



Coalition for Tobacco Control – Pakistan (CTC-Pak), a project of Society for Alternative Media and Research, is the first civil society coalition in Pakistan which is working towards identifying and promoting tobacco control issues in collaboration with Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, USA. CTC-Pak has been advocating for stronger measures for tobacco control by the translation and adaptation of FCTC provisions into national tobacco control laws as well as acting as a liaison between the policy makers and civil society organizations. CTC-Pak is a recognized 'Technical Resource' for Tobacco Control Cell, Government of Pakistan, and is partners in its campaign for enforcement of tobacco control laws in Pakistan.

Currently, CTC-Pak, under a project supported by Bloomberg Global Initiative for Tobacco Reduction, is advocating for application of existing tobacco control laws on smoke-less tobacco; both at Federal and Provincial levels. A Political mapping exercise has been conducted and case studies of smokeless tobacco victims is under progress. CTC-Pak, through its more than 160 coalition members in all four provinces, is also assisting the Government of Pakistan and the Provincial Governments in identifying and raising awareness on smokeless tobacco issues.

CTC-Pak has a dedicated 'Resource Center' on tobacco control in Pakistan where information on various issues related tobacco control is available; both in soft and hard forms, free of cost.

The Red Poison



House 67-B, Street 43, F-10/4,
Islamabad, Pakistan.
Ph: +92-51-2210006-7
info@ctcpak.org
www.ctcpak.org



The Red Poison

Research By:
Mohsin Babbar

Layout & Design:
Jafar Mehdi

Published By:
Society for Alternative Media and Research

2013. SAMAR

House 67-B, Street 43, F-10/4
Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel: +92-51-221 0006-7
Web: www.alternativemedia.org.pk,
www.ctcpak.org
Email: contact@alternativemedia.org.pk,
info@ctcpak.org

The Red Poison

Introduction

A recent research conducted in Pakistan about cigarette consumption and smoking trends has shown some encouraging results. Major reasons behind declining per capita cigarette prevalence are introduction of legislation and ban on advertisements on all medium of media.

But at the same time, tobacco business is flourishing as obvious result smokeless tobacco consumption must have increased, which need to be proved through an empirical research. The worrying part of the increase in tobacco consumption is that it is being used in many products. The major use of the tobacco is traditional chewing of *Paan* that contains betel nut, tobacco, lime and *Kaththa*.

A recently developed framework by World Health Organisation (WHO) and Convention on Tobacco Control says that the term "smokeless tobacco" is used to describe tobacco that is consumed in un-burnt form, either orally or nasally.

It is a growing socioeconomic and health concern in many countries, particularly low- and lower-middle-income countries in the WHO South-East Asia, Eastern Mediterranean and Western Pacific Regions. It is also consumed in several developed countries in different parts of the world.

One of the products of smokeless Tobacco is consumption of dry *Naswar* and *Guttka*. Along with India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, New Guinea, Taiwan and China, Pakistan is the attractive market for dry *Guttka*, mainly smuggled from India. The local *Guttka* market is also flourishing but it is mainly producing a format of wet *Guttka*.

①

The alarming concern

Paan is rapidly replaced with product called *Guttka*. There are number of branded and non-branded *Guttka* products are available across Pakistan. "*Paan Parag*", a brand name or similar sort of brand names like "City", "M", "121" and others are smuggled from India through train route. The difference between traditional *Paan* and *Paan Parag* type products is that it is a dry, well-packed with no addition of lime and *Kaththa*. One packet of *Paan Parag* can be consumed with ease and with regular intervals unlikely to *Paan*.



The growing and alarmingly increasing usage of tobacco in the format of *Guttka* is yet another cause of concern for policy and decision makers, health practitioners and civil society of Pakistan.

A wet form of *Guttka* is held in the mouth and chewed for long time. Saliva is generally spit out but sometimes swallowed. It is very popular among men across age group but the most worrying part of the consumption is that it is not only heavily consumed by women but also among children from age 3 to 12.

In some cases, as told by the interviewees, it is widely practiced that some *Guttka* using mothers put a very small amount in the mouth of newly born children to make them calm and sleepy. No empirical research is available to prove the per capita consumption of smokeless tobacco in Pakistan but there is a possibility that it can simply turn into an epidemic in clusters.

Another aspect which was observed during the study that some shopkeepers blamed moderate ban on smoking is the result in rising trends in consumption of different forms of smokeless tobacco.

