

Psycho Social Issues of Tobacco Marketing: An Observational Study at Point of purchase

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ABSTRACT

Background of the Study: Tobacco is at the centre of the contradictions inherent in the evolving process of globalization. It is where the goals of a set of multinationals are clearly in conflict with public health and welfare and where globalization of values such as accountability and corporate responsibility are under severe pressure. The transformation of marketing and promotion of harmful commodities, such as tobacco products, is one important component of globalized public health threats. The industry looks towards the creation of new brands, products and variety in the market. Today's youth is attracted to such a flavored product which is dressed up with brightly colors and attractive packing. Given the harmful influence of tobacco advertising and promotion on current, potential, and former smokers, marketing regulation is a necessary component in the effort to combat the global tobacco epidemic.

Objectives:The current research work provides a general review of emerging promotional channels, such as packaging, viral marketing. Secondly to analyzed the violation under smoke free act (COTPA, 2003) by these promotional approaches.

Methodology:Study Areas:This survey was conducted in two cities of Punjab state namely Bathinda and jalandhar city **Study Design:** The research used descriptive research design in the study. **Method of data collection:** Observation and interview technique were used for the data collection. Observations like display of advertisement, variety of smoked and smokeless tobacco products and use of any promotion were noted. The information was collected from tobacco vendors based on convenient sampling. These included temporary kiosk, permanent kiosk and permanent shops. These observations were noted according to the various sections like 7, 8 and 9 of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003.

Results: The results of the present study illustrate that cigarette & bidi packs and smokeless tobacco products were carried out the flavored properties, with catching tag lines, attractive packaging and lastly dull warning images on the packs of both segments, advertised at point of purchase locally. Number of flavored, foreign, Indian brand and locally manufactured cigarettes packs were available and sold at point of purchase. These products with attractive packing packages attract the young population and these approaches leads to lifetime addiction and affected with tobacco related diseases.

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I. Introduction

Tobacco product marketing, promotion through various strategies or approaches that leads to tobacco addictions or it is one of the reasons for promoting tobacco use among various segments of the society especially the youth. It is also a barrier to reach goal 3 of sustainable development that “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” and mislaid the opportunity to invest in sustainable development. [1] On that account The World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) is incorporated in sustainable development goals of United Nations General Assembly adopted on 25 September 2015. In actual fact it is accepted as “means of implementation” to achieve the overall health goal (SDG 3). [1] This goal also target to decrease the ratio of premature deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) by 1/3rd till the year 2030 and to promote the mental health and well-being of the people & nation. [2] According to World Health Organization (WHO) more than one billion of human those who smoked and higher than six million die every year from tobacco-related diseases. [3] A large amount tobacco users exist in the low- or middle-income countries. [3] India is the 2nd leading consumer of tobacco and 3rd major producer of tobacco. [4] GATS 2 revealed that 28.6 percent (266.8 million) of adults in India, aged 15 and above currently use tobacco in some form. Among the adults 24.9 percent (232.4 million) are daily tobacco users and 3.7 percent (34.4 million) are occasional users. [5] Every 5th adult 19.9 crore uses smokeless and every 10th adult 10.0 crores smokes tobacco. [5] The World Health Organization estimated that tobacco use may leads to more than 1.5 million deaths in India by 2020. [6] The use of promotional strategies banning on tobacco advertisement and promotion of tobacco products is an imperative part to reduce the tobacco epidemic at national & international level. According to article 13 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) affirmed that ‘undertake a comprehensive ban or restrict tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship on radio, television, print media and, as appropriate, other media, such as the internet’. [7] These advertisement strategies are noted at the Point of sale (POS) or point of purchase (tobacco products promotion is a variety of activities in the retail setting to maximize the sale of these products). [8] These promoting strategies targeted different socio-economic areas and to appeal different social groups based on characteristics such as age, potential, product price, flavor and lifestyle of such segment. [9] The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) 2003 limits these tobacco advertising at these points of purchase (generic or local sale of tobacco products, name on prescribed boards carrying health warnings, other promotional message and picture , location & size signboard displayed where tobacco products are sold). [10]As par (WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control guidelines, 2003) Cigarettes packs are the most likely advertised tobacco product globally. [11] Present study examined or identified the ways in which tobacco companies are using product packaging elements to associate their product (like: flavored, smell, mouth feel & taste which gives fun, energy, confidence to the youth). Tobacco industry studies validate that these menthol properties add to a tobacco product a refreshing properties which attracts the user by masking the taste of tobacco, less the risk of throat irritation, and making the smoke easier to breathe in. [12]

This analysis assesses appearing on different tobacco products and it is essential to think about all these channels of promotional approaches like musical app on cigarette packs, direct & indirect advertisement of tobacco products, gifts, & coupon schemes, tag lines, logo of the product and lastly warning messages on products.

