

The Effects of Complete Ban of Smokeless tobacco Products in the State of Manipur: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract:- This study was undertaken to examine the effective implementation of the complete ban on sales of smokeless tobacco products in the state of Manipur, India. **Methodology:** Nature of the study being qualitative, data were collected through observation, interview and questionnaire methods. Interviews were conducted on 100 students who were in their 11th and 12th standard, belonging to the age group of 15-20 years. The analysis of data was achieved with the application of grounded theory approach. **Result:** Implementation of the ban has not been effective in controlling tobacco use. It has given rise to price hike of the products and increased black marketing, affecting greatly on the financially poor tobacco users. **Conclusion:** Any effort to ban tobacco products without effective implementation of the laws does not necessarily help users to quit, nor does it prevent new users from the uptake. Therefore, any future attempt is advised to have proper and systematic plans along with other intervention strategies.

Key words: *Black market, complete ban, intervention, price rise, smokeless tobacco.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Tobacco use is a global pandemic and is the leading cause of preventable death in the world. Nearly 5.4 million people die every year from lung cancer, heart diseases and other illnesses attributable to tobacco use. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that in the 21st Century, about 1 billion people around the world will die from tobacco use related diseases, 10 times the number killed throughout the 20th Century [1]. In order to prevent and reduce these deaths, the only solution is to control and prevent the uptake of tobacco initiation. Control measures and initiatives have been undertaken at different levels – global, national and at the state level. From the global perspective the WHO, Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) provides a comprehensive framework for global tobacco control efforts. It is the first international treaty negotiated, aimed at curbing tobacco-related deaths and diseases. The WHO, FCTC covers all aspects of tobacco control, including tobacco product regulation, advertising, health warnings, price and tax issues, illicit trade (smuggling) and programs for smoking cessation [2]. Concurrent to the WHO, FCTC the Indian government also in their efforts to control the use of tobacco has introduced tobacco control laws in 2003 known as ‘Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Product Act’ (COTPA) with series of provisions, including ban on smoking cigarettes in public places, sales to minor, mandatory health warning etc. [3]. However, a comprehensive study to examine its effectivity has not been carried out at the national level. Nevertheless, at the state level, studies on specific provisions of COTPA have been reported. For instance, studies conducted in Assam [4] and Kerela [5] on awareness of COTPA 2003 and tobacco legislation show 50% of the participants being aware of the implementation of COTPA and tobacco legislation of the country. The success stories of the prohibition of smoking in public places have also been reported in Tamil Nadu and Bangalore [6,7]. On the other hand, low level of compliance to the same laws have been reported in the state of Odisha and other states of India, thus, overall outcomes have been a mixture of both success and failure stories.

The present study will be the first of its kind relating to the study on the complete ban of smokeless tobacco products in the state of Manipur or for that matter across India to the best of the researcher’s knowledge. According to the latest nationwide data, made available by the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2010, on the prevalence of tobacco use – 54.1% (male-66.6%, female-41.8%) of the adult from the age group of 15 years and above currently use tobacco in one form or the other in Manipur [8]. The state along with Mizoram has also the highest number of people infected with lung cancer, owing to the habit of heavy tobacco

use in the form of smoking. According to local newspapers, it was said that about 930 to 950 new cases of cancer are reported annually in Manipur, out of which about 390 are tobacco related cases, that accounts to 34 percent of the total cancer cases in the state [9]. Consequently, the Manipur government on 26th February, 2013 under its Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Regulation on sales) Regulation, 2011 had imposed complete ban on the manufacture, storage, transportation, distribution, display, sale and purchase of gutkha, khaini, zarda, pan masala and other chewable, smokeless tobacco products containing tobacco or nicotine food ingredients as unsafe food injurious to health, by whatsoever name it is available in the market, in the state of Manipur (see also the original notification, a snapshot attached below). The ban also says that whoever violates this law is liable to get prosecuted under the provisions of the Food and Safety Standard Act of 2006 [10].

The objective of this ban and other similar measures implemented by the WHO and Central government is to prevent youth's uptake of tobacco and to protect from deleterious health effects that may cause to the general public from smoking (including second hand smoke to the non-smokers) and smokeless tobacco. While it is very important to impose laws and control measures by the government, it is also equally important to ensure the efficacy of the imposed laws at the ground level; otherwise it holds no significant meaning in the policy implication and in controlling the use of tobacco. As a result, this study was undertaken to examine the effective implementation of the law with respect to the complete ban of smokeless tobacco products by the government of Manipur.