The smokeless tobacco has another aspect that encourages its manufacturers and promoters to meet the market demand. Smokeless tobacco is a highly profitable booming business. The profit ratio in majority cases goes up to 200-300 per cent. Lack of appropriate law is

②

also one of the major reasons of increasing consumption of harmful smokeless tobacco in Pakistan. An attempt was made to ban production, sell and consumption of many forms of smokeless tobacco through legislation in provincial assembly of Sindh could not yield results.

Geographical consumption

The use of smokeless tobacco in Pakistan varies from one region to other. Karachi, metropolitan capital of Sindh province, being a population of around 17 million is the heaven for smokeless tobacco producers and users. *Guttka*, dry *Paan* masala or dry *Guttka* is rapidly replacing *Paan* consumption, thus turning illegal *Guttka* business into an industry.

Besides Karachi, the production and consumption of *Guttka* is alarmingly growing in southern districts of Pakistan. All the coastal districts like Badin and Thatto are becoming the districts where *Guttka* consumption is seen rampant.

The consumption of *Naswar* is also confined to a particular ethnic population, i.e. The *Pashtuns* or *Pathans*. It is mainly consumed in Northern districts of Pakistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. But the product is easily available in the areas, where Pathan population lives.



3

Reasons of decline in smoking tobacco

There are various reasons that the trend of smoking tobacco especially cigarette has declined. One of the reasons cited during the study, it was found that cigarette was more expensive than *Naswar*, which is easily available in the market at Rs 5 to 'highly quality' of Rs10.

Another important reason, which consumers as well as sellers told was gory pictorial images published on the cigarette packets. It has created a fear among the smokers, he said. Ahmed Hassan, a labourer in his middle age, said the image published on the packet was horrific and I have left smoking and now I take *Naswar* instead.

Sajjad Akhtar, who runs a cabin near main market of the city, said customers either demanded the cigarette packet without images or not buying the packet with pictorial images. Another shopkeeper said due to images, the trend of foreign brands was increasing now days as they don't have pictorial images.

Ajab Gul, a shopkeeper said he had been selling *Naswar* for the last 20 years and he had earned a good name in the area. "We use fine ingredients and the best quality tobacco, although it is quite expensive but still we want to produce quality products to have an edge over our competitors," Gul said.

Naswar is popular among all age groups from 12 years old to septuagenarians. Women are also among *Naswar* addicts but it is more popular among the younger lot who emulate their elders. "I tried it only for fun initially but later I got addicted to it. I tried to get rid of the habit but I couldn't," Israr Shah, a Mardan (district of Kyber Pakhtoon Khwa) teenager confessed.

Myth of Paan

It is widely believed that the consumption of *Paan* was introduced during Mughal era. It is associated with an event when a Mughal queen was suffering from mouth odour and she started to use betel leaf by putting patti with *Saunf*. Thus she overcame of odour she was suffering with and in this way the use of *Paan* became familiar and part of culture. Initially, it was consumed socially but now it is an addiction.



4

What is Guttka?

Commonly used name *Guttka* has no brand name, it is being sold and consumed in Southern parts of Pakistan from Karachi to the sea belt of Thatto and Badin and districts of Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Tando Allahyar, Tando Mohammad Khan, Nawabshah, Matiari, Sanghar, some parts of Tharparkar and Umerkot.



Guttka is a popular product in geographical locations mentioned above. Aft recent preliminary study of Thatto town, some 100 kilometers south east to Karachi, has made some alarming revelations.

Betel nut, tobacco, flavoring are commonly used to manufacture *Guttka* but the important ingredient of this product is a liquid, commonly known as the "Chemical" or 'Essence'. It was not ascertained during the initial visit of the area that what kind of chemical or essence was being used but the manufactures call it a "formula" which they cannot share because of the market competition.

Dry Guttka or Paan Masala

Manikchand, Mahak, Pan Parag, Vimal, Crane, Rajdarbar, Kuber, Yamu, Badshah, Tulsi, Rahat, Pan King, Jubilee, Kanchan are the products of dry Guttka, largely smuggled from India to Pakistan.

Dry Guttka constitutes Tobacco, areca nuts, slaked lime, betel leaf. "Chewing tobacco" is sometimes used, and flavoring agents such as menthol, camphor, sugar, rosewater, aniseed, mint, or other spices are sometimes added in different regions. A *quid* is placed in the mouth (usually between the gum and cheek) and gently sucked and chewed.

