

**SUPREME
COURT
VOLUME-1
ANNEXURES**

**SLP (C) No. 16308/2007-Ankur Gutkha Vs Indian
Asthama Care Society & Ors-regarding.**

VOLUME INDEX(1-5)
VOLUME-1-PAGE 1 TO 168 (O/C OF COVERING LETTER)
VOLUME-2-PAGE 169 TO 454
VOLUME-3-PAGE 455 TO 714
VOLUME-4-PAGE 715 TO 998
VOLUME-5-PAGE 999 TO 11320

SUPREME COURT

**SLP (C) No. 16308/2007-Ankur Gutkha Vs Indian
Asthama Care Society & Ors-regarding.**

F.No.NIHFW/SLP(C)/16308/2007/2010
11th February, 2011.

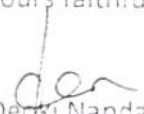
Mr. R.S. Negi
Under Secretary
Min. Of Health & Family Welfare
Room No. 425-C
Nirman Bhavan
New Delhi – 110011.

Subject: SLP(C) No. 16308/2007 – Ankur Gutkha V. Indian Asthama Care Society &
Others – regarding.

Sir,

With reference to the letter No. 16017/15/2011-PH-I dated 23rd Dec. 2010, please
find enclosed herewith the final report with index and list of members.

Yours faithfully,


(Deoki Nandan)

Encl: as above.

Copy to: Mr. Ranjit Singh, Legal Consultant, NIHFW, Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi

20
2011



National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Munirka, New Delhi.

Evidence assessment: Harmful effects of consumption of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala and similar articles manufactured in India

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Central Government had been directed 'to undertake a comprehensive analysis and study of the contents of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala and similar articles manufactured in the country, and harmful effects of consumption of such articles'. The National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW) had been asked to compile the national and International studies already done on this issue.

RESEARCH QUESTION

In view of the above, the following questions were drafted for assessment:

- 1) What are the contents of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala and other similar articles manufactured in the country?
- 2) What are their harmful effects on humans?

METHODOLOGY

The evidence assessment was carried out in two parts:

- a) Formation of a Committee of technical experts for helping with scientific literature on the topic
- b) Analysis of contents of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala and other similar articles with the help of scientific literature provided by technical experts
- c) Review of research studies on harmful effects of these articles which were identified following a comprehensive literature search

a) Committee of Technical Experts

A committee of technical experts was constituted to provide guidance on technical issues and help in collecting relevant scientific literature. The members of this committee are mentioned in Annexure A.



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● **b) Scientific literature on contents of articles**

The scientific literature on the contents of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala and other similar articles manufactured in the country was provided by the above mentioned committee of technical experts. In addition to the scientific literature, these experts also provided letters from Directors of various Regional Cancer Centers of the country and these have been appended at the end of this report *Annexure B*.

c) Review of research studies on harmful effects

Literature search

To identify relevant published evidence for the harmful effects of these articles, a comprehensive literature search was conducted in PubMed – a highly respected electronic database of peer-reviewed journals and online books with 20 million citations for biomedical literature. The search strategy combined relevant controlled vocabulary and natural language or free-text words to search for relevant English language studies conducted in humans from the year 1990 onwards. Studies published prior to 1990 were not searched since these studies were included in the two monographs developed by the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC) of WHO which have been appended as evidence for this review (*Annexure 1 (a), 4 (a)*). Additionally, technical experts were invited to submit any study for consideration provided it met the selection criteria. No attempt was made to hand search journals not indexed in the database or search for grey literature (conferences, abstracts, theses and unpublished studies).

Study selection criteria

The abstracts identified from the literature search were reviewed and the following criteria were defined for selecting the studies:

- a) Studies conducted with an objective of evaluating harmful effects of these products in humans.
- b) Studies based on primary as well as secondary research.

RESULTS

I. CONTENTS OF ARTICLES

The term 'smokeless tobacco' includes a large variety of commercially or non-commercially available products and mixtures that contain tobacco as the principal constituent and are used



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either orally (through the mouth) or nasally (through the nose) without combustion (*Annexure 1 (a)*).