II. METHODOLOGY

This paper was a result of community based qualitative study conducted on 100 students of two higher secondary (12th Standard) schools (name of the schools kept in anonymity) of Ukhrul district headquarter, Manipur. Ukhrul district is one of the 9 districts of Manipur state, inhabited predominantly by the Tangkhul Nagas. For the purpose of data collection, fieldwork was conducted in the month of October and November 2013, few months after the implementation of "Complete ban of smokeless tobacco products" in the state. The two higher secondary schools were selected based on the consent given by the school authorities out of four schools being approached, and also the students' consent was obtained through their respective principals of the schools and later by meeting them personally by the researcher himself.

Out of 300 students being identified, only 100 (male-52, female-48) of them gave consent to participate in the study. Of which, majority (65 users) of them were current tobacco users (male-41, female-24) of one form or the other. All the participants were under the age group of 15-20 years. Before proceeding with data collection, the participants were informed about the aims of the study and topics to be discussed. They were made aware of the data collection processes, including tape-recording and transcription of their responses and interviews, and were also informed about the anonymity of the research data they will be providing.

Data collection was primarily achieved through observation, interview and questionnaire method, self-administered by the researcher himself. Questionnaire with an open ended question: "According to you, has the complete banned of smokeless tobacco products really been effective in controlling tobacco use?" was asked and distributed written on a piece of paper to all the participants. They were asked to note down their responses, opinions and experiences below the question, where enough space was provided. Questions in the questionnaire also include about their age, sex of the respondents and status of tobacco use. The students were also given a choice to note down their responses either in their own tongue or in English or a mix, whichever they find easier in expressing their views. Unlike in the case of face to face interview settings, one very important advantage of this method is the freedom to pen down their opinions and experiences on a piece of paper without any interference or hesitancy, and without actually revealing their real identity. The principle idea of not revealing the identity of the respondents in any adolescents or youths' study is very vital to its success, especially in drugs or substance abuse studies. For instance, Sack and Westwood suggested that confidentiality is the cornerstone of any therapeutic relationship with the youths [11], without defining the limits of the confidentiality one may well get incorrect or incomplete information about what one is looking for from the youths or from the students.

Analysis of the data began with the initial translation of the responses and opinions into English from the local language. It was followed by the application of the 'grounded theory approach' [12], using techniques such as, organization of data, coding and categorization of data and interpretation. Analysis was further supported by the observational data collected during fieldwork and secondary data from books, articles,

journals, newspapers and from internet sources. Verbatim anonymous quotes have been used extensively in this paper to illustrate the findings.

III. RESULTS

Complete ban on smokeless tobacco products by the government of Manipur involves restriction of use, sales, storing, transportation and a ban on the production of tobacco products. It was primarily carried out with good intention to control tobacco use and to prevent new uptake. Some of the most common themes that emerge from the interviews and group discussions are exemplified below. That is, during the coding and categorization of data, six main themes (table 1) were identified from the narratives of the participants. These themes reflected the true nature of the implementation of the “complete ban of smokeless tobacco products” and its implication on the social and economic aspects of the people. The study provides strong qualitative explanations for the reasons why the ban on smokeless tobacco products failed to yield any positive result.

1. “Black marketing and price rise”