5

Commercially prepared, vendor prepared or assembled at home. Areca nut is boiled, roasted, or sun-dried. Tobacco may be used raw, sun-dried, and roasted, then finely chopped, powdered and scented. Alternatively, the tobacco may be boiled, made into a paste and scented with rosewater or perfume. To assemble, slaked lime and catechu are smeared on a betel leaf. The betel leaf is folded into a funnel shape and tobacco, areca nut and any other ingredients are added. The top of the funnel is folded over, resulting in a *quid*, which is placed in the mouth for use.

Why people consume Guttka?

Guttka consumers find it easy in chewing than using *Paan*. The foremost reason of consuming *Guttka* is its accessibility at any shop, general store, cabin, kiosk or vendor. There is no hazel to use *Guttka* because first its dryness, packing and it does not make blot or unwashable spots on clothes. It has no expiry while the *Paan* only be used not more than five days. And to keep *Guttka* preserve longer, producers use some sort of oil which is easily available in the market.

The History of Guttka

Historically, Thatto district, in Sindh province, is the only district in Pakistan where farmers grow *Paan* after its import was banned from East Pakistan in 1971 due to partition of Bangladesh. Thatto has always popularly known for *Paan* consuming area across the province of Sindh. But due to various socioeconomic factors it has replaced with *Guttka*.

Some of the manufacturers of *Guttka* claimed that *Guttka* is creation of Thatto because of ban of *Paan* import from Bangladesh. This also made hundreds of *Paan* sellers unemployed and they were forced to opt for *Guttka* business. Initially, according to a local *Guttka* manufacturer, the ingredients of the product was *Kaththa*, lime, betel nuts, and different tobacco brands including shahzadi patti, mushki, insaaf, kumam, mooney, and some also used malaithy, which is used for coughing patients. All these ingredients were used to not to

6

compromise *Paan* quality.

But now because of profitable business, manufacturers use a few of these ingredients including *Kaththa*, lime, betel nuts. In order to make this product popular every manufacturer includes its own 'formula'. There is no uniform formula of making *Guttka*. Every manufacturer has his own formula which they were reluctant to share it with the researcher. Some of them said that they used 'essence', some call it 'chemical' and it was also claimed that *Guttka* manufacturer a type of narcotics to make customers addictive.

Guttka is a rising business in Thatto and softly shaping up as an industry. Some *Guttka* manufactures are part of the local trader organisations and some are affiliated with political organizations. It was told that two criminal groups have involved in *Guttka* manufacturing business and some cases are also reported that these groups have sold their brand of *Guttka* at gun point to local shopkeepers.

An attempt was made by a former District Coordination Officer (DCO) to ban selling of *Guttka* in the town but pressure from the local business community and political affiliation led to restoration of *Guttka* business.

As a campaign to curb this menace, local Police also arrested some of the *Guttka* manufactures and booked them under PPC 269-270. There is no specific law to ban *Guttka* manufacturing in the province, but the applicable law under which violators are booked helps them to freely start their business again after a bail tendered by an individual.

Initial calculations and information collected from various sources, it is learnt that 18-20 manufactures sell 10,000 plastics bags of *Guttka* every day in the town with population of around 100,000. Each *Guttka* bag contains of 50 packets.

7

Not ready to sell 'red poison'

Mohammad Ishaq Memon, 51, has been in the business for the last 36 years. He is one of the famous cabin-owner selling *Paan* in the town of Thatto. Cabin is a popular name of shop which sells *Paan*, cigarettes, *Guttka* and sweet betel nuts. He has now given up the business citing the reason that with the growing trend of *Guttka*, the business of *Paan* has almost died away. When asked why he did not opt for the *Guttka* business, he simply replied: "I am not ready to sell this poison."

He further said in early 70's when *Guttka* was introduced there were only none cabins in the town of Thatto. He claimed that every second person of the area consumes *Guttka*. The *Guttka* manufacturers, he said, includes 'something' that make consumers addictive to *Guttka*.

"A school going child also wants to have *Guttka* in the morning before leaving to school." He even went on saying that many people use *Guttka* as a breakfast. He said there are around hundred factories making *Guttka*.

It is useless to write for a paper, highlight in print or electronic media or do research on the subject as no action could be taken against the manufacturers or sellers.

