobacco users wanting to quit) and promotional messages from the tobacco industry misinform the public about the risks associated with their use in the absence of robust evidence (or indeed in the face of growing evidence to the contrary)⁷.

The WHO report on “The Global Tobacco Epidemic 2021: Addressing New and Emerging Products”⁸ highlights how these products are promoted aggressively as safer or smoke-free alternatives to conventional cigarettes. Although their full risks remain unknown, the impact of nicotine delivery devices is clear. While framing these products as a contribution to global tobacco control, the tobacco and related industries employ the same old marketing tactics to promote new tools to hook new consumers on nicotine and circumvent tobacco legislation. At the same time, they continue to fight measures and legislation designed to protect people from the many harms of tobacco.

Tobacco industry interference

Despite the fact that more than one billion people around the world still smoke and more than eight million tobacco-related deaths occur each year, and that the tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease⁹, the tobacco industry continues to aggressively market its products worldwide, including in Pakistan.

In addition to selling combustible products like cigarettes, tobacco companies have been aggressively marketing and promoting their non-combustible alternative novel products and lobbying governments to limit their regulations with an objective to hook another generation on nicotine¹⁰.

The tobacco industry invests considerable resources to oppose strong tobacco control measures, both at national and international levels. Tobacco industry interference is always designed to thwart attempts to curb the tobacco epidemic and its negative social, economic, environmental and health consequences. While there is a growing awareness of the tobacco industry's unceasing attempts to sabotage public health, it is less well known that tobacco companies often work hand in glove with their commercial competitors to keep regulation to a minimum and obtain advantageous conditions from the government to help them run their businesses¹¹.

The tobacco industry wields its influence for expanding product portfolios to attract new customers and retain existing ones, marketing new products to youth and young adults who have rejected cigarettes, working to improve the industry's reputation among influential audiences and the general public, and cultivating influence with policymakers and lobbying against policies that strengthen tobacco control efforts to improve health¹².

Why tobacco industry influence around non-combustible products is an important issue

As ENDS put a new generation at risk of nicotine addiction, tobacco companies are mounting a campaign to try to transform their image with non-combustible tobacco products and claim that they can be part of the “public health solution” to end smoking¹³.

With new products, the tobacco industry is exploiting the traditional public health concept of harm reduction and attempting to position itself as working alongside public health while aggressively growing its market base among youth and young adults¹⁴.

The term tobacco harm reduction refers to reducing the levels of disease and death from tobacco use among smokers, while eliminating exposure to nicotine altogether. Presently, this term has been coopted by the tobacco industry as justification for marketing its novel or new alternative tobacco products as harm reduction tools.

Attracting new customers and sustaining existing customers

One of the major tasks of tobacco companies is to ensure that their new alternative tobacco products effectively attract young people¹⁵. The products look like sleek new technology and are often sold in stores that are glamorous and hyper-modern. Some of the designs associated with novel products look like small USB sticks and are small enough to hide from others, making them particularly useful in a school environment where students can keep them concealed from teachers and other authorities.

Furthermore, the products are promoted at youth-friendly events such as music festivals and even in television dramas, and manufacturers use social media influencers who appeal to young audiences to promote them. Another product characteristic attracting new users in their droves is the enormous range of flavours that particularly appeal to children and adolescents.

Dissemination of misinformation about novel non-combustible products

Novel non-combustible tobacco products are often promoted by the industry as “safer” alternatives to conventional tobacco. They are also promoted or indirectly framed as cessation products that can help tobacco users quit conventional smoking. Such activities have ramifications for proven interventions to assist tobacco cessation, as they have the potential to misinform and mislead consumers. Based upon misinformation, individuals who want to quit may opt for the use of products with which they have a lower chance of success.

The tobacco industry increasingly positions itself as a legitimate partner and stakeholder in tobacco control, but its interests are fundamentally at odds with control efforts. The tobacco industry simultaneously portrays itself as working towards a “smoke-free” future, while at the same time they are promoting and making most of its profits from tobacco products across the world and in Pakistan¹⁶.

The tobacco industry and its allies' activities

Over the years the tobacco industry has interfered through front groups and other allies¹⁷. For example, Philip Morris International (PMI) and groups funded by PMI, like the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, use promotion and other tactics to try to pressure governments to allow these products into domestic markets and exempt them from tobacco control regulation (in particular TAPS bans, taxes and smoke free laws), thereby undermining tobacco control initiatives and weakening WHO's

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) implementation¹⁸.

The WHO FCTC is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO. It was adopted by the World Health Assembly on 21 May 2003 and entered into force on 27 February 2005. It has since become one of the most rapidly and widely embraced treaties in United Nations history. The WHO FCTC was developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic and is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. The Convention represents a milestone for the promotion of public health and provides new legal dimensions for international health cooperation¹⁹.

The tobacco industry, either through its allies or directly, uses a range of strategies in Pakistan to weaken or prevent advances in tobacco control, including establishing inappropriate relationships with government staff, wielding financial power, leveraging influence through other persons, discrediting government, using “surrogates” such as front groups and trade unions, distorting national and international tobacco control researches, staging media events to distract from tobacco control initiatives, and monitoring and surveying tobacco control activities²⁰.

The WHO FCTC recognizes that tobacco industry interference poses the single greatest threat to tobacco control. It has been documented that, the tobacco industry

has used strategies to subvert, hinder, and prevent tobacco control efforts²¹.

The growing market of alternative novel tobacco products

The global and domestic ENDS market has increased significantly during the years 2016-2020 and projections are made that the market would rise tremendously in the next four years, i.e. 2021-2025²².

The ENDS market is expected to increase due to an increase in income and changing mindset of Generation Z (the group of people who were born between the late 1990s and the early 2010s), increasing influence of social media, growing penetration of e-commerce, shifting consumer perception towards combustible cigarettes, swelling demand for ashless and smokeless vaping alternatives and growing urbanization as markets in urban areas offer easier access to a greater variety of media, images, ideas, and products than rural areas²³.

Tobacco promotional activities or advertising by the tobacco industry, in particular, presents ideas and images, which can influence people to smoke, particularly young people and women²⁴. Yet, the market faces some challenges, such as stringent government regulations, high degree of competition, and increased concern over side effects of ENDS.

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METHODOLOGY FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS



This research comprises a mix of primary and secondary research utilizing the mixed-method analysis of coding sheets to aggregate data derived from primary and secondary data collection.

The secondary research sources referred to include, but are not limited to, companies and organizations' websites, annual reports, financial reports, organizations' pipeline charts, presentations and filings, journals and conference materials, internal proprietary databases, news articles, press releases, news reports of mainstream, social media and webcasts specific to the research topic and research reports and study findings of 100 materials in number on the tobacco industry and its front groups' activities as well as marketing and promotion of non-combustible alternative novel products.

The primary research involves interactions and key informant interviews with 30 respondents or stakeholders including tobacco control advocates, health professionals and concerned public officials as well as retailers, smokers, and journalists (participants were located in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, and Quetta). The participants who took part in this process include, but are not limited to, direct source information, and secondary source information was also collected through various means of communication from many people.

The researcher primarily relied on research work and databases that the researcher obtained on this topic. The researcher cross-verified the secondary research findings with the primary respondents participating in the study. The researcher also used journalistic knowledge of the tobacco sector to analyze the exact situation of the tobacco industry, from a vendor to an end-user perspective.

The researcher began work by searching reports, surveys, publications, company or organizational reports, news reports, and research. Information was also gained through extensive interviews with major players and other participants, utilizing key informant interviewing techniques and a semi-structured questionnaire based on the various aspects of the research topic. Interview participants were selected through purposeful sampling, professionals and individuals with firsthand knowledge of the research topic in the target population were used in each selected primary sampling units. The background information, related to the research subject, is provided by the author and supports the organization's proprietary databases.

The study used Pencil and Paper Interview (PAPI) and Digital Voice Recording (DVR) methods for primary data collection, which is a simple and precise data collection technique with high-quality results and high precision. Furthermore, DVR was turned into transcripts based on study themes. This procedure was overseen closely by the researcher to ensure that the substance of the questions was clearly and correctly conveyed in the translated scripts. This was done to verify that the translation properly conveyed the respondents' views, which were recorded during interview on all themes in order to avoid mentioning wrong response in respective categories.

The information was then analyzed and synthesized into a research report including forecast, trends and competitive strategies on the basis of their responses while asking various questions. The research analyst used both qualitative tools and techniques to get an insight into the industry while presenting responses in percentages.

Analysis of interview transcripts and secondary data source text was done using

into the industry while presenting responses in percentages.

Analysis of interview transcripts and secondary data source text was done using a coding sheet to identify common themes and key concepts. Coding was also used to pool non-standardized data to identify quantifiable trends across data sources.

The researcher developed categories and prepared data categories in accordance with key themes while the study evaluated some domains also to know about other major subject related components.

Data coding and synthesis was done using

line coding for open-ended questions and key concepts. Statements were broken down into conceptual components and indicators to make sense of data while relational and causal links have been built between categories.

Through analysis of primary and secondary sources, this study discovered two primary themes – **(1) Tobacco industry and its front groups' activities** and – **(2) marketing and promotion of non-combustible alternative novel tobacco products**. Furthermore, these overarching themes were divided into sub-themes presented under “Findings”.

FINDINGS



The findings of this study are on two themes linked to the **tobacco industry and its front groups' activities**, and **marketing and promotion of non-combustible alternative novel tobacco products**.

Secondary Research Sources and Analysis

The secondary research sources include overall 100 companies and organizations' websites, annual reports, financial reports, organizations' pipeline charts, presentations and filings, journals and conferences material, internal proprietary databases, news articles, press releases, news reports of mainstream, social media and webcasts specific to the research topic and research reports and study findings.

Analysis of secondary sources was done through coding and synthesis to identify key concepts and break down text to conceptual components and indicators. This allowed for the pooling of non-standardized data across different data sources to calculate the finding presented below.

Secondary Research Sources Findings

- 95% pooled data sources believe the tobacco industry (TI) forms coalitions and front groups to promote and market its business, particularly alternative novel tobacco products.
- 90% pooled data sources believe TI attempts to portray its novel tobacco products as harmless with no negative effects on public health through different means of communication including news stories and articles.
- 85% pooled data sources were of the view that TI produces and disseminates misleading research based on information of its need to convince and attract youth to buy its products.
- 82% pooled data sources say TI engages directly in lobbying and influencing policymaking to avoid facing negative market results and to continue promotional activities without any barrier, particularly with regards to novel products.