‘Black market’ or ‘illicit trade’ means any practice or conduct prohibited by law and which relates to production, shipment, receipt, possession, distribution, sale or purchase, including any practice or conduct intended to facilitate such activity [2]. In other words, it is a market characterized by some form of noncompliant behavior with an institutional set of rules. If the rule defines the set of goods and services whose production and distribution is prohibited by law, non-compliance with the rule constitutes a black market trade since the transaction itself is illegal. Moreover, people engaging in the production or distribution of prohibited goods and services are members of the ‘illegal economy’ [13]. The reasons for the emergence of black market are mostly due to high tax imposition, to evade tax [14] and stringent restrictions on sales, distribution or production [15] in order to control (in this case) tobacco use which poses serious threat to the public health. According to the narratives of many respondents, retail shopkeepers began to involve in the black market or illicit trade of tobacco products in every corner of the district as a result of imposition of the complete ban of smokeless tobacco products. They began to engage in illegal activities to circumvent and escape from laws and penalties laid down by the enforcement agency (government), because the sale of tobacco products became illegal, and in doing so the shopkeepers kept making their profits. For instance, 17 year old female (user) views that the complete ban on smokeless tobacco products might have somehow reduced the number of users on one hand, on the other hand, “... it has led to the rise of price as well. Instantly, the shopkeepers took advantage and raised the price almost double from the actual ones. According to my opinion, a place like Manipur sounds impossible to bring changes regarding the stopping of tobacco use, because the leaders of the society are leading in using tobacco.” She believes that retail shopkeepers exploited the situation and the leaders who themselves were using tobacco. It was hard for the respondents to put trust on the enforcing agency or the leaders who themselves were using tobacco, to effectively control or implement the ban of smokeless tobacco products. 19 year old male (user), taking the example of Manipur as a ‘dry state’ plainly stated, “Manipur government had declared the state as a ‘dry state’ many years ago, whereas in reality Manipur is not. In the same manner the government has also imposed a complete ban on the sales of all tobacco products, but it will never be so. This has only led to the rise of price, encourages black marketing and smuggling. The government is fooling around with the people and it is just to get media attention and for publicity.” He does not believe in the work of the government as far as tobacco control is concerned. Taking the precedent effect of banning alcohol, he believes the government is doing just for the sake of publicity and media coverage, as it is the general trend of the government across the country. 20 year old male (non-user) also said, “Manipur government has imposed a complete ban on the sales of tobacco which does not have any effect at all. Rather, it has led to the hike in the price of all tobacco products almost to double from the actual price, besides, increases smuggling, black marketing, etc.”

Goods or products acquired illegally may exchange above or below the price of once legal market. They may be cheaper than the actual market prices, because the supplier does not have to pay for production costs or taxes [16]. In another case, they may also be more expensive than legal market prices, for example, the product is difficult to acquire or produce, dangerous to handle, or not easily available legally. Thirdly, if exchange of goods is made illegal by some sort of state sanction, such as in the case of the present study, their prices will tend to rise as a result of that sanction. For instance, the ban imposed by the government instead of controlling tobacco use has turned things into worst said 18 year old female (non-user), she said, “... in contrast,

it has led to a steep rise of price, smuggling and so on. In order not to lose their money for the tobacco products they have, they sell secretly with higher price. This paves a way for the youngsters to chew, as we the youngsters mostly would like to do only those things that are prohibited. Moreover, the elders didn't teach us about the harmfulness of using tobacco." She would further try to relate the ban of smokeless tobacco to some sort of a motivating factor to experiment than preventing, as she believes the youngsters like her were more attracted by the things which are not normal or deviant. In a similar opinion 19 year old female (non-user) also stated that the ban has helped to control nothing, but in hiking the price and encouraging more people to use tobacco, she said, "...besides raising the price of tobacco products, and black marketing and profiteering by the shopkeepers, in my opinion it has also encouraged more people to use tobacco." A lot of them also viewed that the imposition of the ban on smokeless tobacco has proven nothing, but it has provided an opportunity to the retail shopkeepers for profiteering and exploiting the users. The price has almost gone up to double and it is like "...an incentive to the shopkeepers", says 17 year old male (user), while, another female user who she herself was affected by the ban, said, "...banning of sales of tobacco has led to making more profit to the shopkeepers, because I myself would not quit even after the products are banned. I kept going to the shops who sell secretly." Likewise, as shown in the table 1, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the complete ban imposed by the government of Manipur has actually given rise to the spread of black markets or illicit markets. This in turn has led to increased price of smokeless tobacco products to almost double from the actual price written on the package, without significantly controlling the use and prevention of tobacco uptake. What is more devastating is that the ban has also caused irreparable damage to the economy of the financially poor users.