"They are very influential people as they have roots in business community and some of them also belonged to different political groups which supports them in case of any police action against them."

8

What is Naswar?

Naswar is made of tobacco, slaked lime, indigo, cardamom, oil, menthol, water. Tobacco leaves, slaked lime, ash from tree bark, and flavoring and coloring agents are mixed together. Water is added and the mixture is rolled into balls. After mixing all the ingredients, manufacturers' put it in the Sun and heat-dried.



Why people consume Naswar?

The user of *Naswar* interviewed were of the view that it is comparatively easy than consuming cigarette, *Paan* or *Guttka*. One can easily take a small ball of it and hide it the mouth. *Naswar* is held in the mouth for 10 to 15 minutes. If it is chewed it produces a bad taste in the mouth. Usually, the consumption varies but mostly people take it on an hourly basis as it is highly addictive.



To facilitate the customers, or to better put it this way saving them from taking trouble, now a *Naswar* packet is available with small balls made in it. Thus, a consumer does not need to take trouble to make it and easily put a small ball in his mouth.

There is not a one type of *Naswar*. There are different 10 types of this product including black *Naswar*, hard *Naswar* and others. Besides, manufacturers have also introduced one with cardamom and *Saunf* so that it may give a pleasant smell and taste in the mouth. Another type of *Naswar* is available in the shape of small balls packed in a tissue cover was also available in the market.

Administrative Will

Although there is no law to curb or curtail this business of poison thus making it go unchecked, unabated and unmitigated. Around a year ago, a former administrative head along with police chief of the district Thatto launched a campaign and took strict action against sellers as well as manufacturers. The measures resulted in closure of the *Guttka* business in the town for some weeks.

But all this went into vain as the manufacturers were much powerful than these administrative head and police chief. As soon as both of the officials were transferred, the business returned to its previous state with manufacturers and sellers again in it.

While it was observed in Sukkur and Mithi; both in Sindh province, that 'where there is a will there is a way.' In both the cities, the district coordination officers took strict action against the sellers as well as manufacturers. Now days the sale of dry *Guttka* is completely banned in the cities except *Paan*. The *Guttka* and other similar products are available on black market and that too not in open market.

When talked to a local police official, he was of the view that manufacturing or sale is a bailable offence under Clause 269 and 270 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). This law relates to adulteration of edible products and the offender can simply be bailed out on a personal guarantee.

A police chief of a district launched a crackdown against manufacturers and sellers of smokeless tobacco. He started to arrest offenders under a clause of law which falls in anti-narcotics act, which is non-bailable crime. He chose a different way to curb this menace, but obviously it was not a lawful action as there is no law exist to curb this menace. It was learnt that some criminals and smugglers have also become involved in smokeless Tobacco business.

A former home minister Sindh in a meeting held in Thatto directed local police officials to launch action against smokeless tobacco sellers. He also instructed his party men that nobody would support *Guttka* manufacturers if police arrest them. But the will was never implemented.

Political aspects

Rafique Khumbhati, a *Guttka* manufacturer in Thatto has given up his business. He was of the view that it all a political issues and a game of money. "I was put behind the bars just because I refused to pay extortion as I belong to different political school of thought."

He said Karachi is heaven for smokeless Tobacco business industry. There is a one product named "Sony *Guttka*" is being sold in Karachi. He said if Police wants to close this business, they can shut it down in minutes. "All the smokeless Tobacco manufacturers and sellers pay extortion to Police as well. How can Police wants to plug the money hole," he added. The *Guttka* mafia is so powerful that if their business is forcibly shut down they are capable of turning the city upside down. In Thatto, he warned, if not stopped, smokeless *Guttka* mafia would take over the town.

A young provincial assembly member, Sadiq Memon said that he realizes the growing menace of red poison in the area but he was helpless to take any action. He said what chemical or essence they use in the product but it is dangerous to the human health.

"The smokeless Tobacco has become an industry and huge money is involved in this business that's why it is very difficult to curb," he said. Citing political aspect of the business, the foreign qualified MPA pointed that politicians in the ruling as well as opposition both are involved in this business. "If I take a strict action against the manufacturers and sellers, this may affect my polity," he added.