Aims of the Study:

1. The existing research provides a broad-spectrum review of current regulatory practices of TAPL (Tobacco advertisement, labeling, promotion) strategies including physical design features (such as logo and tag lines), message content (pictorial vs. text and content “themes), and other novel practices with reference to tobacco marketing.

2. Secondly to analyzed the violation under smoke free act (COTPA, 2003) by these promotional approaches.

1. Identification of Cigarette among children through sweet cigarette:



Sweet Cigarettes, passionately a popular candy, which came into existence in 1980s and 1990s, still available, is a preparation of 75 to 80% sugar; and the remaining 20% of it, are glucose and gelatin. We normally told our children that smoking is bad and it is injurious to our health but we could barely ignore the magnetism of the pleasures product available in market i.e. “Cigarettes candy”.

(Picture1:A pack of sweet cigarette for kids source:Sweet Cigarette Google Image) &(Picture2: A candy mouth freshener locally made there is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)



However everybody knows that it's not similar to real tobacco cigarette and a cigarette with white sweet-stick, tipped with a reddish tinge to make it seem like a flame do not harm. The product became quite famous, earlier than being banned in thirteen international locations (inclusive of Canada, Brazil, Turkey and New Zealand) and positive components of America. Candy cigarettes were, certainly, quite arguable. The packaging of candy cigarettes is made pretty just like real cigarettes, which brought about tussles among confectioners and tobacco Cigarette producers. Most candy cigarette-makers who have survived these conflicts don't even name their products 'cigarettes' any more, and give the

name “Sweet Sticks”. No matter all of the commotion going in and around the globe about these candy sticks, Indian model of this candy like Phantom sweet cigarettes are easily available in India. Worst is that, they are now available



on line (e.g. amazon). If a small child thinks that it is to be ultra-modern to flaunt a white candy-stick just like cigarettes, won't he or she be greater inclined in the direction of smoking tobacco later in existence? The chances of possibility are very high. Making the imagery of smoking look advantageous, can definitely promote smoking among youngsters, mainly if the packaging is also similar. Clicking selfies with candy cigarettes (that's pretty the fashion among young Indians on Instagram) would possibly make oneself more popular. In addition to this researcher would like to highlight that sweet cigarettes are also not healthier if taken for long time like real cigarettes. Their composition suggests that they can result in long-term harm. [13]

A similar product, a candy mouth freshener, was also observed all through my field work that is designed much like a cigarette. This mouth freshener is particularly easily available in the rural regions of Punjab state of India. This product is consumed or chewed similar to a cigarette. This social marketing of these products is specifically targeting the children. Researcher wonder why company's ideology for making a mouth freshener in form of a cigarette while they could easily design it the other way round. Because this design of cigarette can have a negative impact on children especially the teenagers mind. An observation done by *Sunil Kumar M, P. S. (2015)* indicates that smoking form of tobacco has come to be most famous among students in the assessment of other forms. An evaluation shows that the mean age of normal customers became 14- sixteen years and initiation age becomes 12 years. Most of the research reported loss of right implementation of regulation which desires to be focused by way of policy implementers. [14] A *Study titled "Tobacco use among high school children in Bangalore, India: A study of knowledge, attitude and practice" (2015)* done in Bangalore (India) highlighted the result that peer pressure becomes the principal cause of tobacco use among kids and age became no longer a barrier to buying tobacco merchandise. [15] A cross-sectional school-based survey stated in London that 41.4% of students had attempted smoking in the 6th class, with occurrence growing from 21% in magnificence sixth to 60% in magnificence twelfth. [16] A research work explored by *Xi, B., et.al (2016)* stated that tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure were common among the young adolescents aged from 12-15 years in low-income and middle-income countries. [17] Lastly an article *Tobacco Free India: Save Our Children* based on numerous studies evaluated that it is time to wake up and save a vulnerable children from the ravages of tobacco and smoking. [18] (Picture 3: A Cigarette pack cigarette with musical app: Source: There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

How it works? : Give a Missed call on 9223402222 or send the message on 54646. One will

receive a message has been received on the cell phone which indicates how to download the magic grooves app. When the downloading of the app is completed it asks for the adult age (above 18) before using the app. Once the packet of the classic cigarette is scanned through this app then it starts doing the work very

effectively. Please see the attached above images this kind of advertisement indicates that how Cigarettes companies are using new kind of strategies to promote their brands and to attract the new customers. So researcher has to be vigilant of these kinds of tricks and bring it to the notice of higher government officials.