- 80% of across pooled data sources believe TI is successful in getting the support of concerned public officials.
- 82% of across pooled data sources believe TI clearly influences government officials.
- 88% of across pooled data sources think TI is deliberately attempting to attract youth to use new tobacco products through different tactics.
- 75% of across pooled data sources observe TI is behind the active drive to encourage smokers to quit smoking and switch to alternative novel tobacco products.
- 86% of across pooled data sources believe TI remained successful in creating a positive societal perspective of non-combustible tobacco products as a 'safe thing to use'.
- 74% of across pooled data sources accept the success of TI in making the impression that 'the use of alternative tobacco products is the only option to control tobacco consumption in Pakistan'.
- 70% of across pooled data sources believe that high rates of use and availability of alternative tobacco novel products is an issue.
- 90% of pooled data sources believe that the family members, friends and colleagues are fully supportive of this activity and don't believe it causes harmful effects on their health.
- 78% of across pooled data sources accept hurdles for regulators (watchdog, officials and controllers) to have check tobacco products due to activities of TI (direct industry, front groups, and support groups).
- 76% of across pooled data sources were of the view that the concerned enforcement agencies are ineffective, having 'no action plan' to control TI's marketing and promotional activities especially for non-combustible novel products.
- 78% of across pooled data sources say TI makes 'hidden incentives' and 'target plans' for whole-sellers, retailers and shopkeepers as part of corporate promotional and marketing activities.
- 89% of across pooled data sources believe TI plans effective public relations campaigns to promote its cause and counters challenges from the opponents or anti-tobacco advocates.
- 85% of across pooled data sources believe TI smoothly counters anti-tobacco voices and activities of tobacco control advocates (individuals, organizations, doctors, journalists, media organizations).
- 87% of across pooled data sources believe TI funds and charity setups and tobacco harm reduction associations.
- 79% of across pooled data sources say TI supports tobacco-harm reduction research and messaging in mainstream and social media networks to promote tobacco harm reduction novel products.
- 75% of across pooled data sources believe TI and its front groups counter every strong move in the way of their promotional drives for traditional and novel tobacco products.
- 86% of across pooled data sources believe TI makes consistent plans for marketing and promotion of non-combustible alternative tobacco novel products.

Primary Research Sources and Analysis



The primary research involves interactions and interviews with 30 stakeholders including tobacco control advocates, health and other concerned officials besides retailers, smokers, and journalists.

Analysis of primary interviews was done through coding and synthesis of interview transcripts to identify key concepts and break down text to conceptual components and indicators. This was allowed for the pooling of responses across interviews to calculate the finding presented below.

<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Stakeholders Groups</u>	<u>Means of Engagement</u>	<u>Other</u>
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular discourse 2. Surveys & questionnaires 3. Training 4. Business Communication 5. Formal gatherings 6. Forums & events 7. Prescribed relationships 8. Memberships/partnerships 9. Regular & brief visits 10. Reports & publications 11. Hotline & call centers 12. Consultations 	
Work councils/trade unions	Employees	1,2,3,5,6,8	
Chambers of commerce/ trade associations	Business community	1,5,6,8,10	
Agricultural organizations	Officials/employees	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11,12	
Sourcing communities /operating communities	Local communities	1,2,3,5,6,8,10,11,12	Community contributions
Manufacturers/contractors	Suppliers	1-12	
Retailers/wholesalers	Distributive trade	1,3,6,7,9	
Adult consumes	Adult consumers	1,2,6,11	
Governmental organizations/policymakers /regulatory agencies /standard setters/health authorities	Regulators & governments	1,3,5,6,10,12	Suggestions and consultations
Academia/citizens/NGOs	Civil society	1,4,5,6,8,10	
Print & electronic mainstream media/social media	Journalists/media	1,2,4,6,8,10	Interview, business achievements and acclamations
Researchers/public health experts/ academia	Scientific community	1,5,6,7,8,9,10	
Analysts/shareholders/ institutional investors/ sustainable ratings agencies/ socially responsible investors	Investors and shareholders	1,4,6,10	

Primary Research Sources Findings



TI and its front groups plan various activities to engage stakeholders. On the basis of this engagement, the TI and its front groups get desired outcomes from the stakeholders.

The analysis of all the key informant interviews regarding TI and front groups' activities generated the following themes and categories:

1. Influencing the policy and administrative decisions

Participants (70%) see TI as a prime intruder in policy-making and key administrative decisions of the government. The participants opined that TI uses monetary and power tactics to influence policymakers in placing tobacco control in the backseat and making business for tobacco producers and tobacco vendors.

2. Supporting governmental development projects

Participants (76%) surmised that TI had been traditionally involved in various governmental development projects, which directly contradicts Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC, which calls on Parties to protect public health policies from the commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry.

3. Managing public pressure on policymakers

The participants (69%) felt that TI creates an impression, which results in a lack of public pressure on policymakers and politicians in framing effective tobacco control policies.

4. Sharing favorable information

The participants (63%) believed that TI and its front groups frequently share informative

material with the concerned individuals and groups like media persons or government officials which supports their business objectives.

5. Political parties and government officials get TI favours

The respondents (65%) shared the information that many political parties and officials in the government receive favors from TI, which undermines tobacco-related policy decisions.

6. Ensuring the display of novel tobacco products at point of sale

Participants (67%) felt that TI utilizes good relations with administration or enforcing agencies to ensure the display of tobacco products particularly novel products to attract youth or new customers at various points of sales.

7. Interference in legal proceedings

Participants (68%) said that TI interferes with and takes advantage of slow legal proceedings and poor implementation of tobacco control laws. Conflicting orders from different ministries provide this opportunity.

8. Offering undue favours to government officials

The participants (71%) reported undue favours being offered to the higher officials of the government by the TI representatives in the form of gift hampers or financial support to the organizations, as a tool to influence them to take policy decisions at the behest of TI.

9. Exercising corrupt practices

Most of the respondents (81%) felt that the TI uses corrupt practices to influence the system and weakening the political setup for their benefits.

10. Sponsoring biased research

Respondents (76%) reported witnessing instances when the TI used biased self-sponsored research in its favour. By discrediting scientific evidence, TI misguides the existing and future customers and discourages tobacco users from quitting or suggests alternative novel products as harmless to health and a way to quit smoking.

11. Image building through corporate social responsibility activities

Responses from the interviews (71%) provided an insight into how the TI paints a bright picture in front of the public and policymakers and hide their vested interests under the guise of health promotion and social activities performed by them. Many responses from the interviewees highlighted the fact that TI undertakes corporate social responsibility (CSR) by which they depict their companies as ethically correct and economically productive to society.

12. Incentives for point of sale owners

Most of the respondents (82%) said that the TI backs distributors and point-of-sale owners by providing various incentives like installing and replacing advertisement boards removed during enforcement drives or compensating for losses in case of seizures or challans.

13. TI's predatory tactics to make novel tobacco products socially

As per the respondents (71%), the TI uses tobacco advertising, promotion, and

sponsorship (TAPS) to increase the consumption of their products. The TI uses deceptive, misleading, and predatory tactics to make novel tobacco products use appear glamorous and socially acceptable while minimizing perceptions of these products' adverse health effects.

14. Partnering with other organizations for sponsored events

Respondents (67%) said that the TI supports distributors and wholesalers by performing various activities like paying daily wages to petty sellers and providing signage and other posters mandated (under law) to these retailers or vendors etc. By endorsing other brands and partnering with other organizations for sponsored events, they indirectly advertise their company.

15. Manipulating through allied groups

Most of the respondents (83%) stressed the manipulative powers of the TI. According to them, the main tactics used by the TI were threats and maneuvering acts. Threats of legal action are the popular means used by the TI to intimidate governments and activists who introduce and support effective tobacco control policies. As per the respondents, the mere threat of such litigation and threats discourage the whole implementation process.

16. Instigating front groups to support novel products

Respondents (68%) said the tobacco company instigates the front action groups to arrange activities in support of novel non-combustible tobacco products as alternate to tobacco conventional products.

17. Contacts with tobacco control activists

Respondents (63%) believed that TI contacts different tobacco control activists and officials for preventing tampering with their business.

CONCLUSION



After conducting interviews and going through observations and other documents on the research subject, there was a clear understanding that presently TI and its allies have an influential, persuasive, convincing, and effective role in marketing and promotion of non-combustible alternative novel tobacco products in Pakistan. They use different ways and means to get their objectives. They work in an organized manner to pursue policymakers, making their influence to make policies as per their wishes. They also enjoy close relationships with enforcement organizations and all concerned stakeholders.

The researcher observed that they continued their work in a smooth way without facing any threat from any side. While managing all things, their ultimate target is to increase the sale of alternative novel tobacco products, particularly non-combustible products. Their main focus remained on the marketing and promotion side for which they have hired professionals and experts to handle things and achieve set targets. They make short-term and long-term business plans keeping in view the confronting aspects. They arrange activities directly by the tobacco industry or assign the task to their allies as per the situation.

There is a lack of effective strategy to manage their promotional plans or curtailing the sale of alternative tobacco products. In countries like Pakistan where resources are limited, the only option left to minimize the activities of the tobacco industry and its partners, or stop their promotional and marketing plans, is to prepare effective communication strategies to engage stakeholders, the general public and potential new smokers through different means of communication particularly social and digital media with having strong and meaningful contents in the present era of

social and digital media, when every household has mobile phone and other gadgets to access social networking sites or apps as in Pakistan everyone including low income class families have even access to major influencing social networking apps on mobile phones like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Tiktok.

On the contrary, this technology is currently being used mainly to attract youth for the promotion and marketing of non-combustible novel alternative tobacco products in Pakistan.

APPENDICES



Appendix A

INTERVIEWS

Smokers, anti-tobacco advocates, journalists, retailers and stakeholders

Next is a selection of interview transcripts – all names have been changed to maintain participant anonymity.

Kaleem Khan- a retailer at tobacco products shop, Beverly Centre, F-7

In an interview, Kaleem claimed that the e-cigarette is trending in the city. He added even a ban on displaying promotional banners in front of tobacco dealing shops, the trend is increasing day by day in the age group 18 years to 50 years.

He said that in past, regular cigarettes were more in trend than other tobacco brands but now the trend is gradually shifting to novel non-combustible tobacco products. He said that in recent years, e-cigarettes were trending in the city.

Kaleem said that e-cigarettes are easily available in markets of Sector F-6 and F-7 in Islamabad and added that astonishing not only boys but girls are also regular customers and users of novel tobacco products as they frequently visit these shops to purchase e-cigarettes to find it cool and status symbol.

He said that now e-cigarettes are getting popularity and roughly over 60 percent of clients have shifted to e-cigarettes.

When asked have you any idea about the harmful effects of e-cigarettes, Kaleem replied, "As per American research e-cigarettes are very less harmful than a regular cigarette as there is pod and filter added in the manufacturing of e-cigarettes and vegetable glycerin is used as a liquid in e-cigarettes."



He added that with the regular use of e-cigarettes, the urge of cigarettes decreases, and very soon the smoker quits smoking. "Tobacco companies spend a lot in the publicity of their product so as shopkeepers don't need to publicize their products." Customers are well aware of all such products, he added.

He informed that u-well, Vapresso, and Voopoo are the popular products in e-cigarettes. He said that girls are also consumers of e-cigarettes and around 30 percent girls visit his shop and buy e-cigarettes.

He said that the concerned departments' officials frequently visit his shop to observe any violation of laws. "We strictly follow the government rules and don't sell the product to youth and avoid displaying promotional banners."

Arif Khan, a tobacco products retailer at F-7 Markaz

In an interview, Arif Khan said, "I earn a handsome amount from the tobacco business as daily a large number of smokers visit the shop and purchase tobacco products.

He said most people purchase regular combustible cigarettes while the demand of e-cigarettes is also high in some areas of the federal capital.

He informed that cigarette billboards are not allowed to place in front of shops to attract

smokers as the government has completely banned such billboards in order to discourage tobacco companies and to stop tobacco promotion.

He said that smokers are well aware that smoking is dangerous for their health but the quitting cases are rare.

He told that despite using pictorial health warnings on cigarette packs the sale is still high. He said that tobacco companies offer and provide them reasonable incentives for its sale.

Arif said that he never faced any issue in selling the cigarettes packets. He said, "I spend 42 years in this business."