He said *Guttka* with a passage of time has become socially acceptable which was not before. Some years back, people considered it bad to use *Guttka* but now no one heeds it. Having said all this, he showed his commitment to suggest that there should be zero tolerance policy on this issue. It was observed in all the cities where study was conducted, all the smokeless Tobacco manufactures as well as sellers are part of local traders associations or unions thus making them untouchables before the law.

A civil society activist, Khalid Memon said that the issue is politically connected, adding that political people are involved in the business. Otherwise, the menace could be curbed.

"Media is also part of the business because this is vicious circle of smokeless tobacco regime," said Khalid.

Economy of Smokeless Tobacco

During the study it was observe across the board that illegitimate business of smokeless tobacco is a profitable investment. Advertisement and publicity are essential elements to launch any new business or product. But interestingly there is no need to spend money on advertisement or publicity to flourish the business of smokeless tobacco. Nowhere in the locales, where study was conducted, were seen signboard, publicity banners or pamphlet and billboards. Though, except the dry *Guttka* and *Naswar*, wet *Guttka* is packed in recycled paper.

According to an estimate in Thatto alone there are hundred cottage factories producing *Guttkas*. There is a standard of quantity. Each packet contains 50 small packs of *Guttka* and is sold at Rs110 to Rs 120 per packet to a retailer. While its production cost is Rs70 to rs80 per packet. The retailer sells it to the end users as Rs3 to Rs4 each small pack, thus giving a profit of Rs70 to Rs80 per packet to end user.

Abdul Aziz Pakhero, a local political leader and also a businessman dealing in smokeless tobacco products, said it is a lucrative business. He said 100 manufacturers in Thatto town alone produce 10,000 packets of *Guttka*. He estimated that only in Thatto town, 50,000 *Guttka* packs are sold in a day.

Haji Ghulam Mustafa, a *Guttka* manufacturer of Thatto narrated an interesting account how *Guttka* emerged in the region. He said when import of *Paan* was banned in early 70s, hundreds of people involved in the business became unemployed.

"Keeping in view the fear of mass unemployment, the then DC Thatto Haroon Memon asked me to start manufacturing *Guttka* and also train others so that they may get reemployed," said Mr Mustafa.

He claimed that he was the first one to introduce *Guttka* in Pakistan. "We initially called it a "Chooro" but later it became popularized as *Guttka*," he said.

He opposed consumption of *Paan* because for him it was an alien (Indian) culture. "*Paan* is bad thing while *Guttka* is not because I myself use it," said Ghulam Mustafa.

When asked why you use essence in *Guttka*, he said the essence is not a bad thing because we usually use it in food items cooked for marriage ceremonies.

He said there is only a one way to stop use of *Guttka* if *Paan* is made available cheaply at Rs 40-50 per KG. And for this, he added, import duties on *Paan* and Betel nuts are waived off.

There are three big wholesale markets for smokeless tobacco along in Lahore. The one is located opposite to the Railway Station and besides Noori Mosque. Second is located in Anarkalli Market near Al Habib Bank. The third market is located near Delhi gate of Lahore.

Smokeless Tobacco is a lucrative business and it has made many business man involved millionaires overnight. According to a whole seller, if you invest Rs one million in it, you can easily earn net profit of Rs two million in only a year along with product stock of one million.

He said an ordinary shopkeeper earns equal to the invested amount after four years. While, a smokeless Tobacco seller earns the same amount within one year because the consumption and demand is so high.

Naswar is basically a locally made product but it was learnt that some brands of it are smuggled from China and India as well. The Indian *Naswar* with the brand name '*Tara*' becoming popular in the local market and especially educated people prefer it as it is well packed in a tissue cover.

Cross border smuggling

In the markets of Lahore, capital of Punjab province, once can easily find number of brands of dry *Guttka* smuggled from India through train running between Attari station of India to Wahga of Pakistan.

The train runs between two countries twice a week. The train coming from India to Pakistan not only carries passengers but also huge quantity of business items including refined and processed tobacco, betel nuts, *Kaththa* and packed sachet of dry *Guttka* brands.

Though there is a strict security check and all huge volume



'luggage' is scanned through custom and immigration processes. But very few items noted in the books of tax authorities and rest easily crosses through the illegal gates and sent to the wholesale markets of Lahore.

It is an open secret that the immigration and custom officials of both the countries allows passengers to carry illegal items. From the station, the smokeless tobacco items are brought to two godowns in Shah Alam Market and Tower market and from there it is distributed to wholesalers.