A musical app strategy for the advertisement of Cigarette pack by the Cigarette brand

Throughout the visit in factor of sale, here researcher observed that cigarettes poster and desk boards have been displayed with new form of advertisement method. In these classified ads the approach of the cigarette business enterprise is to draw the attention of the teenagers through smart phones having internet. Cigarette (brand name) luring the youngsters to buy the classic cigarette pack and test it with the smart phone (android) “Grooves Magic” app. To download the app there are helpline numbers (9223402222 for call) and (54646 for SMS).

2. *Direct & Indirect Advertisement content*



(Picture 4, 5, 6: A kind Direct & Indirect advertisement of different companies; Source: There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

India ratified the “**Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)**” on 5th, February in the year 2004 which came into implementation on 27th of February, 2005. According to this FCTC “Tobacco Advertising and Promotion” means that any form of commercial communication, recommendation or action with the aim, effect or likely effect of promoting a tobacco product or tobacco use either directly or indirectly”. Government of India prohibit the ***direct & indirect tobacco product advertising and marketing***, the use of brand names or promotional slogans under the Act of “Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products Act (section five)” within the country and its accompanying regulations. [20-21] Reseracher observed that cigarette companies are advertising their products by using large billboards, smaller posters inside the kiosk, and on the front of the kiosk.

The above mentioned pictures i.e. Picture no 4: A cigratte brand was advertised on billboards as its pack is sold. This company advertising and marketing campaign uses terminology as **“Red is on the move”** available in Red, Black & White packs. On the otherside an indirect promotion isdone by the company using the logo of it i.e. a“lion” which clearly indicates the mark of Cigarette company. On the third picture the company narrated about the product in the most understandable language i.e. Hindi to attract the customers. The text “Best quality, Best taste & Best price”in hindi denotes thatthis brand provide best combination of Cigarette to the user. A Mumbai based study titled **“Cigarette advertising in Mumbai, India: targeting different socioeconomic groups, women, and youth”** (2003) explored some observation, documentation of cigarette advertising on billboards, storefronts and at point of sale. In spite of ban on the advertisements of tobacco & cigattes products, cigarette companies are use different modes of encourgament for the usuage of there products like reseracherhave vexplained above.[22] Another observation study **“Tobacco industry tactics with advertisements at the point of sale in Mumbai”** (2013) of different billboards of cigratte as direct & indirect advertisement form or form of violation were reported. It was commaly found that maximum voilations were done by placing the boards especially above the stores. [23] Finally **“Point of sale tobacco advertisements in India”** also conclude that the purpose of the point of sale classified ads seems to be a surrogate commercial of tobacco merchandise, specifically cigarettes. [24]

3. **Marketing all the way through gifts & coupons, Discount Strategies**





(Picture 7 to 12: A kind of promotion through by providing discounts & gifts; Source: There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

Given images showshow these tobacco companies use promotional strategies to sell their products throughfree gifts, discounts, coupons, prizes; both on smoked & smokeless products on the purchase of it. First image explored the text written in hindi “*jyada jodo jyadapao*” means consume more, purchase more and get better gifts. The items shown in gift category are needed by any household. The second image depicts the more you purchase these items (in number) you get more money as a gift. In the third image the company is trying to lure the consumer by offering such an item which some fine low income people can’t afford so in directly they are motivated to purchase and consume it more. The forth image is given the grunted money back offer to their customers. In fifth image the company is giving you a more amount of consumable product on a lesser price. It also motivates the consumer to purchase the same then other substances of the same nature. Some companies are awarded by some quality control agencies such companies stick the picture of the award on their product indirectly assuring the consumer about the best quality of their products. They target population is usually rural background people or less literate people and there is a great need to plan and organize research based on these evidences. There is a requirement of conducting prevention & awareness programs to make people aware of the ill effects of these substances.

A study titled “*Awareness of pro-tobacco advertising and promotion and beliefs about tobacco use: Findings from the Tobacco Control Policy (TCP) India Pilot Survey*” (2014) also recorded some responses when

the tobacco pack bought by the user based on free sampling of tobacco product, special price offers, free gifts, coupon schemes, discount linked to the concerned tobacco company.[25] A report published on “*Technical Report on Flavored Cigarettes at the Point-of-Sale in Latin America*” also recorded the promotional strategies included price discounts, special or limited edition packs, and brand stretching. But no promotional gifts, loyalty schemes, mention of social media, free tobacco products, or contests and competitions were observed. [29]

4. *Product logo & Target group*



(**Picture 13 to 15:** Based on tobacco product logos; **Source:** There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

Through these images the researcher is trying to highlight that the companies are targeting even small children by pasting pictures of their age group on the bidi pack itself. It can have a negative impact on the innocent minds without bothering about the negative effects of it, if they consume it. On the pack of second image, a picture of young boy is seen which indirectly indicates that the user can be younger generation (Youth) because researcher feel that images does have impact on the mind and they become a stimulating factor for that age category.