2. "Affects the economy of the poor"

Recognizing the use of tobacco as a major public health challenge, the government of Manipur enacted and implemented a complete ban on smokeless tobacco in the state. However, this has not been received well by the public, especially the financially poor users, because of its ineffectiveness resulting in the price rise of tobacco products. When the ban got introduced into the state, selling of smokeless tobacco products became illegal, which means the retail shopkeepers are not supposed to sell the products anymore. In other words, even if they wish, they can no longer sell the products legally or openly, but it was revealed from the narratives of the respondents that, the sales of tobacco products kept going in the retail shops covertly with a price almost double to when it was sold legally (shown in table 2).

The shopkeepers taking advantage of the ban, and knowing that users will continue using and buying, irrespective of the price, they kept exploiting the users by selling the products at an unreasonably high price. Hiking of price might not have affected the rich users, because they have no problem in buying as they have money, however, it has in fact, severely affected the financially poor users as they could not quit, but to continue using in spite of the ban and the high price. A 17 year old female (user) indicated that the ban has, but led the poor users to become poorer, she said, "...to me the ban is really not effective in controlling the use of tobacco. It has led poorer to those poor users due to the rise of tobacco price. Therefore, my suggestion would be to shut down manufacturing factories once and for all instead of banning which is not going to be effective, as we all know." In a similar opinion a 19 year old female (user) expresses that the ban has, but affected the poor users and their poor families, she said, "...the ban on tobacco sales is not really an effective measure in controlling tobacco use. It has led to the rise of price which affects mainly the poor users and their families." Even if the ban was imposed for the good cause of the users and for the general public, it did not strike the users to quit, in other words, it did not give them enough motivation to quit. Moreover, the overwhelming majority of the users lacks technical assistance, skills, counseling, unaware of the benefits of quitting and other pharmacological interventions. Due to these reasons, even if they wanted to quit, they could not, but to continue using in spite of the ban. While applauding the ban, 20 year old male (user) also added that the ban has affected the economy of the poor so much without significant sign of controlling or preventing tobacco use. He said, "It is good that the Manipur government has imposed a complete ban on the sales of tobacco products. However, when we examine closely, this ban has affected so much on the economy of the poor users. Because, shopkeepers sell the products with a higher price, double from the actual price, also, there has been no sign of decreasing in the number of users." Another respondent who holds similar views at first thought the introduction of the ban was a commendable job. However, she added that the ground realities were very different, for tobacco products are available in every shop sold illegally. She said, "I thought the ban of intoxicating things was good. However, when we look at it from the other angle, it has greatly affected the economy of the poor families, due to the rise

of prices of tobacco products. Though the government has introduced a complete ban on any tobacco products in Manipur, we find 'black tobacco' available in every corner across the state." They claimed that the ban has paved a way for the shopkeepers to increase the price through black marketing, thereby making users' lives more miserable than comforting. 16 year old female (non-user) said, "It has opened up a road to price rise, black marketing, etc. of various tobacco products. Making the poor users hard to afford at the same time they can't quit taking tobacco." Similarly, for the 17 year old male (user), the ban has given extra burden, as he has to continue using, the hike of price has led him to demand more money from his parents, which every time he has to lie them on some pretexts. In another case, the ban has even pushed some respondents to steal money from their parents, besides to even steal tobacco directly from the shops. Further, 19 year old male (user) said, "...but this does not help at all in controlling tobacco use. Rather, it has created many problems for the users. It has also given rise to stealing of money and tobacco products."

In the process, the ban has benefited only few people of the state, and those are the retail shopkeepers who only think of one thing which is to make as much profit as possible from the ban. On the other hand the worse affected sections of the people were the financially poor users who at the same time were unable to quit. 20 year old male (user) said, "...the ban on tobacco products introduced by the government of Manipur is not effective enough. It has led to the rise of price almost to double from the actual price, smuggling, and black marketing giving more profit to the shopkeepers. As a result, instead of quitting tobacco it has greatly affected the economy of the poor addicted users, which directly or indirectly has affected the livelihood of the entire family members."

3. "Not effective at all"

The respondents testified that there has been a weak regulatory and enforcement infrastructure in implementing the ban, and as a result the implementation of the complete ban on smokeless tobacco was "not effective at all." According to them, the government of Manipur has done a commendable job of introducing the ban to control and prevent the use of tobacco, but they also added, merely imposing and banning of these products on general public would not yield any positive result without following up the ban meticulously. For instance, 19 year old female (user) said, "...the ban on tobacco sales is not really effective measure in controlling tobacco use, because, the sale will definitely go on notwithstanding the ban."