The products are sold not only in Lahore markets but they are further sold to the cities of rest of the Punjab. A wholesaler of Lahore market was of the view that they mainly cover markets of Punjab and

northern Pakistan.

When asked, how the huge market of Karachi is served, he said all the dry *Guttka* and other smokeless tobacco products come from Afghanistan via Balochistan. A sea route is also used to enter smuggled smokeless Tobacco products in metropolis of Karachi.

Poverty nexus

The use of some of the smokeless tobacco products is also the major cause for poor. It does not allow them to come out of the poverty trap.

Saleem, a rickshaw driver, said that he earns around Rs 300 per day and he has six children. Adding, all his family members including his wife consume 70-80 *Guttkas* per day. That cost them around Rs 150-200. His two children, Samina of 4 years and Riaz of 5 years also consume *Guttka*.

Saleem realizes and knows the fact that *Guttka* is a not only dangerous to his health but also eats up his income. "I can't help with it," he said.

During the study it was also witnessed that some children belonging to an ultra-poor family begging alongside the road. The interesting part of their begging plea was they want to buy *Guttka* from the alms.

Another interesting thing noticed during the study was that some flood victims who had got mineral water bottles as flood relief item, seen selling out those water bottles against *Guttkas*. It was told that one mineral water bottled was sold against four packs of *Guttka*.



Legislation

An attempt was made to ban smokeless Tobacco in Sindh Assembly by its member from Thatto district. Humaira Alwani, Member Sindh Provincial Assembly, submitted a private member bill in Sindh Assembly, called "The mainpuri and *Guttka* Act 2009." But even after passage of two years no development has taken place to discuss and approve the legislation.



The objective and reason of the bill says, "The people of Sindh on different occasions have been demanding for imposing of ban on the substances which are extremely injurious to health so that public can give up smoking or chewing of Tobacco in the shape of Mainpuri and *Guttka*, which are mainly to be blamed for rising number of Oral cancer patients in the country."

The bill further argues, "The Tobacco consumption is one of the biggest challenges confronting people today out of 90 per cent tobacco related oral cancer cases, 82 per cent pertain to mouth and throat and the survival ratio among cancer patients who live for five years is 50 per cent. While 48 per cent live for 10 years, after they are diagnosed with Cancer." The copy of the submitted bill is attached separately.

Health problems and major cause of oral Cancer

Smokeless tobacco contains several carcinogenic compounds and is usually of the species *Nicotiana rustica* (most smoking tobacco is *Nicotiana tabacum*). Samples of *N. rustica* have been found to contain higher concentrations of tobacco-specific nitrosamines than *N. tabacum*. Smokeless tobacco also contains 24 polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) that cause oral and pancreatic cancers.

Until recently it was erroneously believed that smokeless tobacco was a less harmful alternative to smoking tobacco as it did not contain PAH. This assumption was proved to be wrong by recent research that has established that moist snuff becomes contaminated with PAH during the curing of tobacco leaves required for its preparation.

Director Laboratories and Chemical Examiner of the Government of Sindh Karachi conducted a lab test of 5 packets of paper packing *Guttka*. The laboratory performed Morphine and related compound, Corrosive, Barbiturates, Cocaine, Nicotine and Silica tests to determine the contents of the particles.

The laboratory examination found that it has detected Nicotine and Silica. The laboratory test report also remarked that the *Guttka* contains hazardous food stuff and it is injuries to health. The report is attached separately.

A local doctor of Thatto, Dr Sham Kumar Lohana, was of the view that out of around 800 patients at government hospitals OPD, he receives 25-30 patients of "Oral submucos fibrosis", a disease lead to Oral Cancer.

He also pointed out that almost all of them come for checkup when they reach to a second or third phase of the disease, often difficult to heal. Local health department is also aware of the alarming situation and made number of efforts including awareness campaigns from its limited resources to curb growing consumption of *Guttka*.

Dr Sham claimed that a substantial majority of patients admitted or referred to Dr Ishrattuibad oral and Dental College Hospital belongs to Thatto and adjacent areas.

Regarding the use of *Naswar*, a senior medical practitioner of Haripur, Dr Abdul Rahim said, "The use of *Naswar* directly causes lung, stomach and mouth cancer besides causing bronchitis, kidney, heart and other diseases".