Oral use of smokeless tobacco is widely prevalent in India and different methods of its consumption include chewing, sucking and applying tobacco preparations to the teeth and gums (*Annexure 2*). According to the monograph developed by the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization (*Annexure 1 (a)*), the three forms of smokeless tobacco which are commonly used orally include:

- a) *Tobacco alone* (with aroma and flavourings) – e.g Creamy or dry snuff, Gudakhu, Gul, Mishri, Red tooth powder
- b) *Tobacco with other components* (lime, sodium bicarbonate, ash) – e.g Khaini, Zarda, Maras, Naswar
- c) *Betel quid with tobacco* (includes areca nut, slaked lime, catechu and tobacco with spices) – e.g Betel quid, Gutkha, Mawa

For nasal use, a small quantity of very fine tobacco powder mixed with aromatic substances called dry snuff is inhaled. This form of smokeless tobacco use, although still practiced, is not very common in India. Snus is a form of snuff using moist tobacco powder, consumed by placing it under the lip for extended periods of time (*Annexure 2*).

The brands and common names of different products of chewing tobacco (smokeless tobacco) used in India have been enumerated in the proceeding of a prestigious meeting conducted by the National Cancer Institute, USA and the Centre for Disease Control, USA (*Annexure 3*).

In addition to the above mentioned smokeless tobacco products used orally, various mixtures of *betel-quid without tobacco* are also commonly used in India. A '*betel quid*' (synonymous with '*pan*' or '*paan*') generally contains betel leaf, areca/betel nut (or supari) and slaked lime, and may or may not contain tobacco. In other words, it usually contains at least one of the two basic ingredients **tobacco** or **areca nut**, in raw or any manufactured or processed form. Other substances, particularly spices, including cardamom, saffron, cloves, aniseed, turmeric, mustard or sweeteners, are added to betel quid according to local preferences. (*Annexure 4 (a)*)

Pan masala is very similar to a betel quid except that all its ingredients are in dehydrated and granular/powdered form. *Gutkha* is a mixture of Pan masala and chewing form of tobacco.

Chemical composition



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There are 3095 chemical components in smokeless tobacco products (including gutkha), among them 28 are proven carcinogen. The major and most abundant group of carcinogens is the tobacco-specific *N*-nitrosamines (TSNA) and no safe level of this chemical has been ascribed so far (*Annexure 1 (b)*). Other carcinogens reportedly present in smokeless tobacco include volatile *N*-nitrosamines, certain volatile aldehydes, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, certain lactones, urethane, metals, and radioactive polonium. The two monographs published by the IARC of WHO have listed all these toxic ingredients along with their specific health implications (*Annexure 1 (b), 4 (b)*).

Results from various studies have found high levels of Nitrosamines in the branded Indian smokeless tobacco products available in the market (*Annexure 5-7*). A detailed laboratory report on the constituents of different brands of smokeless tobacco available in India had reported substantive quantities of two potent carcinogens (nitrosamines and benzo-a-pyrene) and heavy metals in most of these products (*Annexure 8*). Other studies have also demonstrated presence of high levels of heavy metals (Lead, Cadmium, Chromium, Arsenic and Nickel) in these products (*Annexure 7 - 9*), with one study reporting almost 30% of gutkha brand samples exceeding the permissible levels of heavy metals Lead and Copper, when compared to the provisional tolerable intake limits determined by the FAO/WHO (*Annexure 9*).

II. REVIEW OF EVIDENCE ON HARMFUL EFFECTS

The two key ingredients of smokeless tobacco and betel-quinid products are tobacco and areca nut, and the chemical composition and effects of these two ingredients are quite different. Hence the evidence on the harmful effects of smokeless tobacco and areca/betel nut (or supari) has been reviewed under separate sections.

Section 1 deals with smokeless tobacco and includes evidence on harmful effects from 105 studies from India and abroad. Section 2 is a compilation of harmful effects of areca nut and includes 93 Indian and International studies. Altogether 184 scientific articles have been included in this review.

Effort has been made to include all the relevant studies identified from literature search and which met the pre-defined selection criteria. Due to time constraint, it was not possible to search other electronic databases and evaluate the included studies for their methodological quality.



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SECTION I: SMOKELESS TOBACCO (OR CHEWED TOBACCO)

Prevalence in India

The Global Adult Tobacco Survey India (GATS India) is the global standard for systematic monitoring of adult tobacco use (smoking and smokeless) in the country. The survey, conducted in 2009-10 by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Mumbai, covered about 99.9 % of the total population of India. Its findings revealed that more than one-third (35%) of adults in India used tobacco in some form or the other. Among them, 21 % adults used only smokeless tobacco, 9 % only smoke, and 5 % smoke as well as smokeless tobacco. Based on these, the estimated number of tobacco users in India was 274.9 million, with 163.7 million users of only smokeless tobacco, 68.9 million only smokers, and 42.3 million users of both smoking and smokeless tobacco. The prevalence of overall tobacco use among males was 48 % and among females 20 %, while the use of smokeless tobacco products among males (33%) was higher than among females (18%). The quit ratio for the use of smokeless tobacco use was 5% (*Annexure 10*).