The participants were also of the view that banning tobacco products has created a lot of confusion among the general public, because of the half-hearted attitude of the government towards the implementation of the ban through the state police personnel. In an effort to effectively implement the ban, routine checkup and surprise raid on the shops persisted only for a period of two to three months from the date of the commencement of the ban. However, the sales of tobacco products has not reduced, but still widely available through 'back door sales', and due to this sales method, shopkeepers have taken advantage of the situation, took the matter into their hands and exploited users by selling the products with almost double from the normal price. As users continue to remain as users, there is no visible rate of quitting, and this has severely affected the general public without actually helping them. 20 year old female (non-user) said, "...complete ban without constant vigilance on the part of the government is not an effective measure, because, tobacco is available everywhere, and any time even after the ban has been introduced." The fact is, after banning the products for two to three months, it collapsed and ceased to exist. The police force lost their interest in checking regularly on the shops as they themselves were chewing and smoking tobacco. Gradually, the sales of tobacco products came out of the 'closed door business' to normal open market, however, irreparable damage that has caused to the users is the price of tobacco products which never return back to its normal price. Many of the participants were of the view that the government is not serious in implementing the ban. They said they were imposing just because other states of India have imposed. They were imposing just for the sake of imposing or the government has some hidden agenda, because, "if the government of Manipur is actually serious in implementing and controlling tobacco use, they would have properly followed up the ban. They would have appointed a separated police force instead of the corrupt state police who they themselves are smoking and chewing," said 20 year old male (user). They also viewed that it is a mockery of the laws (or to themselves) they (government) themselves have legislated and implemented. The reason is, "the government has appointed people (state police) to make sure the ban is implemented effectively who they themselves are chewing and smoking tobacco. Isn't this an irony of the government efforts towards the public health of the state? It is ridiculous", said 18 year old female (user). Still others were skeptic about the government steps in controlling tobacco use. As an 18 year old male (non-user)

suggested, “This ban is just another new policy of the government of Manipur to hike the price of tobacco and to increase taxation, because, when we observed properly this doesn’t make any sense. The government would just announce the ban without making sure the ground status of the ban, whereas, in reality it is only the shopkeepers who are benefitting without any visible sign of decreasing.” Moreover, because, the government is not serious about its effectivity, people themselves also do not take seriously about the ban. For instance, 17 year old male (user) would say that “...only few people are serious about the ban when most of the people and the police are not.”

4. “Against the ban”

The respondents who were under this category believed that banning of tobacco products will definitely help a lot of people to quit from using tobacco products, because when things are not available easily, people try to do away with it, provided black market or illegal sales of tobacco products are checked stringently. However, they also added that this was not the case of the present situation. For instance, 19 year old female (non-user) commented that, “Banning of tobacco products undoubtedly will lead to opening of black markets which in turn will also lead to price rise. In my opinion, it is better not to ban if one’s government’s intention is not fully committed to perform the task. Otherwise, it will only affect the economy of the poor users’ families.” In other words, the banning of tobacco products cannot be a serious proposition, because, immediately after introducing the ban, black markets emerged and running, besides, there are many other practical issues in implementation of the ban. To cite an example is the rampant use of tobacco by the police personnel who are entrusted with the task of effective implementation of the ban. Therefore, according to them banning things does not solve anything; but proper and efficient regulation, and education are the most important measures to invest upon. In support of this argument 20 year old female (non-user) stated that, “Unnecessary and unplanned ban does not help in controlling tobacco use in anyway. It will give rise to many illegal activities while tobacco will be available to all with higher price, and this higher price will not stop non-users from acquiring tobacco nor will it stop the users, because, in India tobacco products are available for a variety of prices.” Some people may argue that the purpose of this ban isn’t for the benefit of the existing users, rather to prevent non-user from becoming a user. According to the respondents, at the initial period of experimentation they didn’t learn to chew or smoke tobacco by acquiring directly from the shop, but from friends or elders. Still, some other respondents would add that though, the use of tobacco is detrimental to the user’s health; it should not be banned completely, because of its perceived practical uses in the field of medicine, social, physical (weight and complexion) and emotional management for the users.