He said there is a dire need of the training of

shopkeepers with the support of the government to know about the laws related to the tobacco business like disallowing sales to minors and said that most shopkeepers are not following this law.

Saleem Baig, Tobacco shop owner at F-6 Islamabad

Saleem Baig, the owner of the shop said that the tobacco shop was established in 80s. He said that his father initially started a business while he joined the business five years back.

He said that they are running their business successfully as smokers of different age groups are their regular customers who frequently visit the shop to purchase cigarettes.

He said the tobacco companies spend a huge amount for their publicity to attract people of all ages to growing their tobacco business. He said, "Due to their effective marketing and sponsorship drives, we don't need to do anything to convince people."

He said that there is no impact of any awareness or cessation drive for smokers as their consumers are increasing day by day rather seeing any trend of decreasing. "Tobacco industry people are very influential and they know how to attract people."

He said that most consumers demand



tobacco products of popular brands due to their strong attractive campaigns.

He said that they try their best to follow regulations to avoid any fine from the regulatory bodies and unlike in past practice, they avoid using promotional stickers or big billboards.

Zahid Khan, tobacco products seller at F-6 Markaz

Zahid Khan said that the use of e-cigarettes trend is gradually growing and the sale of e-cigarette brands is on rising in the federal capital particularly among youth.

He said that smokers understand the negative effects of smoking on their health but due to the effective marketing of tobacco companies they continue using it without considering such threats. He said that even they are unable to consider the textual or pictorial health warnings on tobacco packs.



Amir Nawaz, tobacco retailer, Islamabad

Amir Nawaz, who is associated with tobacco business, said that e-cigarettes trend is high nowadays and many students in schools and colleges are regular users of alternative tobacco products in the federal capital.

He said that keeping in view the youth inclination, many tobacco companies entered the business of alternative non-combustible tobacco products

Shams Abbasi, Senior Economic Reporter, Islamabad

Shams Abbasi said that there is no doubt that the tobacco industry and its front groups are fully involved in various activities to promote their business and stop any expected legislation which may harm their business in Pakistan.

He said that big tobacco companies like Philip Morris and Pakistan Tobacco Company always remained active to engage parliamentarians and bureaucrats for lobbying to avoid heavy taxes and also get support for illegal and legal trade and legislation.

He said that the legal trade of tobacco in Pakistan is around Rs 80 billion to Rs 90 billion. He said that many Senators in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are involved in the tobacco business. He added due to increasing pressure related to the taxes, now the tobacco industry is being shifted to Mirpur, AJK.

Shams added that there is an issue of increasing business of counterfeit tobacco items in the market in the name of popular brands.

He said that the Pakistan Tobacco Company was the first investor to produce novel non-combustible tobacco products locally. He added earlier these products were being imported with the ratio of Rs 400 million to Rs 500 million, but recently they have started

the plant with an initial investment of Rs 600 million at Jhelum by PTC and later in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Shams said, "I personally visit such plant, which was also visited by FBR officials and Finance Minister." He added the PTC has established a monitor and evaluation system in Pakistan to observe the daily situation.

He said that things are managed by the tobacco industry from top to bottom, which means they meet the high officials to the lower level of bureaucracy. He added their incentives including visits to foreign countries and supporting local journalists.

He accepted that the tobacco industry engages many economic journalists to use their services for the promotion of alternative tobacco products besides raising their voices in favour of their narratives on taxes and other issues.

He added the industry pay taxes of only 10 percent of the total which actually they have to pay. They make heavy investments on beat reporters. "This is heavy work and not simply as if they need any engagement of such reporter of major media organizations, they pay them a heavy amount for their services."

Tabassum Gul, Senior Health Journalist, Islamabad

Tabassum Gul, a senior health journalist, said that new shops in plazas around the city are continuously springing up to cater to the growing demand for e-cigarettes. In swanky cafes and restaurants, trendy youth can be seen inhaling from electronic devices and filling the room with fruity scents upon exhaling.

She said that many police personnel are still ignorant of e-cigarettes, confusing them with shishas and mistaking e-cigarette shops for shisha cafes and lounges.

She said that the latest generation of e-cigs, especially from leading companies like Juul, has been likened to the iPhone of cigarettes.

They are sleek, modern looking, and shaped like a USB device, built to appeal to the tech-savvy younger masses.

She said that a new trend, which is now starting to blossom into a rich subculture, has been taking root in Pakistan for the past few years. Vaping, as it is commonly known, appeals to mostly bourgeois and upper-class youth, she added.

She said that the tobacco industry is so strong in Pakistan that no one can take any step against them and even their front groups have strong links with policymakers and regulators in Pakistan to defend their interests.

Muhammad Kamran, a senior lawyer

Muhammad Kamran, a senior lawyer, said that shopkeepers openly sell cigarettes to children in school uniforms, with no one to stop them. Therefore, talks of a ban on e-cigarettes seem impossible task in Pakistan.

He added that in Pakistan, the e-cigarette market remains unregulated, which means that the quality of the e-liquids on the market has not been checked by a public health body while regulation of e-liquids seems especially important. There needs to be a standardization of the basic chemical composition and manufacturing process of the pods and limits on the amount of nicotine.

More research needs to be done on the psychological and physical effects of e-cigarette smoking, with better regulations and enforcement to protect vulnerable populations.

He accepted the influence of the tobacco industry and its front groups in managing strong legislation against tobacco particularly novel tobacco products, which are now being presented as a harmless and the best option for quitting smoking.

Dr Waseem Khawaja, health expert

Dr. Waseem Khawaja said that the rising popularity of vaping means that a large number of the country's teenagers have switched to e-cigarettes.

He said that e-cigarettes, as the devices themselves are known, heat a liquid contained in pods and sold separately, flavoured with anything from cucumber to bubble gum and usually containing nicotine, into vapour-hence “vaping”- which is inhaled.

They replicate the effect of smoking both chemically (nicotine) as well as the physical and behavioural hand-to-mouth aspect without burning tobacco. E-cigarette use has grown rapidly in Pakistan, he added.

He said that the technology has been

pushed by producers as a safer alternative to tobacco and as a way to kick the habit, which is not fair. E-cigarettes allow the inhalation of almost the same amount of nicotine without the harmful tar and carbon monoxide produced by burning tobacco. Tar is an assortment of about 7,000 chemicals with at least 69 directly linked to various cancers, he added.

Dr Khawaja said that Nicotine, an addictive substance also present in actual cigarettes, can rewire the developing adolescents' brains making them more susceptible to addiction later in life. Furthermore, studies like the 2017 Truth Initiative survey and a 2015 Stanford study have shown that a lot of them are not aware of e-cigarettes containing nicotine in the first place.

Dr Sharif Astori, medical practitioner

Dr Sharif Astori said that there should be a ban on the sale of e-cigarettes as more young people are using e-cigarettes now. “We don't have any data on it and we don't even know about any diseases caused by it.”

He said, “E-cigarettes are not completely

risk-free but when compared to smoking, evidence shows they carry just a fraction of the harm.” Tobacco consumption in Pakistan is very high, even among children, with an alarming 20 million estimated child smokers.

Zaheer Abbas, a smoker

Zaheer Abbas said that many people have switched to e-cigarettes due to health reasons and have seen benefits.

Zaheer, 32, made the switch from actual cigarettes to e-cigarettes about two years ago.

While speaking in an interview, he explained,

“Although I had been smoking 10-15 cigarettes a day for 10 years, the switch was easy. In the beginning, you get the occasional urge to smoke a cigarette, but eventually, you don't miss it at all.”

Zaheer said that his senses of taste and smell had improved.

Fareed Khan, President Pakistan Pharmacists Association, Islamabad chapter

Fareed Khan said that while vaping has helped multitudes move away from conventional cigarettes to a supposedly safer alternative, some medical professionals worry about the lack of availability of long-term usage data for many chemicals present in vaping products, like diacetyl and also propylene glycol, which may be a respiratory irritant.

Moreover, there is no standardization. For example, some brands have a much higher nicotine level with their cocktail of chemicals, he added.

He said that critics also argue that the vaping culture, with its attractive fruity smells, slick marketing campaigns, and rich social media presence is forged in a way to entice non-smokers and has led to a teen vaping epidemic, thus making them addicted to nicotine at a young age.

In recent years, there has been a growing regulatory backlash against the vaping industry. He, however, said that the move was seen as hypocritical as conventional smoking and the tobacco remain legal while tobacco industry has an effective strategy to handle all this.

Sanaullah Ghuman, General Secretary, Pakistan National Heart Association (PANA)

Sanaullah Ghuman said that the tobacco industry in Pakistan runs very strong drives to attract people and particularly youth are the main focus of their strategy to enhance their future business and marketing their novel non-combustible tobacco products.

He said that in order to sell their products to youth for long period, they plan different strategies to convince them like introducing slim cigarettes or e-cigarettes. He added that keeping in view the large population of women in the country, the tobacco industry has started focusing on them and introducing products like Velo which are acceptable in the society to use by the girls in Pakistan.

He said that although the Velo is the same tobacco product, the tobacco industry shows this product as harmless and safe for them in their effective social media drives. He added that the Velo's packing is very attractive and

even the parents of girls cannot understand whether this is a make-up kit or something like this, which means the girls can easily misguide their elders while using this product, which is tactics of the tobacco industry.

He added the girls now started using these pouches while showing it as chewing-gum. He added due to the tactics of the tobacco industry as per the recent survey, two in every five women are tobacco users. He said that the tobacco industry attracts college and university girls and many of them are using first, second or third grade of Velo, which is alarming.

He said that it is high time to tell the country's youth about the factors behind the growing use of tobacco and its negative impact on their health and society overall. He added strict legislation is the need of the hour to stop tobacco consumption particularly novel

non-combustible tobacco products which are equally harmful to health.

He said that PANAHA always raised its voice against tobacco use and there is a clear understanding that strong marketing strategies compel non-smokers to use tobacco and later they become regular smokers. He added as per the survey of PANAHA 1200 school-going children start smoking daily in Pakistan due to the tactics of the tobacco industry.

He said that the government has an important role to play to handle the tactics of the tobacco industry and expose the industry.

He added there is a wrong perception that tobacco industry is a great source of revenue generation and added that Rs 112 billion has been generated from the industry this year while the government has to bear health expenses of Rs 615 billion due to tobacco-related diseases in a year as per PIDE report.

Similarly, there is no factual situation in the claim of offering high numbers of jobs by the tobacco industry as their share is just 0.2 percent employment related with this profession, which is just nothing while the loss to the human being is high, he added.

Note: Names and identification of some persons have been changed in this section.

Appendix B



TOBACCO INDUSTRY AND ITS FRONT GROUPS TACTICS IN PAKISTAN



Local Groups

The future of the combustible tobacco industry in the country's struggling economy is uncertain. So-called Tobacco Harm Reduction Products (HRPs) have created a niche for the non-combustible tobacco industry to take its place and become a growing part of Pakistan's business model. For this purpose, several front groups are actively working in Pakistan with the support of the tobacco industry to achieve set targets and tasks.

Following are some major groups working with the different names and involved in different activities in Pakistan:

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, Inc. (FSFW or the Foundation)

The Foundation is funded by annual gifts from Philip Morris International (PMI) Global Services Inc..

The organization supports groups working on Tobacco Harm Reduction Products (HRPs) and raising voices in favour of having regulations in Pakistan.