Studies from different parts of the country have found high prevalence of smokeless tobacco use in the Indian population (*Annexure 11 – 22*). This has been endorsed in the monograph developed by the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC) of WHO (*Annexure 1 (c)*). Many studies have also reported on the popularity of smokeless tobacco products amongst children and youth of the country (*Annexure 1 (c), 23 – 38*). An annotated bibliography of research on smokeless tobacco in India published by the Human Development Network of the World Bank also provides evidence of its widespread use in India (*Annexure 28*).

Harmful effects

CANCERS

Oral pre-malignant lesions/conditions

Several studies, majority of them from India, have reported a strong association between smokeless tobacco use and oral premalignant/precancerous lesions like leukoplakia, erythroplakia, submucous fibrosis or lichen planus (either alone or in combination) (*Annexure 1*



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(d), 39 – 45). The risk of these lesions has been found to increase with the duration and frequency of smokeless tobacco use (*Annexure 1 (d), 39, 42*).

Oral cancer

A large number of studies from India provide consistent results of an increased risk of oral cancer with the use of different forms of smokeless tobacco used in the country (Gutkha, mishri, gudaku, khaini, etc) (*Annexure 46 – 55*). Similar results are seen in International studies and reviews including the IARC monograph (*Annexure 1 (d), 56, 57*). There is also good evidence to suggest that the risk of developing oral cancer is directly associated with the duration and frequency of tobacco usage (*Annexure 1 (d), 46 – 48, 52, 53*).

Oesophageal cancer

Smokeless tobacco use or tobacco chewing has been reported as an important risk factor for the cancer of the oesophagus by multiple studies from India and abroad (*Annexure 1 (d), 54, 58 – 62*). Moreover study results suggest an increased risk of oesophageal cancer with increase in the duration and frequency of smokeless tobacco usage (*Annexure 60 – 62*).

Stomach cancer

Few Indian and international studies were identified which have reported an increased risk of stomach cancer with the usage of smokeless tobacco (*Annexure 1 (d), 59, 63*).

Pancreatic cancer

All the relevant studies identified for this topic have been conducted outside India and their results indicate a strong association between smokeless tobacco and pancreatic cancer (*Annexure 1 (d), 58, 64 – 66*). The association was significant even after adjustment for other variables.

Throat (pharynx and larynx) cancer

Results from different studies suggest an increased risk of pharyngeal cancer and/or laryngeal cancer with the use of different forms of smokeless tobacco (*Annexure 47, 53, 54, 67 – 69*). Two studies also observed a strong dose-response relationship between chewable tobacco and risk of pharyngeal cancer (*Annexure 54, 68*).

Renal cancer

Most of the studies included in the IARC monograph have reported an increased risk of renal cell cancer 3-4 times with the use of smokeless tobacco (*Annexure 1 (d)*).



MORTALITY

Results from some studies indicate an increased risk of all-cause mortality or all-cancer mortality in smokeless tobacco users compared to non-users (*Annexure 70 – 73*), and the increased risk was seen predominantly in female users. In addition, one Swedish study has reported an increased risk of dying from cardiovascular disease among the users (*Annexure 74*).

NON-CANCEROUS DISEASES/CONDITIONS

Oro-dental health

All the Indian studies identified under this section have shown a close association between smokeless tobacco usage and different types of periodontal diseases (inflammation, gingival recession and bleeding, staining, tooth loss) and/or caries (*Annexure 75 – 80*). A review of oral mucosal disorders associated with gutkha usage also found an increased risk of peri-odontal inflammation (*Annexure 43*).

Hypertension & Cardiovascular diseases

Results from several studies indicate that regular use of smokeless tobacco increases the risk of hypertension (*Annexure 81 – 86*) and that of cardiovascular disease (*Annexure 82, 84, 86, 87*). A systematic review of observational studies from Sweden and USA has also shown an increased risk of fatal myocardial infarction (*Annexure 88*).

Nervous system diseases

Two large studies have found a significant association between the use of smokeless tobacco and the risk of fatal cerebrovascular stroke (or stroke) (*Annexure 89, 90*).