Another group of respondents argued that although tobacco kills lots of people every year in our country, what good would it be to ban it when there is a drug in the tobacco that purposely is an addictive substance, and it is banned in one place and not in another. It wouldn’t change the fact that many deaths will occur, because people will still use. Furthermore, the same group of people stated that the use of tobacco is a personal choice and wish. People have the right to use tobacco, because they are making a decision of their own. They know it’s going to cost their life, but they still use it. Moreover, it also gives an awareness message “Tobacco Kills” or “Tobacco Causes Cancers”. Therefore, it is up to the individual what to do and, what not to do. For instance, 18 old male (user) would say in the following that, “In this modern age, there is no need to ban tobacco products from selling and using. Even if there is, as we have seen, it is not going to be effective. It is simply an unnecessary workload created by the government for themselves.” Another female (user) also said, “...it is not really good to control or ban the sale of tobacco, because, it is peoples’ choice. The chewers know what is good and what is bad.”

5. “Effective and in favor of the ban”

Tobacco is the deadliest substance in the history of human civilization [17]. It kills several million people every year, a number that will grow before it shrinks. The state of Manipur remains one of the highest cases of cancers reported among the Indian states, thus tobacco products has to be banned completely, said some respondents. They agreed that although, complete ban on smokeless tobacco products have not been effective as expected, however, if it does somehow prevent children from having to access, exposure to the products and reduce the chances of initiating, then the ban is already an effective one. This group of people believed that at least the ban would prevent some of the non-users from experimentation. For that matter, even if the ban has given rise to black markets and rise of price, at least the ban has done something by helping the users to quit from continuing. In other words, the quit percentage may be very low, but if there are some people who have

quit, then the ban is worth. For instance, 17 year old female (non-user) said, "I found it to be effective to some extent. I saw some of my friends quitting, because they could no longer afford to buy due to rise of price." Another female (user) also said, "Yes, shopkeepers raise the price of the products, in one way it is also good to raise the price, because some users may be unable to buy due to high price to which they may quit." They believed that the rise of price would prevent some users to give up chewing, because of unaffordability to purchase the products, but more importantly, restricting children from accessing to tobacco products. 20 year old male (user) who supported the ban also said, "I appreciate the government of Manipur for taking up measures to control tobacco. As for me, no problem let the price go up, if the shops cannot sell them freely and openly. This way people will have no option, but to quit from taking tobacco."

The argument of these people is, when something is illegal it becomes harder to obtain; with it becoming harder to obtain the amount of users would dwindle. However, when something is available to the masses through public stores, then it is easy to obtain and chances are more that more people will start using in addition to those who have been using. In other words, when the only way to get tobacco products that is illegal, is through illegal markets, it becomes harder to obtain, with it becoming harder to obtain, the amount of users thereby would reduce or would remain the same by preventing people from initiating.

6. "Suggested measures"

Suggested measures that emerged from the participants' narratives were; "banning alone is not enough", "it must come with an awareness and cessation programs", "criminalize the sellers", "hand over the task to local people with some incentives", "better focus on regulation than complete banning", "shut down the manufacturing industries", etc.

Firstly, the students observed that banning the sales and the use of tobacco products alone is not going to work anywhere in controlling and preventing tobacco use. Given the nature of its addictiveness, people will always find ways and means to satisfy their cravings, and as long as there are users, new users will emerge. Therefore, if the government of Manipur is truly serious about controlling tobacco use, people must be provided with necessary cessation assistance and more rigorous anti-tobacco campaign in the rural villages. This will help the users to quit and prevent non-users from initiating as well. Secondly, the law must criminalize the sellers. They must be put in jail or penalized heavily. Only then, they will refrain from selling illegal products. Otherwise, imposing fines of few hundreds is not going to keep away the sellers from selling. Thirdly, they suggested that in order for the ban to be effective, the government must transfer the task to the local people with allocation of funds to carry out. To let the people take care of the situation with government as a facilitator might also work in effective implementation of the ban. Fourthly, some of them still said that banning completely will do no better than worsening the situation, because, just like prohibition of other drugs like marijuana and heroin or alcohol, although they are illegal, thousands of people are still using them. They also fear that a complete ban on tobacco products will lead to another problem of using marijuana (ganja), available in plenty in Manipur. Finally, the respondents went on to the extent of suggesting that, howsoever effective the ban is, tobacco products will always be available to the users at a variety of prices, and so, the only solution is to shut down the manufacturing industries across the world. Only then tobacco will be controlled, said the participants. In other words, whether the ban is effective or not tobacco will always be available for those people looking for it, unless rooted out of this earth, which is unlikely to happen. Hence, the only thing and measure is to control oneself and one's own family.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The objective of banning smokeless tobacco products completely by the government of Manipur was primarily to prevent fresh (children) initiations and to protect from the deleterious health effects caused to the general public from the use of tobacco products. While it is very important to impose laws and control measures from the part of the government, it is also equally important to check the efficacies of the imposed laws at the ground level; otherwise it holds no significance in the implementation. Simply imposing the laws and a ban in letters without actions and without proper execution is equal to none existent. Instead, this could open up ways and back door alleys accompanied by a rise of price. The finding shows that imposition of sales; use and transportation of tobacco products have brought disturbing and irreparable damage on the economy of the poor tobacco users than controlling the use of tobacco. The main reason is the government after imposition of the ban for two to three months never cares to check the effective implementation of the ban again, after which, tobacco