The Foundation is of view that as there are currently no HRP regulations in Pakistan, so this is the ideal time to integrate them into Pakistan's business strategy, educate people (especially health professionals) on HRPs, enhance HRP acceptability, and introduce soft regulations for HRPs with subsidies and lower taxes to make them more affordable and to motivate and attract existing smokers to transition from high-risk to reduced-risk products. It claims HRPs can change the future of millions of current and prospective Pakistani smokers.

FSFW funds research, promotes innovation, and supports collaborative initiatives to accelerate progress in reducing harm and

deaths from smoking. The Foundation also serves as a convener of global research supporting the reduction of tobacco use, while helping to address the impact of decreased smoking rates on agriculture and economies.

The Foundation's work focuses on four core areas: Health, Science and Technology (HST); Agriculture and Livelihoods; and Industry Transformation.

It also supports the use of alternative products/methods that may reduce their current health risks and perhaps help them to stop smoking entirely in the future.

The Foundation collaborates with other non-profit, advocacy, and government organizations to advance smoking cessation and harm-reduction science and technology. It also serves as a convener of research, dialogue, and ideas to reduce smoking globally, while monitoring, evaluating, and helping to address the impact of reduced smoking rates on agriculture and economics.

The organization managed financial support to launch the Pakistan Economic Report 2021 (Scoping study- The Dynamics of Pakistan's Tobacco Economy: A Situational Analysis). This scoping study reviews the infrastructure of existing tobacco health and tax regulations in Pakistan, including a review of economic research on the emerging space for HRPs (Harm Reduction Products). The main focus of the study is understanding the safety, availability, and affordability of HRPs in Pakistan's existing regulatory environment.

The organization has awarded so far grants to eight projects in Pakistan (four each to Alternative Research Initiative (Pakistan) and Quality Belligerence Pakistan (QBal). The projects included Map the status of harm reduction products for cessation and THR in Pakistan, Assessing further the

status of Harm Reduction approaches in Pakistan, Study on barriers to smoking cessation and reduced-risk products in marginalized communities in Pakistan, Garner consensus and support for COP9 to consider harm reduction as integral to tobacco control, Development of tobacco control farmers focused tobacco control policy in Pakistan, Identify best practice evaluation methods for readily available tobacco and nicotine consumer products, Building an economic argument for tobacco harm reduction as one route to cessation in Pakistan, To build evidence for a supportive HRP regulatory environment in Pakistan.

FSFW's Website

The foundation is also running its website. The foundation supports the development of innovative cessation and harm reduction tools through news, views, and videos on its website.

www.smokefreeworld.org

Alternative Research Initiative (ARI)

Alternative Research Initiative (ARI) started its work in Pakistan in 2017 with the objective to give alternative and innovative solutions for smoking cessation. The alliance claims to serve as a platform for advocating and promoting all innovative solutions for ending smoking whether counselling, NRTs, or harm reduction.

ARI has a claim that the organization is working across the country with the support of 87 member organizations to provide researched-based solutions in a variety of social fields, including health, education, governance, culture, etc. in Pakistan.

According to ARI, it offers analytical research and outreach services, identifying and analyzing social issues, in order to provide long-term practical innovative solutions, both for public and private sectors. ARI has a strong internal team comprising researchers, policy analysts, writers, monitoring and evaluation experts, and IT experts. Additionally, ARI has a vast pool of experts from the fields of health, harm

reduction, economy, governance, parliamentary strengthening, culture, etc.

Over the last two years, ARI has conducted countrywide surveys and research studies on various issues of health.

The organization has received funding on several occasions from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (FSFW), an organization solely funded by Philip Morris International (PMI). In 2018, ARI received US\$285,200 for “mapping the status of harm reduction products framework in Pakistan” and to conduct a study on smoking cessation and harm reduction products in marginalized communities in Pakistan. In 2019, FSFW granted US\$123,420 to the Alternative Research Initiative, to “conduct a knowledge, attitudes and practices survey evaluating the use of harm reduction products (HRPs), mainly e-cigarettes, in 11 urban districts of Pakistan” and to “conduct qualitative survey barriers to smoking cessation in marginalized areas of Islamabad, and assess the possible use of e-cigarettes in these areas”.

In 2020, ARI received US\$340,960 from the Foundation for a Smoke-free world for two different grants: one to “study on barriers to smoking cessation and reduced-risk products in marginalized communities in Pakistan” and a second one, more focused on advocacy, to “Garner consensus and support for COP9 to consider harm reduction as integral to tobacco control”. This last grant is one of fifteen grants awarded in 2020 by FSFW that focuses on influencing the Conference of Parties of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

ARI's Website

ARI is running its website in Urdu and English language to attract people. It uses research articles and news stories.

<http://www.aripk.com/>

ARI's newsletter

ARI also issues a monthly newsletter covering national and international articles on the subject of novel tobacco products and

in support of alternative options to quit smoking like using e-cigarettes or vaping.

ARI on Whatsapp

The alliance directly interacts with the people through its Whatsapp number.

PANTHR EMR

PANTHR EMR has claimed that this is an alliance working for finding innovative solutions to ending combustible smoking in 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) to end combustible smoking. The group backs scientific research, with a focus on engaging small organizations and countries in finding innovative solutions to combustible smoking in this region.

The alliance serves as a platform for advocating and promoting all innovative solutions for ending smoking whether counselling, NRTs, or harm reduction.

PANTHR EMR works with health professionals, civil society organizations, academics, youth, women, media, and others for a smoke-free EMR.

The organization encourages NGOs, journalists, doctors, researchers, government officials, advocacy experts, students, teachers and volunteers (among others), particularly from the Eastern Mediterranean Region to join their efforts to end combustible smoking.

The group is working with the support of nine member organizations in Pakistan including FSFW-funded Alternative Research Initiative, Dareecha, BLLF, Now Communities, Masro, Institute for Research, Advocacy and Development, Salar Foundation, ERADA and Youth Development Association.

PANTHER EMR's Website

The organization uses video interviews and research on its website to get the attention of readers on smoking cessation and encourage the use of alternative non-combustible tobacco products.

<http://www.panthr.org/emr/>

Pakistan Alliance for Nicotine and Tobacco Harm Reduction

A project of the Alternative Research Initiative (ARI), the Pakistan Alliance for Nicotine and Tobacco Harm Reduction (PANTHR) promotes smoking cessation and harm reduction for tobacco control.

PANTHR uses research, survey reports, and news stories in support of using alternative tobacco products for quitting smoking or harm reduction.

PANTHR's Websites

Through articles, research, and other ways, the organization is promoting alternative novel tobacco products solutions for smoking cessation on its website.

The organization runs its website on regular basis with the use of different materials to convince people on using alternative tobacco products. The organization also publishes newsletters.

<http://www.panthr.org/>

PANTHR also runs another website that highlights Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (FSFW), a foundation wholly funded by Philip Morris International (PMI), as its partner. The organization uses articles, news stories, reports, and other material on its website in favour of alternative novel tobacco products.

<https://tobaccotactics.org/wiki/panthr/>

PANTHR's Facebook

5,019 people are following the Facebook of the organization, which was created on March 5, 2020. PANTHR is using this social media source to convince people to use alternative means of tobacco to quit smoking.

<https://web.facebook.com/ari.panthr/>

Several other organizations are included on organization's website as PANTHR's member organizations working in Pakistan. The majority are development organizations.

As per claim PANTHR consists of 13 organizations in Pakistan from diverse backgrounds like youth development, education and women rights¹.

The organization's purpose is stated as: "The alliance serves as a platform for advocating and promoting all innovative solutions for ending smoking whether counselling, NRTs, or harm reduction."

Quality Belligerence Pakistan (QBal)

QBal is a public policy advocacy entity registered with the Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan. It has expertise in research and developing public policy with the active engagement of multiple stakeholders including law and policymakers, the corporate sector, media, and other professionals from health, finance, and agriculture.

QBal has completed its work on some research publications with the help of a grant from the Foundation for a Smoke Free World, Inc.

QBAL has received four grants from the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World on projects that included the development of tobacco control farmers, focused tobacco control policy in Pakistan, identifying best practice evaluation methods for readily available tobacco and nicotine consumer products, building an economic argument for tobacco harm reduction as one route to cessation in Pakistan and to build evidence for a supportive HRP regulatory environment in Pakistan.

QBal's website

QBal is running its website since 2019.

<http://www.qbal.com.pk/>

Global TI's Cause's Supportive Front Groups Activities In Other Countries



Right To Vape

Right to vape is a strong pro alternative novel tobacco products voice in digital media with 14,532 testimonials, advocacies, and government submissions.

Right to Vape is an international database and repository. It contains testimonials of adults who have switched from combustible and unsafe oral tobacco products to safer nicotine alternatives. Any adult who has successfully made the switch is encouraged to share their story for the world to see.

The RightToVape.org site is a joint venture between the Consumer Advocates for Smoke-free Alternatives Association (CASAA) and the Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (CAPHRA).

The purpose of this site is to collect successful vape stories and testimonials from people who smoke, and people who used smoke-free alternatives to quit or reduce their smoking. The testimonials are posted publicly on this website for everyone to see and may be sent to lawmakers to fight anti-vaping legislation.

<https://righttovape.org/>

Vaping Post

Vaping post is another strong supporter of e-cigarettes as the best option of risk reduction for adult smokers. The Vaping Post is an online publication that brings information on vaping (also known as e-cigarette, electronic cigarette, or vaporizer). The Vaping Post is a combination of previous websites pvgv.net and Ma-cigarette.fr acquired in May 2016 by

Vaping Post Sàrl (Geneva, Switzerland). It has been originally created by Ghyslain Armand, a French ex-smoker. This online edition considers that the electronic cigarette (vaporizer) is a method of risk reduction for adult smokers who can't or don't want to quit smoking.

www.vapingpost.com

The Global Tobacco and Nicotine Forum (GTNF)

This forum is the world's leading forum discussing the future of the tobacco and nicotine industries.

The GTNF has become the global exchange for views and ideas between public health experts, government representatives, the industry, and investors.

Each year, the GTNF features an expanding range of influential voices charting historic transformation. They offer expert panels, key speakers, and diverse viewpoints. The GTNF is a strong belief that deepening the conversation about tobacco, nicotine and public health can lead to more informed views and decisions by all stakeholders. To that end, they build plenty of opportunities for informal networking and meetings. In 2020, their first fully virtual event successfully engaged with a global audience in multiple time zones.

The GTNF holds events, meetings, and discussions with the support of the tobacco industry and the organization openly shows its support.

Their many representatives belong to the tobacco industry like GTNF advisory board member Mark Kehaya- a past chairman of

the GTNF advisory board and current chairman of AMV Holdings is a leading retailer and e-liquid manufacturer in the vapor industry. Similarly, GTNF advisory board member, Lindsay Andrews is vice president of scientific engagement at Juul Labs. In her role, she supports the

dissemination of Juul Labs' regulatory science and policy research through a scientific publication strategy.

<https://gtnf.org/>

1. <https://tobaccotactics.org/wiki/panthr/>

Appendix C

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global TI's Cause's Supportive Front Groups Activities In Other Countries



Tobacco Industry primarily conveys arguments through direct and indirect lobbying

56% of articles focused on activity in North America, Europe, or Australasia¹, and the rest focused on Asia (17%), South America, Africa, or transnational activity. Six main political strategies and four mainframes were identified. The tobacco industry frequently claims that the proposed policy will have negative unintended consequences, that there are legal barriers to regulation, and that the regulation is unnecessary because, for example, the industry does not market to youth or adheres to a voluntary code. The industry primarily conveys these arguments through direct and indirect lobbying, the promotion of voluntary codes and alternative policies and the formation of alliances with other industrial sectors. The majority of tactics and arguments were used in multiple jurisdictions.

