

Tobacco Control and COTPA implementation in Thiruvananthapuram

Around the globe approximately 6 million deaths occur in a year due to abuse of tobacco. Of these over 5 million are caused as a result of direct tobacco use while more than 600 000 as a consequence of second-hand smoke exposure. Even in an erudite state like Kerala where 95% of the adults are aware of the hazards of smoking, tobacco-use is responsible for over 40 per cent of cancers among men.

Apart from lung and throat cancer, Tobacco results in a host of other chronic diseases, including COPD, Asthma, Diabetes, and Cardiovascular diseases. In spite of being notorious for such health risks, 21.4 per cent of the population in Kerala continue to be slaves to various tobacco products, and 17.5 percent of adults are exposed to second-hand smoke in workplaces as per the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2009-10 of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

In the light of such alarming statistics, the Revenue Department headed by the Hon'ble Minister Shri Adoor Prakash and Revenue Secretary Shri Vishwas Mehta IAS directed the Thiruvananthapuram District Collector with an objective to strengthen implementation of Indian tobacco control law COTPA, 2003 - Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products - Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution - by including it as a regular item of review in the monthly District Development Council meetings.

The economic burden from tobacco use is Rs 1514 crore a year according to a study conducted by Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) with support from the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The economic burden due to cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) accounts for a staggering Rs 226 crores annually. It is the highest among four major tobacco-induced ailments in Kerala, contributing to 51 per cent of total direct medical costs.

In view of such facts, requests and figures the District Administration is striving to make the district COTPA compliant. Accordingly, review of tobacco control measures have begun in right earnest from the DDC meeting held at the Thiruvananthapuram Collectorate on 22 August 2015.

Significantly, the Expert Committee Report on Health of the Kerala State Planning Board has recommended implementation and monitoring of the existing acts such as COTPA Act 2003 to reduce the burden of non communicable diseases.

Tobacco Control is gradually changing its facade from a public health issue to being a developmental agenda. With an aim to transform Thiruvananthapuram into a model tobacco free COTPA compliant district, the Thiruvananthapuram District Administration led by District Collector Shri Biju Prabhakar IAS has planned to make the process transparent and accessible with the help of this online initiative. These pages will lead you to the various tobacco control initiatives being taken up in Thiruvananthapuram district.

According to WHO, tobacco kills up to half of its users, and we request you to share and participate in the endeavour taken up by the Thiruvananthapuram District Administration to reduce the health and economic burden of tobacco use in our district.

Sd/-

For District Collector
Dy. Collector (General)
Thiruvananthapuram