He was of the view that the diseases caused by *Naswar* are more fatal than those caused by smoking. He could not provide the details but suspected there may be 24 poisonous chemicals used in smokeless tobacco.

Lack of awareness and action

On the other, observation made in Sukkur town tells a different story. There is no open and free sell of *Guttka* at "Paan Cabins" of the city of one million population. There were some regular consumers of *Guttka* but third biggest city of Sindh province would soon be a *Guttka*-free city from an alarmingly dangerous health hazard just because of a small and committed action taken by local DCO.

It was observed during visits of Thatto and Haripur that the local health departments were engaged in a proactive campaigning against smoking but has failed to show the similar commitment against the use of *Guttka* and *Naswar*.

Conclusion and Recommendations

- An obvious observation has made it evident that the consumption of smokeless tobacco, especially in the form of Guttka, Dry Guttka and Naswar, is growing at a massive scale. The primary evidence is the booming business and smuggling of smokeless Tobacco in Pakistan. In some areas as observed, politics has gripped the business of smokeless tobacco.
- In order to make it further scientifically proved, there was a need to conduct an empirical research to determine the exact number of smokeless users, its prevalence and its close links with poverty and gender.
- The growing use of smokeless tobacco in Pakistan should be the cause of concern of policy and decision makers. To start with, there was a need to recognize the problem at different policy level forums including parliament, provincial assemblies, executive and if required, the judiciary.
- In order to make them realize that an administrative will by local administration at district level can prevent thousands of lives free from a menace that is alarmingly gripping a huge population in scattered areas of Pakistan.
- Since the portfolio of health is being transferred to provinces under post 18th amendment regime, there was a need to allocate ample funding on mass awareness campaigns against smokeless tobacco.
- The capacity of civil society organisations at local level with the financial and technical assistance from national level campaigns should be enhanced to socially mobilise and sensitise stakeholders at the district as well as provincial levels.
- There was also a need to run separate targeted sensitization programs with media practitioners at district and provincial level.
- The mass media anti-smoking campaign launched by federal health ministry has left an impressive positive impact in prevalence of cigarette. A similar sort of campaign at government level need to be designed a launched to curb the menace of harmful forms of

smokeless tobacco. Targeted campaigning in particular areas with different messages is required to deal specific smokeless tobacco prevalence.

- Specific behavior change communication campaigns also need to be designed and launched in targeted areas since there is a wide acceptance that the consumption of smokeless tobacco is not only injurious to health but also a heavy burden on the poor.
- As it was found evident that there was no law available to deal with harmful forms of smokeless tobacco, there was a dire need to introduce legislation at provincial level. A bill has already submitted with provincial assembly of Sindh, which needs to be processed.
- If required, a broad based consultation process need to be initiated at provincial level to seek and solicit further input with regard to new and already drafted legislation.
- The smokeless tobacco is turning into an industry in the scattered hubs across the country. The booming business is quickly influencing and making its place in formal trader and business associations. Though the smokeless tobacco manufacturers and retailers have not organized them as formal business groups due to variety of reasons but they are becoming part of the organized business unions, there was a need to look into this dimension as well. The advocacy campaigners should also hold sessions both formally and informally with business and chambers of commerce in targeted cities where the harmful smokeless tobacco is getting recognition.
- It was quite evident that smokeless tobacco business houses and employees thousands of employees across the Pakistan. An overnight ban could negatively effect to the livelihoods of skilled and non-skilled labour associated with this informal sector. There should be a gradual and phase out plan to deal with the situation. Alternative employment opportunities need to be worked out to accommodate manpower especially the labour class in targeted areas.
- The raw material for smokeless tobacco imported and smuggled from India, China, Dubai and Afghanistan is also a big cause of concern and one of the major reasons in increasing prevalence of smokeless tobacco. Banning the import of raw material like *Kaththa*

and Betel nuts or imposing high tax rates to these products would discourage the manufacturers to make it a cost effective business. Since the smokeless tobacco products are mainly consumed by poor and lower middle class segment of the society, making these products expensive would discourage them to purchase and consume. This may not stop them consuming smokeless tobacco but it would certainly lower the high prevalence.

- Associated raw material for smokeless tobacco and a huge quantity of dry Guttka products enter in Pakistan market through smuggling. The major smuggling routes are a train route from India to Pakistan, sea route from Mumbai and Dubai to Karachi, land route from Afghanistan via Balochistan.