International research shows 'strong evidence' linking vaping to cigarette smoking

Young people who use e-cigarettes are more likely to take up tobacco cigarettes, according to an international review of research into vaping². People under 20 who used vapes were more than three times as likely to have ever smoked tobacco cigarettes, and more than twice as likely to have smoked cigarettes in the previous month, according to a review of 25 studies globally. The review, published in the journal Plos One, was led by Australian researchers and funded by the World Health Organization. It analyzed vaping studies in several countries, including the US, UK, and Germany. The researchers concluded there was "an urgent need for governments internationally to take action to regulate the availability and marketing of [e-cigarette] products to children and adolescents".

Serene Yoong, an associate professor at the Swinburne University of Technology in Melbourne and the study's lead author, said the findings pointed to the need for youth prevention programs and better regulation of e-cigarette products.

Second-hand nicotine vaping exposure raises the risk for bronchitis, breathing problems

Second-hand exposure to nicotine vapor from e-cigarettes at home raises the risk for bronchitis symptoms and shortness of breath among young adults, a study published by the journal Thorax found.

If future studies determine that nicotine vapor exposure causes these complications, there would be a "compelling rationale" for banning their use in public spaces, the researchers said³.

Up to 93% of study participants reported being exposed to second-hand nicotine vaping at home over a five-year period and more than one in four of them reported wheezing and other bronchitis symptoms, the data showed. "While the association is not causation, this study is the first to describe the negative effects of [second-hand nicotine vape] exposure on respiratory symptoms," the authors of a related commentary, Dr. Anna Lucia Fuentes and Laura Crotty Alexander wrote.

Tobacco companies systematically work for business expansion

A team of international researchers searched the Legacy Tobacco Documents Library for relevant references, interviewed key stakeholders, and participants, and cast their net wider for newspaper articles, market reports and other sources that might

help them piece together what had gone on⁴.

Their collected evidence painted a shocking picture, showing how tobacco companies systematically:

- **ignored**, weakened, and ultimately overturned attempts to restrict tobacco advertising;
- **lobbied**, with some success, for favourable tax structures (e.g. on import duties);
- **conspired** to keep tobacco prices low, to stave off possible tax rises; and
- **donated** large sums of money to political parties to attempt to influence policy.

Tobacco industry uses a set of discursive and instrumental strategies

This study found that the tobacco industry uses a set of discursive and instrumental strategies that is largely consistent across low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) and with the policy dystopia model (PDM)⁵.

We identified several minor contextual nuances absent from the PDM. Some of these nuances were characteristic to individual countries, while others to LMICs more broadly. They included the argument that tobacco control policies unfairly punish reputable tobacco industry actors, and an emphasis on instrumental strategies centered on maintaining a good image, rather than rehabilitating a tarnished image as emphasized in the PDM.

Alternative Tobacco Product's (ATP) promotional materials have association with ATP initiation

In this study, the researchers studied the question of whether ownership of alternative tobacco product (ATP) marketing materials (eg. samples, coupons, branded caps, t-

shirts, or posters) is associated with subsequent initiation of ATPs or cigarettes among adolescents and young adults⁶. The findings of this longitudinal cohort study of 757 adolescents and young adults in California were that the ownership of ATP promotional materials was associated with ATP initiation.

Tobacco industry effectively uses front groups to combat public health measures

The researchers consider how industries use front groups to combat public health measures by relating the history of “Get Government Off Our Back”, a coalition created by the tobacco industry to fight government regulation⁷. Using tobacco industry documents, contemporaneous media reports, journal articles, and press releases, they review the establishment by RJ Reynolds of an industry front group, Get Government Off Our Back (GGOOB) in 1994. The group's goal was to advocate against U.S. federal regulation of tobacco. By keeping its involvement secret, RJ Reynolds was able to draw public and legislative support toward limiting government regulation of tobacco without having to address the tobacco industry's reputation for misrepresenting evidence. Unfortunately, the tobacco industry's use of front groups is not unique; other industries use front groups to fight measures designed to protect public health. Research on the background and funding of advocacy organizations could help identify industry front groups and make them less useful to their creators.

Association proves between electronic nicotine delivery systems and initiation of tobacco use

The researchers systematic review of the association between electronic nicotine delivery systems and electronic non-nicotine delivery systems (ENDS/ENNDS) use among non-smoking children and adolescents aged <20 years with subsequent tobacco use⁸. They searched five electronic databases and the grey

literature up to the end of September 2020. Prospective longitudinal studies that described the association between ENDS/ENNDS use, and subsequent tobacco use in those aged < 20 years who were non-smokers at baseline were included. They generated unadjusted and adjusted risk ratios (ARRs) describing associations between ENDS/ENNDS and tobacco use.

Regulations on harm reduction products are essential in Pakistan

As per findings of the study, the component of smoking cessation is almost missing in Pakistan's existing tobacco control efforts and policies⁹.

The study suggested that Pakistan also needs to develop durable mechanisms to control the illicit trade of cigarettes in order to restrict available options of buying cheap, illicit, or smuggled cigarettes. Tobacco law enforcement on smoking in public and private places should be more stringently pursued. There is a need to create an understanding about HRP, backed by sensible regulation. Currently, the use of HRP, mainly e-cigarettes, is unregulated and limited to the upper and middle classes. The unregulated use of HRP in a regulatory vacuum may create space for abuse of HRP in the form of fake products.

Pakistan needs awareness and sensible regulation on alternative to combustible smoking

The study observed that knowledge about HRP, especially e-cigarettes, can best be described as vague. Friends are the main source of knowledge about HRP¹⁰. Higher prices of alternatives to combustible smoking are a major hurdle to their use for smoking cessation. Smoking cessation mechanisms are missing from tobacco control efforts in Pakistan, especially for marginalized communities.

The study says lack of knowledge about alternatives (HRP) to combustible smoking and their higher prices in Pakistan is a barrier to their adoption. There is a need to create an understanding about HRP, backed by sensible regulation.

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Appendix D

DESK REVIEW OF MATERIAL ON THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY AND ITS ALLIES ACTIVITIES

(Internal, external media, and other sources)



National Sources

Business Recorder

(Report 04 Jun, 2021)

Smokers: \$3.85bn medical bill can be saved by extending Nicotine Replacement Therapy

The cigarette use costing a whopping US\$3.85 billion to 15 million smokers in the medical bill in Pakistan, can be saved, if the government extends an efficient cessation service including Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) in government healthcare facilities aided by Harm Reduced Products (HRPs)¹.

This has been stated by the Quality Belligerence, an Islamabad-based policy advocacy Organization, here on Thursday, during an interaction with the media.

Many imported HRPs after paying 20 percent customs duty have made inroads in Pakistani markets capturing all high middle and low-income groups.

The Pakistan Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC) should end its ambivalent policy on innovative tobacco products to clearly articulate, if these can be used as cessation aid as has been done by many developed countries on the basis of clinical trials.

In the scientific evidence-based decision making, Sweden, Japan, New Zealand, the UK and many others have started adopting HRPs as cessation aid.

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) has unequivocally adopted HRPs as an essential component of quit smoking, saying that many thousands of people in the UK have already stopped smoking with the help

of an e-cigarette. This is because there is growing evidence that they can be effective. There is no tax on e-cigarettes in the UK.

A clinical trial from a large New Zealand vaping population, funded by the Health Research Council in 2019, suggested that hundreds of thousands of more smokers worldwide could successfully quit the killer habit, if they used nicotine containing e-cigarettes (vapes) together with nicotine patches.

The WHO, however, differentiates between NRT and HRPs calling latter novel and emerging tobacco and nicotine products including Heated Tobacco Products (HTPs), Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), Electronic Non-Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENNDS) and other products.

The WHO report on the tobacco epidemic states that tobacco cessation support worldwide remains low, with less than 30 percent of the world having access to appropriate tobacco cessation services even though 70 percent of all people who smoke and want to quit.

For Pakistan, where 22.2 percent men and 2.1 percent women are smokers (GATS), means that there is a need to provide cessation facilities to 15.6 million people to prevent 160,000 tobacco-related illnesses deaths annually.

In Pakistan, except for "Offering help to quit tobacco use", the government is implementing all other parts of the MPOWER strategy with mixed results.

Being party to WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the NHSRC has reported to the FCTC secretariat in 2,000 on the status of FCTC's implementation that tobacco dependence and counselling services for the cessation of tobacco use are virtually nonexistent. The

NHSRC also conveyed to WHO that it does not have any statistics on the HRPs.

The WHO has started monitoring of HRPs saying that monitoring the use of ENDS among both adults and adolescents is important for understanding the level of use and the trends.

Countries began collecting data on the current use of ENDS in 2013, and 42 countries now have nationally representative data available. However, the indicator is not yet collected in enough countries to permit an estimate of the global level of use.

Derek Yach, president of Foundation for a Smoke-Free World, said: "There is growing evidence that a range of harm-reduction products, including e-cigarettes (vapes), snus, nicotine pouches, and heated tobacco products, can help smokers quit or at least substantially reduce their harmful exposure to combustible cigarettes. The WHO, supported by heavily funded Bloomberg Philanthropies grantees, continues to blindly ignore scientific evidence, vilifying these products instead of promoting their use to save lives.

ProPakistani

(Website: Nov 25, 2021)

Pakistani Smokers Believe Switching to Alternatives Can Help Quit Cigarettes

Ninety-five percent of Pakistani smokers believe that switching to alternatives can help them quit smoking, according to the results of an opinion survey that was conducted in major cities across Pakistan².

However, 86 percent of Pakistani smokers who wanted to quit smoking have been unsuccessful despite repeated attempts.

The founder and CEO of the Association for Smoking Alternatives Pakistan (ASAP), Mirza M. Abeer, addressed a ceremony in Islamabad and said that the best option is for smokers to quit the habit, but the majority of smokers who cannot do so should at least move to safer alternatives like e-cigarettes or heated tobacco products.

The survey was commissioned by ASAP and conducted by Foresight Research, with over 600 smokers and users of alternatives to smoking to help understand smokers' perceptions about cigarette alternatives. The research was a component of ASAP's anti-smoking campaign launched in early November to get one million Pakistanis to quit cigarettes.

ProPakistan

(Website: Nov 27, 2021)

Philip Morris Has Reduced its Carbon Footprint by 30%

Philip Morris Pakistan Limited (PMPKL) has reduced its carbon emissions footprint by 30% compared with the 2018 baseline in manufacturing, according to PMPKL's Executive Director and Director Finance Muhammad Zeeshan³.

The company has achieved this by reducing the energy consumption of existing manufacturing facilities by 41% and by the installation of a 704KW Solar Plant.

He highlighted that PMPKL is striving to reduce its carbon footprint by transforming its operations. Among other initiatives, PMPKL converted the boiler fuel at its Green Leaf Threshing Plant from furnace oil to Liquefied Petroleum Gas which alone is expected to reduce the CO2 emissions by a staggering 30%. This translates into a reduction of 2200 tons of carbon emissions in the next five years.