products were made available in the public domain again openly. In other words, although, the products have been banned, it still remains like a legal product with an unreasonably high price which is made available through black markets or back door passages in every corner of the streets. Unfortunately, the price of tobacco products once hiked never came down again.

After two to three months of the existence of the law, the banned products then started selling in the open market again; which in turn has created so much confusion among the general public concerning with questions like, does this means the ban has been lifted? If yes, why the government has lifted the ban after hiking the price and why the price has not come down? If not, why it is back to open sale again, what is government enforcement agencies doing? Were they not paid for these? The public has no answers to all these questions. Of course, there are many hurdles for effective implementation of any laws. In this particular case, the problem was the incompetency of the police personnel who were given authority to check the sales of tobacco products. When the police themselves were using tobacco in an open sight of the public or in the market; at the same time taking a front role in controlling tobacco use is rather an absurd attempt. The findings suggested that as long as the laws and ban would be executed efficiently with constant vigilance, the general public would always welcome the existence of such laws. However, they are also totally against half-hearted implementation of the laws and ban due to the past failed precedent effect they have witnessed. Therefore, if the tobacco control law has to be made effective, the whole community's participation is prerogative, and especially the youth wings must be empowered to take the full charge of continuous checking of the sales of tobacco. Otherwise, it will only help in opening black markets and profiteering to the retailers.

Another perspective of looking at the ban, according to Petkantchin is the propaganda that prohibition or complete ban of tobacco decrees ceasing of tobacco use is misleading, because prohibition, though it may increase the financial cost of procuring the forbidden products, does not lead to the disappearance, of the ultimate reasons that explain why the product is still desired, sought and demanded. It is not only addiction factors and known or unknown health risks; it is also hard to deny that individuals who, however, knowingly, decided to use tobacco, get a subjective pleasure in some form or other (excitement, better stress management, peer pressure, etc.). Due to all these reasons, tobacco products, even if it is banned in the open market people still find their ways to acquire through any means, even at an expensive price. Petkantchin suggested that the only lasting way to make tobacco disappear would be for users to decide on their own free will to change their lifestyles and stop using, which they can do at any time in the absence of and regardless of any prohibition, as many ex-users have done [18]. This maybe applicable to the adult users, but one cannot leave children or adolescents to decide on their own free will to use or not to use tobacco, because they are still unable to decide what is good and what is bad for their health and future. Accordingly, there is still a need to ban tobacco partially or fully.

While some of the users may also say that the ban infringes one's rights to chew or smoke tobacco, one cannot also deny the non-users' rights to breathe clean air and to remain tobacco smoke free atmosphere. Therefore, taking consideration of all these aspects and other associated pros and cons, the government of Manipur bans the use of smokeless tobacco across the state, which has not provided positive result in the case of the present study. The reasons, mainly due to incompetency from the part of the enforcing personnel and lack of commitment from the government, low response from general public (or noncompliance), people not being serious about the dangers of tobacco use (due to lack of knowledge), and lack of quitting assistance and cessation centers. In relation to this, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) pointed out that India's tobacco control initiatives are not effective enough and it violates the rights of tobacco users in many aspects including the right to access tobacco cessation programmes (as part of right of health). It was recommended that along with more effective information dissemination, education, and communication programmes on the effects of tobacco, assistance for tobacco cessation should be integrated into healthcare services to ensure access [19]. Tobacco users are often faced with a counter argument, saying, "It is a question of personal choice." However, in the case of a country like India, we see that tobacco users often do not have adequate information about the harmful effects of tobacco products.