Likewise in the third image a picture of an adult (in 40-50) is clearly seen on this bidi pack and this way researcher presume that the company is trying to target the age group of 40-50 years, whereas during these years of life one tends to have age decline and thus medical restrictions also starts thereafter. The fourth image is of a female on the pack of a tobacco powder which even researcher have failed to understand that what the company, who is selling

it, is trying to indicate. Through these images researcher have come to the conclusion that these advertisement companies are misleading and are playing havoc with the lives of many innocent people.

5. *Use of Catchy terminology*



(Picture 16 to 19: A kind of advertisement through catchy tag line; Source: There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

Tobacco companies are trying to lure the general public by writing such slogans on the pack of their products which indirectly motivates them to purchase and use it. In the first picture as it is written “*Aao Karein Party*” indicates that while youngster arranges parties a *khaini* product can be a part of menu for the party. The second product which is a “*pan masala*” made by Indian company is being promoted by using a picture of a film star usually film stars have great influence in the minds of general public. So the company is trying to cash basically the presence of the film’s star on the pack which shows “*leonikesathjeet, kesarkesathshilajit*”. The next product, seen in the picture, is being prepared by the same company but with the different tagline which is “*Mehak Silver mera Dilbar*” which perhaps as has some silver coating in it. In the last picture the product is being sold in the name of a professor (e.g. Prof.B.Pal). This seems to be very funny to look at because to reach this level of highly educated

position is very difficult so one should not defame this post by putting this name on a bidi pack. The companies are just keen to sell their product without taking care of the damage done to society through such taglines and names.

6. *Flavored Cigars& other catchy products*



(Picture 20 to 23: A kind of surrogate advertisement & other flavored products available in market;

Source: There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

Let me apprise you of such surrogate advertisements which are trying to promote & sell two items under one brand name so indirectly both the items are promoted under one name only, which is very much evident in the pictures. The first picture is about a cigar which is available in various flavors like Wine, Cocktail etc the companies trying to woo the consumers by adding flavors in it. The last picture is about the various accessories to be used by the smokers like perfume & mouth freshener to evade the foul typical smell which is usually irritating for the people around the smoker. So usually smokers prefer using these items. Even artificial filter is also available for the cheaper cigarette with are usually without filter.

7. *Un cleared warning signs& pack with warning*





(Picture 24 to 37: A kind of products without unclear warning; Source: There is no copyright issue; researcher has been clicked by himself during field work)

Now here researcher wants to draw your attention towards the warning written on the different packs of the smoked or smokeless tobacco. In the first picture the warning is written as per a compulsion by law but the way it is written and because of the color of the ink used in it, one can hardly make out the meaning of it. In the 25th image the warning is written on the top of the pouch which is written on the 20 % area of the packet and that to on the top edge of it so in this way researcher would like to say that after opening the pouch the warning line do not even exist on the packet. In 3rd picture no statutory warning is mentioned which is against the law. The 27th & 28th image is also very blurred and nothing is legible. The sixth picture is designed in a very haphazard manner where however it is readable but one cannot make any sense of it. The picture next to it is in urdu language which hardly anyone read & write. The rest of the images neither have any warning and even one or two packs have any warning i.e. in a foreign language which is totally beyond anybody understanding. *Some* cigarette packs is local made product and available at a very cheap price of Rs 10 approx per box so the quality of such product can easily be evaluated. Even does not bear any warning on the box.

Limitation of the Study:

The researcher could find out about these products from only two cities of Punjab state (India) if an effort is done in a larger area involving a big team, many more things can come out in perspective with advertisement strategies which are harmful for the community at large.

II. Conclusion:

The results of the present study illustrate that cigarette & bidi packs and smokeless tobacco products were carried out the flavored properties, with catching tag lines, attractive packaging and lastly dull warning images on the packs of both segments, advertised at point of purchase locally. Number of flavored, foreign, Indian brand and locally manufactured cigarettes packs were available and sold at point of purchase. These products with attractive packing packages attract the young population and these approaches leads to lifetime addiction and affected with tobacco related diseases.

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