Another core value of PMPKL is the sustainable development of the communities where we work. To achieve this, PMPKL has partnered with various NGOs to support green leaf tobacco farmers and other stakeholders.

One such initiative is the crop diversification program, where PMPKL has been working to increase the economic and financial resilience of tobacco farmers by increasing their 'Living Income' through the cultivation of alternative and non-traditional crops.

PMPKL in partnership with Idara-e-Taleem-

o-Aagahi is also conducting activities for dependents of farmers, wherein, around 5000 children (aged 6-14 years) of growers were engaged in 200 centers set up across Swabi, Charsada and Mardan with the goal of engaging such children in healthy, playful and educational activities. In collaboration with Shewa Educated Social Workers Association and Integrated Regional Support Program, an additional 700 older children (aged 15-17 years) have been engaged in life skills; "Tailoring and Stitching" and "Electrical Work".

Another initiative is the reforestation program embarked by PMPKL in 2015 with the goal of supplying 100% traceable and sustainable firewood to its contracted farmers. 5.6 Million Eucalyptus Trees have been planted in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa covering an area of over 1,800 Hectares of private communal lands.

As part of its aim to foster innovation and promote social entrepreneurship, PMPKL in partnership with local NGOs launched a program to support and fund start-ups with a view to foster a culture of socially responsible innovation and transformation in Pakistan ("Program"). This also develops start-ups that focus on positively impacting society. So far 150 startups have been engaged all over Pakistan and the top 3 finalists from the Program were awarded \$10,000 each.

PMPKL has also recently partnered with a local NGO, to provide vocational training with the aim of empowering women through professional training in food catering. Under this initiative, four training centers were established in Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Multan where 250 women were trained in the food catering business as well as on how to develop market linkages to sell online.

To support sustainable livelihoods for marginalized segments of society including persons with disabilities, PMPKL additionally partnered with NOWPDP to establish a recycling facility that employs people with disabilities to manage waste collection by providing them with retrofitted vehicles and waste processing to convert PET plastic into items of daily use.

Dawn

(November 11th, 2021)

Govt should ensure transparency while dealing with tobacco industry: Reports

The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index has called upon governments to ensure transparency while interacting with the tobacco industry as it will help check manipulation of tobacco control policies and their implementation processes⁴.

Its Pakistan chapter said the government did not increase the federal excise duty on cigarettes and tobacco products due to which consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products increased in pandemic conditions.

The index stressed that the tobacco industry should be required to provide information in a transparent and accurate manner regularly, about production, market share, marketing expenditures, revenues, and any other activity, including expenditure on research and lobbying.

The third Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index launched by Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR), a civil society organization, working for tobacco control in Pakistan.

The Pakistan index was launched after the global index, a civil society report assessing the implementation of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Article 5.3. The global Tobacco index is based on publically documented industry interference.

Pakistan has been ranked 17th among 80 countries that are measured for tobacco industry interference. There is an improvement in Pakistan as this year score is 48 compared to 50 points from the previous year.

Index informed that governments should require the tobacco industry to submit information on production, manufacture, market share, marketing expenditure, and its revenues.

It said there was a lack of transparency to facilitate deals with the industry.

The index said that corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities are not banned and remain a challenge in Pakistan. The so-called CSR activities to make a decent corporate picture despite the colossal harm they do to general wellbeing. CSR activities of the Tobacco Industry should need to be revised.

Pakistan Tobacco Industry Interference Index said the government did not increase federal excise duty on cigarettes and tobacco products, consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products increased in pandemic conditions.

Zeeshan Danish project coordinator of the SAMAR said that it was a timely report and hoped that the government would implement its recommendations.

“The tobacco industry is pouring millions to build a positive image of new tobacco products like e-cigarettes to trap the young generation by their front groups. Adoption and implementation of sustained and independent National Tobacco Control Policy is need of the hour to protect youth from the hazards of traditional and new tobacco products,” he said.

Dawn

(Published on November 2nd, 2021)
Campaign launched to convince 1m

Pakistanis to quit smoking

The Association for Smoking Alternatives Pakistan (ASAP) has launched a campaign to convince one million Pakistanis to quit smoking⁵.

Expressing grave concern over the increasing number of smokers in the country, a nationwide drive has been launched to educate Pakistanis on the need to quit cigarettes.

“Almost all smokers today understand the risks associated with cigarettes but continue to use them until they fall prey to cardiovascular diseases, cancer or other diseases associated with cigarette use. It is

the role of organisations and regulatory authorities to make people quit cigarettes, right now,” Abeer Mirza, founder and CEO of ASAP, told media on Monday.

Inspired by the UK government's long running 'Stoptober Campaign' that focused on making smokers in the United Kingdom quit smoking during the month of October, the ASAP aims to replicate the learning and results of the campaign in Pakistan for the benefit of public health.

Mr. Mirza said the campaign planned to use digital platforms to provide counselling and support to smokers that could help remove cigarettes from the lives of one million smokers.

He said a number of steps were taken by the government, however, cigarette use statistics over the past decade showed that the desired results had not been achieved.

The ASAP founder said fresh data revealed that despite a reduction in global smoking rates, the absolute number of smokers was still beyond one billion, with over 80 per cent found in low and middle income countries, owing to greater public health costs.

“In a country with over 15.6 million cigarette smokers, Pakistan is in dire need of innovative solutions to help curb the public health impact of cigarettes,” he said, adding that the campaign aims to create awareness of better solutions that had been successful in other countries like UK, Europe and Japan.

Pakistan Today

(Nov 25, 2021)

95% Pakistanis believe switching to alternatives can help quit cigarettes

86% of Pakistani smokers who wanted to quit cigarettes were unsuccessful despite repeated attempts, reveals an opinion survey conducted in major cities across the country. 95% of these Pakistanis, however, told us that switching to alternatives allowed them to quit the harmful habit of smoking⁶.

At a ceremony held in Islamabad, sharing details of the survey with media, Mirza M. Abeer, founder and CEO of ASAP, believes

the best option is for smokers to quit, but the majority of smokers who cannot quit should at least move to safer alternatives such as e-cigarettes or heated tobacco products.

The survey was commissioned by the Association for Smoking Alternatives Pakistan (ASAP) and conducted by Foresight Research with over 600 smokers and users of alternatives to help understand consumer perceptions about cigarette alternatives in the country. The research was a component of ASAP's anti-smoking campaign launched in early November to get 1 million Pakistanis to quit cigarettes.

"This would help a lot in reducing the number of smokers in the country," he remarked

The survey asked the participants about the reasons for quitting and all of them highlighted that better health is one of the primary reasons for switching away from cigarettes, and 98 percent of the participants believed their health has improved as a result of switching.

The survey also covered the government's role, where 82 percent of participants believed the harm caused by cigarette smoking is a public health crisis in Pakistan, and 80 percent believed the use of alternatives to cigarette smoking can help reduce the number of smokers in the country.

About 89 percent of the participants were of the view that in order to help quit smoking, alternatives to cigarettes should be readily available to smokers in Pakistan. The survey also revealed that 86 percent indicated lack of awareness about the benefits of these alternatives as the major cause.

Lastly, 89 percent of participants also understood that the government should encourage existing users who do not quit cigarettes to at least switch to safer alternatives.

Mirza M. Abeer, a lawyer by profession, has founded the largest online community of smokers turned alternative users in Pakistan. His efforts take inspiration from the UK government's policies that encourage alternatives to cigarettes to reduce the country's smoking rates.

ASAP dreams of a day that the Pakistan government would implement similar policies and create space for smokers who are unable to quit.

Tribune Magazine
(Jan 2, 2022)

Smoke without fire: Govts and organizations continue to look for ways to reduce the practice of smoking and its accompanying health risks

Everyone around the world is working on saving lives one way or another. The governments are playing their role to avoid conflicts among countries. Major steps are being carried out to stop Covid-19 and other diseases from spreading⁷.

The law and order forces are trying to maintain peace in the cities. At the same time, there is a silent killer that needs to be stopped or reduced its damage. It's the damage done by cigarette smoking, and as it is difficult for the smoker to quit altogether. For this reason, scientists have invented some better alternatives that can reduce the risk of cigarette smoking by 95 per cent, called e-cigarettes.

As per the report, 'The Economics of Tobacco and Tobacco Taxation in Pakistan' conducted in 2014, Pakistan has one of the largest tobacco users globally, with over 22 million adults ages 18 or older smoking cigarettes, water pipes, and some other tobacco product. This causes Pakistan a heavy burden due to the diseases caused by combustible smoking. The total cost of all smoking-attributable to illnesses and deaths in 2019 in Pakistan was \$3.85 billion.

This is not only the problem of this country but a global issue. There are multiple alternates that the governments and organizations have been working on to tackle the issue. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) defines 'tobacco control' as supply, demand and harm reduction strategies that aim to eliminate or reduce consumption of tobacco products and exposure to tobacco smoke to improve the health of a population.

Cigarette smoke is harmful to smokers and

the people around them. About 163,000 people died due to smoking in Pakistan in 2017. Almost 31,000 of these deaths are due to exposure to secondhand smoke, reveals the Study on Global Burden of Disease by the Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation, USA. According to Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2019, tobacco causes about 16.0% of male deaths and 4.9% of female deaths. Overall, 10.9% of all deaths are caused by smoking.

All of this calls for a solution: Many experts have suggested innovative solutions for ending smoking: through counselling, Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRTs), or Harm Reduction Products (HRPs).

Counselling and NRTs have been used for many years, and there are many examples that smokers have quit smoking but then started smoking again after some time. The latest method to help smokers quit smoking is to provide them with a better alternative that fulfils their nicotine requirement but reduces risks.

Many studies have been conducted worldwide, but in 2015 Public Health England (PHE) officially maintained that vaping is approximately 95% less harmful than smoking combustible cigarettes.

Since then, this observation has been recognized by the New Zealand government on their Vaping Facts website, which debunks vaping myths and misinformation to give adult smokers the resources they need to make the choice that's right for them.

According to the study, 'The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014', of the more than 7,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, at least 250 are known to be harmful. These chemicals are released when the cigarette is burned.

Whereas an e-cigarette, which sells from anywhere between Rs 3,000 to Rs 10,000 is not burned but instead releases vapors, it is a much safer alternative to cigarette smoking. Unlike traditional combustible cigarettes, there is no combustion throughout the nicotine delivery process

from e-liquid to vapor production with e-cigarette use. Vaporizers heat e-liquids composed of everyday ingredients and nicotine to produce vapor and deliver nicotine to adult users. There is no point in the vaping process where smoke, tar or ash is produced by combustion as with traditional cigarettes or other methods of combustible tobacco consumption.

While talking about the technology used in their products, the Head of Pakistan Market at RELX International, Carrie Dong, said that RELX international's product technology sits at the forefront of the industry. Since its inception, it has maintained a steadfast focus on leveraging cutting-edge technology to provide the ultimate user experience while being extremely responsible with our marketing and branding initiatives.

"We're always listening to our users and using their feedback to improve our products and technologies. We try as much as possible to think about problems from their point of view, to better and more comprehensively understand the different demands they might have," she said.

She added that their performance standard was created with over 100 R&D scientists from the RELX Lab through 76 sensory tests and adjustments, which quantified smoothness through five performance indicators. "The Super Smooth gives users the best possible flavor and mouthfeel from their pods while helping to mimic the sensation of traditional cigarettes better to help adult smokers transition from combustible cigarettes to a better alternative," she said.