In conclusion, the best approach to the effective implementation of the comprehensive ban of tobacco products, based on the present findings is, the ban must be accompanied by other interventions strategies and measures. If any government or organization wishes to bring a comprehensive ban on tobacco products, it must come along with rigorous anti-tobacco campaigns to the people, empowering the local community to take

control over the task, and finally the most important intervention is to open up several cessations centers. Then only the comprehensive ban of tobacco will be effective in helping people to quit as well as preventing the children from initiating. Moreover, before enforcing any ban on sales and use of tobacco products, the government or the organization has to properly and systematically plan and examine its pros and cons. It has to be well thought, arranged and planned, because they are dealing with human addiction and habit. Otherwise, the result would be the same as it is in the present study.

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Snapshot of the Notification of Complete Ban of Smokeless Tobacco

Source: Government of Manipur, Health Secretariat

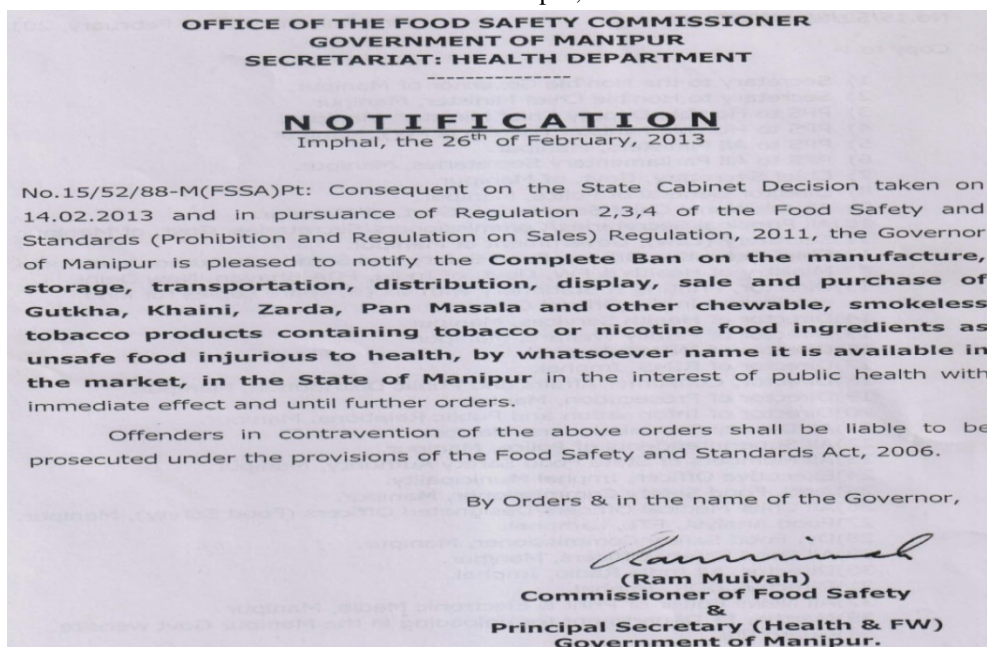


Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their responses

Responses	Number	%
Black market & Price Hike	30	30
Affects the economy	16	16
Not Effective at all	20	20
Against the Ban	12	12
Effective	10	10
Favors the Ban	12	12
Total	100	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2013

Table 2: Distribution of price before and after the Ban

Name of Tobacco products	Price (before the ban)	Price (after the ban)
Raja khaini	Rs. 3/pouch	Rs. 5/pouch
Khaini (tin)	Rs. 10/tin	Rs. 15/tin
Gutkha (Talap)	Rs. 2/Pouch	Rs. 3.5/Pouch
Zarda Pan:-		
120 type	Rs. 5/rolled	Rs. 7-10/rolled
160 type	Rs. 10/rolled	Rs. 15/rolled

Source: Fieldwork, 2013