Metabolic abnormalities

A study from Sweden reported significant association between high-dose consumption of snus/snuff and metabolic syndrome which is defined as 3 or more abnormalities of abdominal obesity, high cholesterol level, high triglycerides level, hypertension, and diabetes or hyperglycemia (*Annexure 91*). Another study has found increased triglyceride and cholesterol levels among smokeless tobacco user (*Annexure 86*).

Reproductive health



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Multiple studies have reported adverse effects of smokeless tobacco on the reproductive health of men and women and during pregnancy. A study of Indian men attending an infertility clinic reported a strong association with decrease in sperm quality and sperm count (*Annexure 92*), while another study found an increased risk of cervical lesions in women (*Annexure 93*). Its use during pregnancy is reported to be associated with increased incidence of birth complications and anemia (*Annexure 94, 95*), increased risk of fetal loss (*Annexure 96, 97*), and a higher incidence of preterm babies and low-birth weight babies (*Annexure 98 – 100*).

Other diseases (Gastro-intestinal and Respiratory)

Results from few studies have found increased prevalence of benign gastrointestinal diseases (oesophagitis, sub-mucous fibrosis) in smokeless tobacco users (*Annexure 101, 102*). Moreover it has been associated with chronic bronchitis and impaired lung function with chronic use (*Annexure 103, 104*).

ECONOMIC COSTS

Using healthcare expenditure data from the National Sample Survey of India, a study found direct medical costs for treating smokeless tobacco associated cancers and diseases as USD 285 million, while indirect morbidity costs (including costs of caregivers and work loss due to illness) amounted to USD 104 million. The total economic cost of tobacco use was reported as USD 1.7 billion which was many times more than the annual government expenditure on tobacco control and about 16% more than the total tax revenue generated from tobacco (*Annexure 105*).

Evidence summary

Most of the relevant studies identified are from India, Sweden and USA with studies from India making the biggest contribution. There is strong and consistent evidence from a number of studies to indicate significant risk of oral cancer and pharyngeal cancer, oesophageal cancer, and pancreatic cancer with smokeless tobacco use. The risk of these cancers is found to increase with increasing dosage and frequency of smokeless tobacco use.

Results from several studies suggest presence of strong and consistent evidence that smokeless tobacco is significantly associated with poor oro-dental health, risk of hypertension and cardiovascular diseases, and adverse effects on reproductive health (especially during pregnancy with birth complications, fetal loss, low birth weight, prematurity). The evidence available for other diseases/conditions is limited but consistent in reporting increased risk of all-



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cause mortality and all-cause cancer mortality in female users, and increased risk of cerebrovascular stroke, metabolic abnormalities, oesophageal diseases, and respiratory diseases among all users.

There is also some evidence to suggest that the total healthcare economic cost of tobacco use in India is many times more than the annual government expenditure on tobacco control and about 16% more than the total tax revenue generated from tobacco

II. ARECA NUT OR BETEL NUT (OR SUPARI)

Prevalence

Studies have found nearly one-third of the population to be chewing areca nut in form of betel quid (*Annexure 4 (a), 10, 11, 28, 106, 107*). Areca Nut usage has also been reported amongst school children (*Annexure 108 – 110*). Some studies including the IARC monograph has reported widespread use of areca nut/betel nut chewing across many countries, especially the South East Asian countries (*Annexure 4 (a), 111, 112*).

Harmful effects

CANCERS

Oral pre-malignant lesions/conditions

All the relevant studies identified for this topic have reported strong association between chewing of areca nut/betel quid and oral premalignant lesions (leukoplakia, erythroplakia, submucous fibrosis, lichen planus). These studies have been conducted in various parts of India (*Annexure 4 (d), 39, 42, 43, 113 – 119*) and across the world (*Annexure 120 – 124*). Follow-up studies have also shown a high risk of malignant transformation of these lesions with continued areca nut usage (*Annexure 43, 121, 122*).

Oral Cancer

IARC's monograph and several studies from Indian have shown areca nut chewing to be a significant risk factor for the development of oral cancer in humans (*Annexure 4 (d), 53 – 55, 122, 125 – 127*). Moreover the risk has been found to increase with the duration and frequency



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of areca nut usage (*Annexure 55, 122, 125, 126*). These findings have been confirmed from studies conducted in Taiwan and other countries (*Annexure 128 – 133*).

Oesophageal cancer

The risk of oesophageal cancer was significantly increased among the chewers of areca nut as reported in studies from India and Taiwan (*Annexure 54, 60, 134 – 136*). The increased risk was found to persist even after controlling for smoking and alcohol intake. Study results also suggest that the risk of oesophageal cancer is directly associated with the duration and frequency of areca nut usage (*Annexure 54, 60, 134*).