Pakistan, home to millions of smokers, is a potential market where the use of e-cigarette can help cigarette smokers reduce their health risks. According to a survey conducted by Foresight Research, about 95 percent of Pakistani smokers have agreed that switching to alternatives enabled them to quit the habit of smoking.

The survey was commissioned by Association for Smoking Alternatives Pakistan (ASAP), with over 600 smokers and users of alternatives to understand smokers' perceptions about other options.

The survey involved the participants who were asked about the reasons for quitting. They all insisted that one of the primary reasons for switching away from cigarettes was better health. About 98 percent of the participants noticed improved health after switching.

The government's role was also covered, where 82 per cent were convinced that the harm of cigarette smoking is a public health crisis in Pakistan, and 80 per cent thought the use of alternatives to cigarette smoking could help reduce the number of smokers in the country.

About 89 per cent of the participants believed that to help quit smoking, alternatives to cigarettes should be readily available to smokers in Pakistan.

Founder and CEO of ASAP, Mirza M Abeer, believed the best option for smokers is to quit smoking, but most smokers who cannot quit should at least move to safer alternatives such as e-cigarettes or heated tobacco products.

Carrie also agreed that smokers quitting smoking is the best option but said that these alternatives could help reduce the damage caused by cigarette smoking and should be available to smokers.

"The e-cigarette market in Pakistan is multiplying and shows a lot of potentials. The stats by ASAP indicates that Pakistan's adult smokers are open to using e-cigarette technology to make the switch away from combustible cigarettes," she said. "We hope that with the introduction of a better alternative, we can help offer more adult smokers the option of a better alternative while also contributing to an area of rapid economic growth."

Another study, 'Awareness, use and perceptions about E-cigarettes among adult smokers in Karachi, Pakistan', points out that awareness of e-cigarettes is high in Pakistan, and this is the first step to broader adoption; however, use continues to be low. "We believe that is simply because the right product has yet to be introduced and are confident that RELX products will offer a

competitive option for adult smokers and vapers in the country," added Carrie.

Jibran Latif, a resident of Karachi who picked up the habit in college, talking to The Express Tribune, said that he has been enjoying the delicious taste of e-cigarettes for the last three years.

"I used to smoke cigarettes, and usually the atmosphere is polluted with a cigarette, and you don't get a pleasant smell after smoking. Whereas with e-cigarettes, you can enjoy them easily without hiding them from family. Initially, my family forbade me, but now, as this is safer than a cigarette, they are okay with it," he said.

According to the Alternative Research Initiative's (ARI) survey, with no exact estimates about the number of vapers in Pakistan, their number may be around 30,000 to 35,000. Currently, in Pakistan, there are more than 100 vape stores, and the number is steadily increasing, mainly in the cities including Karachi, Lahore,

Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar. The prices of vaping products are higher than conventional cigarettes. The most expensive duty paid cigarette packet in Pakistan costs a little more than a dollar, while the price of vaping kit starts from 24 dollars and goes up to 162 dollars. This is mainly because vaping products are imported, the kits from China, and the flavors from the US, UK and Malaysia.

Reports regarding e-cigarette or vaping use-associated lung injury (EVALI) largely came from the United States from 2019 to 2020. The US Center for Disease Control has now come out and stated that vitamin E acetate, a chemical used to thicken illicit THC-containing e-liquids, was "strongly linked to the EVALI outbreak."

A study conducted by Yale University after the EVALI outbreak further concluded, "Higher rates of e-cigarette and marijuana use in US states did not result in more e-cigarette or vaping-related lung injuries (known as EVALI), a new study from the Yale School of Public Health finds."

According to the study's author, Abigail Friedman, "If e-cigarette or marijuana use per se drove this outbreak, areas with more engagement in those behaviors should show a higher EVALI prevalence, and this study finds the opposite result. Alongside geographic clusters of high EVALI prevalence states, these findings are more consistent with locally available e-liquids or additives driving the EVALI outbreak than a widely used, nationally-available product."

In Pakistan, some organizations believe that e-cigarettes affect the brain development of the younger generation. But there is no evidence that proves these claims. The reported diseases are linked to the use of poor quality flavor for e-cigarettes that are illegally sold worldwide.

The companies officially operating in Pakistan have ensured that e-cigarettes are not exposed or sold to underage youngsters.

While talking about RELX, Carrie said that everything they do is guided by their Pledge, commitment to corporate accountability, centered on protection, the protection of minors, the protection of consumers, and the protection of economic livelihoods. "RELX International pledges to contribute to the communities where we operate under the three key pillars of the Guardian Program, Golden Shield, and Green Shoots," he said.

Explaining the programs, the Guardian Program guides the operations from product development to marketing and sales. "We are guided by a set of internal Marketing Guidelines, which we adhere to ensure compliance strictly. For example, from the first product packaging, RELX has printed bold and prominent reminders on the packaging of our products and product manuals with the words, 'Not for Minors,' 'Keep clear of Children,' and 'this product contains nicotine. Nicotine is an addictive chemical.' This is even in markets where such warnings are not required by law," she said.

"We also do not engage models who are under the age of 25 in our marketing material. We believe that all companies need to be responsible players for the industry to

continue to grow. This means protecting minors, marketing products responsibly, and developing high-quality, reliable products," she added.

Meanwhile, the Golden Shield program helps prevent the production and sale of counterfeit e-cigarette products, one of the main challenges currently facing the e-cigarette industry. Counterfeit e-cigarette products pose serious potential health risks to consumers. "While governments and local authorities work to implement stronger enforcement methods to rid the market of these harmful products, international e-cigarette companies can and should do more to aid them in this global fight to offer consumers products that abide by safety standards by undergoing stringent quality checks," she said.

According to details, over 77,000 websites and over 6,000 social media accounts have been taken down by the Golden Shield team, and 550,000 illicit products have been removed from the market.

The Green Shoots initiative champions entrepreneurship and empowers small businesses. Startups and small businesses are the economic backbones of societies worldwide, providing innovative solutions and services to their customers. However, they face disproportionate business challenges in times of rapid change and globalization.

While there is an ongoing debate on the reduced risk by e-cigarettes, the experts at the Alternative Research Initiative (ARI) Pakistan believes that more effective and affordable smoking cessation services should be provided in Pakistan and make tobacco harm reduction part of the national policy by introducing innovative solutions for ending smoking.

The study by ARI on 'Rapid Assessment of Smoking and Vaping in Pakistan during Covid-19 Lockdown' indicates that "the rate of quitting smoking in Pakistan is one of the lowest in the world – 2.6 per cent. On the other hand, Safer Nicotine Delivery Systems (SNDS) is a nascent phenomenon in Pakistan as there are no regulations for the

use of SNDS, including imports, manufacturing or product. The people and business operators of SNDS stay restrained to avoid issues that could affect their business concerns. In Pakistan e-cigarettes are the main SNDS used, mainly by the users from the middle, upper-middle and upscale urban localities."

Tobacco harm reduction works as almost all disease risks are attributed to the smoke that carries the particles of tar and toxic gases inhaled from burning tobacco. If smokers can find satisfactory alternatives to cigarettes that do not involve combustion but provide nicotine, they would avoid almost all disease risks.

They was also the opinion that to achieve a smoke-free Pakistan before 2030, effective cessation services should be made accessible and affordable, and tobacco harm reduction is made part of the national tobacco control policy. While most countries in the world have succeeded in reducing the number of smokers through their progressive regulations on less harmful alternatives, it is about the time when Pakistan also starts working on this.

Mirza Abeer of ASAP believes that if the Ministry of Health Pakistan is genuinely intent on reducing the burden on public health due to cigarette smoking, they have to encourage the use of vaping and heated tobacco products that are scientifically substantiated to produce fewer carcinogens as compared to lighting a cigarette on fire. The same way progressive governments such as the UK and New Zealand are doing.

Pakistan Observer
(Nov 25, 2021)

Is there a need for Pakistan to reevaluate its tobacco control policy in new light?

The world is embracing electronic cigarettes, vapes, heated tobacco products (HTPs) and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDs) as harm-reduction alternatives to combustible tobacco products⁸.

It has been confirmed through several

independent sources that these products are relatively less harmful than conventional cigarettes for smokers and also eliminate the risk of passive smoking for non-smokers and the environment.

Several countries including USA, New Zealand, and Japan among others have developed comprehensive smoke-free agendas and modern tobacco control policies that are less prohibitionist and are more consumer centric in their approach to eliminating the harm posed by smoking – with great speed and progress.

The UK is perhaps at the fore-front in developing a progressive and evidence-based policy on tobacco control, including vapes as an integral part of their fight against smoking.

Public Health England's research states that vaping is up to 95% less harmful than cigarettes, and just recently the Health Secretary has outlined his vision that would allow the NHS to prescribe non-combustible products such as vapes and e-cigarettes to smokers so that they are able to switch to less harmful alternatives than smoking.

Similarly, in Thailand the Minister of Digital Economy and Society (DES) has also announced his plans to legalize e-cigarettes to help adult smokers quit smoking.

As Asian countries, along with several major economies, are adopting and regularizing vaping in hopes of achieving better public health, why should Pakistan stay behind?

The trend of cigarette smoking continues to grow in developing countries including Pakistan due to steady population growth, low prices, lack of awareness about its dangers and other factors.

There are approximately 24 million smokers in Pakistan, out of which 160 thousand people die from tobacco smoking annually.

Pakistan became a Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2005 but the menace of cigarette smoking is still far from being in control.

This suggests that something about the approach we are taking is not effective – something other countries around the world have realized, and which is why they have actively changed their strategies from being outright prohibitionist, to more progressive.

And they are seeing the positive results in terms of better quit rates as a result of adopting these policies.

Pakistan needs to renew and improve its tobacco control policies and work towards integrating regulated use of less-harmful tobacco alternatives in its policy for smoking.

When consumers don't have access to proper information due to unregulated, smuggled products in the market, there is no check or balance and so regulation is very important.

This calls for an urgent re-examination of tobacco control policy to regulate the use of less-harmful alternatives and to curb harm associated with combustible smoking.

Through these measures smokers can be educated regarding the harm caused by conventional cigarettes and equipped with the knowledge of less harmful tobacco alternatives to aid them in their journey to quit smoking.

Regulating reduced-risk alternatives in no way means normalizing smoking. These alternatives are simply a modern and smoker-centric method to reduce the harm caused by cigarette smoking.

John Newton, director of health improvement at Public Health England said, “If you don't smoke, don't vape, but if you smoke there is no situation where it would be better for your health to continue smoking rather than switching completely to vaping.”

With less than 3% of smokers being able to completely quit smoking per year, Pakistan needs to make modern, smoke-free alternatives to cigarettes available for consumers to promote better public health – for smokers and non-smokers alike.

International Sources

INDEPENDENT

(28 December 2018)

Government says vaping 95% safer than smoking in push to get smokers to switch to e-cigarettes

The government is launching a campaign to convince smokers vaping is a significantly less damaging alternative to smoking⁹.

Public Health England (PHE) says e-cigarettes are 95 per cent safer than tobacco, but that fewer than half of smokers are aware of this fact.

In a bid to counter "false fears" about vaping's safety, a new film by PHE demonstrates how the toxic chemicals and tar inhaled by an average smoker in just one month compares with not smoking or using an e-cigarette.

The health agency released footage from an experiment to show the devastating harm caused by smoking and how this can be avoided by switching to vaping or using another type of aid to quit.

