



सत्यमेव जयते

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D.O. No. 8-2/2024-KT

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Dear Colleague,

Tobacco use is emerging as a serious public health concern in India while contributing to high disease burden and a leading cause of avoidable diseases and death. Nowadays tobacco use among youth including school children is becoming a serious problem. The early age at initiation highlights the imperative need to intervene and protect this age group. According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) 2019, 8.5 percent of school students in the age group of 13 to 15 use tobacco in some form. Further, more than 5,500 children initiate tobacco use every day. According to Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS-2), 55% of tobacco users initiated lifelong tobacco use before the age of 20 years. According to WHO, there will be more than 8 million tobacco-related deaths per year by 2030. The National Cancer Registry Programme Report 2020, released by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), revealed that 27% of all cancer cases (50 % cancer in male and 25 % in female) in our country can be attributed to tobacco or tobacco products.

2. Tobacco and Electronic Cigarettes acts as a gateway to other addictions and unfortunately is linked to the learning outcomes in students. As stewards of the health and education and guardians of our next generation, it is our collective responsibility to take decisive actions and prevent measures as early as possible to protect our youth from the clutches of tobacco and electronic cigarette addiction and any other substance abuse.

3. The Government of India has enacted a comprehensive tobacco control legislation, the Cigarettes and other Tobacco products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulations of Trade and Commerce Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA), with emphasis on protection of children and young people from being addicted to the use of tobacco and improvement of public health in general as enshrined in Article 47 of the Constitution of India.

4. Section 6 of COTPA 2003, prohibits sale of tobacco products to any person who is under eighteen (18) years of age and within a radius of 100 yards of any educational institution. Similarly, Section 77 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, prohibits supplying tobacco products to any child.

5. The Government of India has also enacted a comprehensive legislation to prohibit sale of electronic cigarettes namely, the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act: Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Act, 2019 (PECA 2019). Section 4 of PECA 2019, prohibits production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution and advertisement of electronic cigarettes (includes all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, Heat Not Burn Products, e-*Hookah* and the like devices).

6. As part of the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, released the Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) Guidelines for safeguarding minors and youth from tobacco and electronic cigarette, use. The Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL) has developed and launched the "ToFEI Guidelines Implementation Manual" for schools on 31st May, 2024- the World No-Tobacco Day (WNTD) and the same was communicated to all States/UTs for compliance. In this regard, States/UTs have nominated a Nodal officer for effective implementation of ToFEI guidelines in schools.

Contd.2/-

7. It is observed that as children move from schools to colleges, the age of transition to adulthood, shift in learning takes place from a school environment to a higher education system. It transforms their personality, academics and behavioural patterns. It has been observed that peer pressure and stress of the transition makes young boys and girls between 17-19 years particularly vulnerable to the consumption of tobacco use in HEIs. We therefore need to make concerted and coordinated effort from the Health, School and Higher Education Departments to spread awareness about the ill-effects of tobacco use through performing arts, music, nukkads, rallies on a regular basis to arrest the increasing tobacco use among young children and also implement the ToFEI guidelines in educational institutions covering schools and colleges under Tobacco Free Youth Campaign.

8. As a first step, States/UTs are advised to take necessary steps to ensure effective implementation of the "ToFEI Manual", in compliance with the provisions of COTPA 2003 in your respective State/UT. (copy attached). Section 2.4 of TFEI guidelines says objective of these Guidelines is to provide a fresh momentum to implementation of tobacco control initiatives among adolescents and young adults. *These guidelines may be implemented by any educational institution, including schools at all levels, colleges for higher or professional education and universities, both in public and private sector.* Section 2.5 of the Guidelines also mentions that Implementation of these guidelines should result in;

- More awareness about harmful effects and long-term health impact of tobacco use amongst the students, teachers, workers and officials in educational institutions.
- Awareness about various avenues available for tobacco cessation.
- A healthy and tobacco free environment in educational institutions and all educational institutions becoming tobacco free.
- Better implementation of legal provisions regarding sale and use of tobacco products, especially those related to educational institutions, public places, statutory warnings and minors.

9. We would request your personal intervention in the matter so as to keep our younger generations away from the tobacco use and make a Tobacco Free society. Together we can provide a healthy environment for our young generation.

Warm regards,

Yours sincerely



(Apurva Chandra)



(K Sanjay Murthy)



(Sanjay Kumar)

Enclosure: -

1. TFEI Guidelines, MoHFW
2. Implementation Manual of TOFEI Guidelines, DoSEL

To

1. The Chief Secretary, All States and UTs
2. The Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary, Department of Higher Education, All States and UTs.
3. The Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary, Department of School Education, All States and UTs.
4. The Additional Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary, Department of
5. Health Education & Family Welfare, All States and UTs.

Copy to:

1. The Additional Secretary (TCP), MoHFW
2. The Director, School and Higher Education of all States & UTS
3. The Director, Health Department of all States/UTs
4. Executive Director, Socio Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS) for necessary technical support to States/ UTs