Smokeless Tobacco Victim: A CASE STUDY

Ramzan is an oral cancer patient from a village of Badin district in Southern Pakistan. It has been six months since Ramzan contracted oral cancer through *Naswar*. Despite the hopes given by doctors, he is not able to get treatment because of financial constraints faced by the family. The addiction took hold on Ramzan while he was very young due to his interaction with *Naswar*-addicted friends through his work. As was the family tradition, he started to work on his land from late childhood. He would earn and make use of money as he would like to. There were no societal checks that could have discouraged him from the addiction. Although the environment of the house did not include anyone that would be using any sort of smokeless tobacco, yet the company of friends forced victim develop addiction. He now lives along the families of his sons who work on their own land and some of them drive Rickshaws to sustain a living.

Personal profile of the victim

Ramzan, 60, lives with his family and relatives in a village near city of Badin in Southern Pakistan. He never went to school. As family occupation was farming, and conventionally, he was too expected to work on his own land. As the living style of a village would entail, the victim kept mixed company of friends, which later became the cause of his *Naswar* addiction. He is married, having five daughters and five sons. He owns a small piece of land where he works along with his sons nowadays. Besides farming, his sons also drive Rickshaws to sustain their living. As a joint family, every male member of the family contributes towards the income of the family. The living of the family is fairly decent with basic household items like fridge, television and washing machine being there. However

after the diagnosis of Ramzan as the patient of oral cancer, his family is faced with financial constraints. Though the males in the family have been affected, yet the females in the family have accepted it as a matter of fate.

History of smokeless tobacco consumption

Ramzan had been consuming *Naswar* since his teenage. *Naswar* is a kind of chewing smokeless tobacco that is also known as *Nasway* and used as snuff or dip. Ramzan started working on his land from young age, as a result of which he started to earn a fair amount of money very early in his life. Along with some of his local friends, he kept company with *Naswar* consuming friends as well due to his frequent visits to *Mandi* (a traditional marketplace), which later became the cause of his consumption of *Naswar*. Due to the influence of friends he never realized that his consumption of *Naswar* is taking on a shape of addiction leading to a chronic disease. Along with the supportive environment presented to the victim by his company, other factor that contributed towards consolidating the addiction was the purchasing power of the victim. As he was earning himself, there were no checks on him in terms of money. He would earn the money and then utilize it as he would please. As a consequence it contributed towards further strengthening of the habit. The environment of the household, or the village for that matter, was not such that it would have made any impact on the victim. Nobody in his house consumed any kind of smokeless tobacco at that time. However, influence of friends led the victim towards addiction. No one else in the household takes *Naswar* now. Easy availability of the *Naswar* was also a factor; it was readily available and some of the times friends would provide incase of non availability. Access to the smokeless tobacco was made much easier by the friends who would bring it in abundance from *Khyber Pakhtunkhwa*.

23

Medical profile of the victim

It has been six months now, since Ramzan is diagnosed with oral cancer. According to his physician, he is having this disease in early stages. Early symptoms included swelling and thickening of gums around his mouth. He also developed patches, red and white in color in his mouth area. These symptoms were not given any serious consideration and were brushed aside as normal mouth ulcer (a very common mouth infection). Later symptoms took a serious turn and accompanied bleeding, sore throat, hoarseness in voice and ear pain. A local doctor in Badin was consulted, who upon looking at the symptoms referred the victim to Karachi. Victim was brought to *Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Hospital* whereupon various medical tests were conducted. Reports were positive for oral cancer. A treatment plan ensued. Doctors were positive about the recovery and a little betterment was seen in victim's condition. However, victim's family has nowadays quit treatment from Karachi. So far the family has spent around Rs. 600,000 (\$6000) on the victim's treatment since last one year. Family is under serious financial constraints for further medical expense. Doctor's take on the victim's condition is satisfying, yet family cannot afford to further continue the treatment. Ramzan has given up on the regular medical treatment. However, he is slightly feeling better after the treatment.

Conclusion

There are number of factors that actually made Ramzan's addiction inevitable. First, the young age became the vital reason which prompted him towards friends' influence. Second, accompanied with the young age immaturity, financial independence enjoyed by the victim became another cause that led to addiction. As accepted universally, environment played a very crucial role in framing the habit that carried him towards addiction and then, as a result of which, oral cancer. Ramzan has spent savings on his treatment and has given up now due to financial problems.

24