The film is being released online as part of PHE's Health Harms campaign, which encourages smokers to try to quit this January by demonstrating the damage every single cigarette can do.

INDEPENDENT

(17 August 2018)

Smoking ban should not apply to e-cigarettes and vaping should be allowed at work, in pubs and on trains, MPs say

Train operators, pubs and employers should rethink blanket bans on e-cigarette use which make smokers less likely to quit tobacco products and are not backed by evidence, MPs have said¹.

A major report the Commons Science and Technology Committee has warned

smokers are dying as a result of ministers' misconceptions about the risks of e-cigarettes, and calls for a national debate and regulatory overhaul.

Most public and private organizations have extended bans on smoking in public places to e-cigarettes, despite them being exempt from "smoke-free" legislation and being significantly safer.

The Guardian

(Nov 3, 2021)

The proposed medicinal licensing of e-cigarettes is grotesque

The proposed licensing of e-cigarettes is part of a "harm reduction" approach to smoking which is not supported by our medical colleagues in Europe or the US (Regulator paves way for NHS e-cigarette prescriptions in England, 29 October)¹¹. It threatens to perpetuate the inhaling habit, and to prolong nicotine addiction into another generation. This is the holy grail of a tobacco industry that has systematically defrauded the public for decades in marketing its deadly products, and is now busily purchasing e-cigarette manufacturers, funding cannabis development and acquiring pharmaceutical and biotech companies, in an attempt to align itself with the legitimate pharmaceutical industry and clean up its image.

Grotesquely, it is buying into treatments for the diseases it causes, while still vigorously promoting lethal tobacco sales across the globe. In the UK, it has funded the Institute of Economic Affairs, to which many Tory MPs have strong links, and which has for years opposed so-called "nanny state" interventions designed to improve our public health.

The NHS has systematically disinvested from proven methods of tobacco control, handing it to local authorities who are in no position to effectively fund it. The political ambivalence to effective tobacco control at the highest level is there for all to see and we should not, as physicians, be aligning ourselves with the forces of darkness.

The Guardian

(Oct 29, 2021)

What are e-cigarettes and are they safe?

E-cigarettes are set to be prescribed on the NHS under plans announced by the government to tackle smoking. How do these devices work, how safe are they and what is the debate around them¹¹?

E-cigarettes are now a common sight.

According to the charity Action on Smoking and Health (ASH), 7.1% of adults in Great Britain use e-cigarettes, equating to about 3.6 million people. The devices work by heating up a liquid to produce a vapour which is inhaled. This liquid usually contains nicotine as well as other components such as propylene glycol, vegetable glycerine and flavourings. There is a variety of styles on offer, from those that look like cigarettes to “pod vapes” which look a little like a dictaphone in shape and contain a rechargeable battery and a “pod” with a liquid-filled tank, mouthpiece and coil.

In the UK at least the answer is “pretty much”. The key point is that e-cigarettes do not produce tar or carbon monoxide – which can cause lung disease and cancer – so are much safer than cigarette smoking. And, as the NHS notes, while nicotine is addictive it is relatively harmless; it is already used in many other products, such as nicotine patches and gum, to help people stop smoking.

The Guardian

(Nov 8, 2021)

Firms under fire for using UK influencers to push nicotine products

Companies accused of using social media influencers to entice young people to try nicotine products

Posing expertly for Instagram snaps, a parade of young and beautiful DJs, models and socialites line up to endorse Velo, a brand of flavoured nicotine pouches made by British American Tobacco (BAT)¹².

Between them, the 26 social media influencers boast 2.2m followers, and an audience that skews young, meaning they are hard to reach through traditional advertising channels.

Holding up cans of Velo to the camera, DJ GW Harrison tells his 35,000 followers: “My favourite has to be the ruby berry flavour. What’s yours?”

MC and rapper Bru-C, AKA Josh Bruce, hails the “glow in the dark technology” to his 156,000-strong audience, while another DJ, Jess Bays, gushes: “Product is so cool – especially for in the clubs!”

The former Made in Chelsea star Alex Mytton has posted Velo-themed videos for his 391,000 followers, while racing driver Archie Hamilton, with 207,000 followers, features in an e-sports-themed YouTube series, in association with British racing team McLaren.

The Guardian

(Jan 27, 2022)

New report from Human Rights Law Centre says fossil fuel, gambling and tobacco industries are distorting Australia's democracy

Sweeping reforms of campaign finance and lobbying laws are needed to end corporate influence over Australian politics that would be regarded as illegal and corrupt overseas, the Human Rights Law Centre says¹³.

In a new report titled Selling Out, the HRLC takes aim at three industries – fossil fuels, gambling and tobacco – that its claims are distorting Australia's democracy through political donations, lobbying and public attack campaigns.

It calls for more transparency of political donations and a ban on those over \$6,000, public disclosure of ministerial diaries and an end to the rotating door between political life and corporate lobbying.

The Guardian

(Oct 6, 2021)

GPs caution against telehealth websites promising consultation for vaping scripts 'in minutes'

The peak body representing general practitioners has warned against using “pop up”, telehealth websites that promise to deliver consultations for “vaping scripts in minutes” because they can disrupt continuity of care for patients¹⁴.

On Friday laws came into effect that prevent nicotine-containing vaping products from being obtained without a prescription from a doctor. Doctors are only supposed to prescribe nicotine-containing vaping products as a last resort when other smoking treatments and methods have failed. There is no strong evidence vaping is an effective quit aid.

The Guardian, International Edition

(July 25, 2021)

Tobacco firm Philip Morris calls for ban on cigarettes within decade

CEO Jacek Olczak says product should be treated like petrol cars, which will be outlawed from 2030

The chief executive of tobacco business Philip Morris International has called on the UK government to ban cigarettes within a decade, in a move that would outlaw its own Marlboro brand¹⁵.

Jacek Olczak said the company could “see the world without cigarettes ... and actually, the sooner it happens, the better it is for everyone.” Cigarettes should be treated like petrol cars, the sale of which is due to be banned from 2030, he said.

Government action would end the confusion felt by smokers, some of whom still thought the “alternatives are worse than cigarettes”, Olczak told the Sunday Telegraph. “Give them a choice of smoke-free alternatives ... with the right regulation and information it can happen 10 years from now in some countries. You can solve the problem once and forever.”

Philip Morris International (PMI) recently said it wanted half its turnover to come from non-smoking products as it morphs into a “healthcare and wellness company” with executive pay tied to its new mission to “unsmoke the world” by phasing out cigarettes.

Nonetheless the company has come under fire from anti-smoking campaigners who accused it of hypocrisy after it launched a £1bn takeover bid for Vectura, a British pharmacy company that makes asthma inhalers.

Campaigners argue tobacco companies are positioning themselves as part of the solution to a smoke-free world, while continuing to aggressively sell and promote lethal cigarettes. Smoking, including secondhand, kills roughly 8 million people a year, according to the World Health Organization.

Tobacco firms have been moving into cigarette alternatives such as vapes and e-cigarettes. PMI is pushing the IQOS, a cigarette device that heats tobacco to deliver nicotine without the smoke and tar that cause diseases including cancer.

The Guardian

(Oct 29, 2021)

'There is something for everybody': readers on switching from cigarettes to vaping

Four people reveal how using e-cigarettes helped them stop smoking and how they can help others quit

In an attempt to reduce the smoking rates in England, the NHS is considering making e-cigarettes available on prescription to help tobacco smokers quit and switch to vaping¹⁶.

Four people speak about their experiences of using e-cigarettes and how they helped them stop smoking.

The Guardian

(June 8, 2021)

Vype maker BAT attracts 1.4m new vape users in three months

London-headquartered Tobacco Company aims for 50 million users of non-cigarette products by 2025

British American Tobacco recruited 1.4 million new users of vapes, heated tobacco and nicotine pouches in the first quarter, as it seeks to make cigarette alternatives profitable by 2025¹⁷.

Shares in the London-headquartered tobacco company gained more than 2% in early stock market trading, after it reported a strong performance in both cigarettes and “non-combustible” products such as Vype, its flagship vapour brand.

BAT has set a target of 50 million users of non-cigarette products by 2025, as it aims to burnish its credentials as a modern tobacco company promoting so-called “reduced risk” choices for nicotine users.

The company said growth in cigarette alternatives had accelerated. But sales will have to continue picking up pace if BAT is to achieve its goal, after the 1.4 million increase took it to 14.9 million, less than a third of the target.

It also wants to achieve annual revenues of £5bn from three new products – Vuse vapes, Velo oral nicotine pouches and Glo heated tobacco – by the same date.

The Guardian

(July 9, 2021)

Philip Morris International makes £1bn offer for UK pharma firm Vectura

Tobacco giant strikes deal for British firm developing pioneering inhaled treatment for Covid-19

Philip Morris International, the Tobacco Company and maker of Marlboro cigarettes, has struck a £1bn deal to buy Vectura, the British pharmaceutical company developing a

pioneering inhaled treatment for Covid-19¹⁸.

The offer by Philip Morris International (PMI), which is investing billions to move away from its core tobacco business, trumps the £958m tabled by the private equity group Carlyle in May. Vectura's board had recommended that shareholders accept Carlyle's offer but withdrew support for that bid after receiving the higher offer from PMI.

“We recognise the material increase in the price offered to shareholders under the acquisition when compared with the Carlyle offer and have accordingly recommended the acquisition to shareholders,” said Bruno Angelici, Vectura's chairman.

“The acquisition will provide our people with the opportunity to form the backbone of an autonomous inhaled therapeutic business unit of PMI, helping develop products to improve patients' lives and address unmet medical needs.”

Vectura shares jumped 14% to close at 154.6p on Friday, making it the top riser on the FTSE 250. The cash offer from PMI is 150p a share.

PMI, the maker of the world's most popular cigarette brand, has invested more than \$8bn (£5.8bn) to date in diversifying its business away from harmful tobacco products as “part of a natural evolution into a broader healthcare and wellness company” to “accelerate the end of smoking”.

Last week, PMI spent \$820m buying the nicotine gum maker Fertin Pharma.

PMI aims to make \$1bn in revenues from “beyond nicotine” products by 2025 and has identified respiratory drugs as a key focus. It aims to be “predominantly smoke-free” by 2025, when tobacco revenues will account for less than half of total income.

PMI said Vectura will operate as an “autonomous business unit” and form the “backbone” of PMI's inhaled therapeutics business.

“The market for inhaled therapeutics is large and growing rapidly, with significant

opportunities to address unmet needs,” said Jacek Olczak, the chief executive of PMI. “By joining forces and investing our resources in the continued scientific excellence of our two companies we can secure critical capabilities to accelerate our

long-term growth in beyond nicotine products, which is a core strategic focus for PMI.”

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Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) has been working on tobacco control in Pakistan for the past 17 years and acting as technical resource for the Federal Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination through its flagship initiatives, the Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTC-Pak) and member of Alliance on Non-Communicable Disease (NCDA-Pak) on tobacco and non-communicable disease control efforts in Pakistan. Both of these initiatives overall entertain the civil society memberships of over 100 civil society organizations from all over Pakistan working on health. Both, CTC-Pak and NCDA-Pak, represent Pakistan at regional and international forums and both are active and leading members of global alliances such as Framework Convention Alliance on Tobacco Control (FCA) and Global NCD Alliance.

The websites of SAMAR

www.alternativemedia.org.pk

www.ctcpak.org