Liver cancer

Studies from Taiwan have reported areca nut/betel quid chewing as an independent risk factor for the development of liver (hepatocellular) cancer in humans, and the risk increased with the duration and frequency of its usage (*Annexure 137 – 140*).

Throat cancer

Few studies have shown an increased risk of pharyngeal cancer with the use of areca nut (*Annexure 54, 69, 141*).

MORTALITY

Results from two large cohort international studies have reported an increased risk of all-cause mortality among areca nut chewers compared to persons who had never chewed areca nut (*Annexure 142, 143*). In addition, one of these studies found increased mortality risk due to cardiovascular disease while the other one reported increased mortality risk due to cerebrovascular disease.

NON-CANCEROUS DISEASES/CONDITIONS

Oro-dental health

Several studies have been conducted in South-East Asia on this topic, especially in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. All of them have shown a close association between areca nut usage and different types of periodontal diseases (inflammation, gingival recession and bleeding, staining, tooth loss) and/or caries (*Annexure 75, 79, 144 – 148*).

Hypertension & Cardiovascular diseases



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A systematic review of observational studies found areca nut chewing (with or without tobacco) to be significantly associated with the risk of cardiovascular disease in Asia (*Annexure 149*). It also observed a strong dose-response relationship between the two. Other relevant studies identified in search (*Annexure 143, 150, 151*) have been included in the above mentioned review and they reported similar results. Areca nut chewing was also found to be associated with hypertension (*Annexure 152*) and sub-clinical Ischemic Heart Disease in diabetic patients (*Annexure 153*).

Nervous system diseases

Limited numbers of studies found under this section have reported adverse effects of areca nut usage on central and autonomic nervous systems (*Annexure 154 – 156*). A case study has reported its indulgence as a probable cause of epilepsy (*Annexure 157*).

Metabolic abnormalities (including obesity and diabetes)

Various metabolic abnormalities have been reported with areca nut usage. Studies have found a significant association between areca nut chewing and metabolic syndrome (*Annexure 158, 159*), while an increased risk of this syndrome has also been reported among children exposed to paternal chewing (*Annexure 160*). Other studies have found close association of its use with obesity (*Annexure 161 – 163*), risk of hyperglycaemia and diabetes (*Annexure 163, 164*), and poor glycaemic control in diabetic patients (*Annexure 165*). There are reports that it adversely affects calcium and Vitamin D metabolism (*Annexure 166 – 168*) and appetite (*Annexure 169*).

Addiction and Psychological disorders

Two studies have shown areca nut usage (more so with tobacco additives) to be associated with dependence syndrome (*Annexure 170, 171*). On the other hand some studies have reported its therapeutic effect in patients of schizophrenia by producing less severe symptoms of the disease (*Annexure 172 – 174*).

Reproductive health

Areca nut chewing during pregnancy has been reported to be significantly associated with adverse birth outcomes like prematurity, lower birth weight and reduced birth length in babies, even after adjustment for other variables (*Annexure 175 – 178*).

Liver disease & Kidney disease



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Two studies each have found areca nut use associated with significantly increased risk of development of liver cirrhosis (*Annexure 179, 180*), chronic kidney disease, (*Annexure 181, 182*), and urinary stone disease (*Annexure 183, 184*).

Evidence summary

Majority of the identified studies are conducted in India and Taiwan. Results from multiple studies show strong and consistent evidence suggestive of areca/betel nut being a significant risk factor for the development of cancers of the oral cavity, oesophagus and liver. The risk of these cancers is found to increase with increased duration and frequency of areca/betel nut usage. Sufficient evidence has also been found for the development of oral pre-malignant lesions with a high risk of malignant transformation, while few studies have reported close association between areca nut usage and pharyngeal cancer.

Strong and consistent evidence was found for a significant association between areca/betel nut usage and peri-odontal diseases, cardiovascular diseases, metabolic abnormalities (including obesity and diabetes), and adverse birth outcomes. Though limited evidence is available for other diseases/conditions, results were consistent in implicating its use with increased risk of all-cause mortality, and for causing liver cirrhosis, chronic kidney disease, urinary stone disease, addiction, and nervous system diseases. There is also some evidence to suggest betel nut's therapeutic effect in patients with schizophrenia.

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Annexure-A

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INDEX

S. No.	Annexure	Page No.
1.	1 (a)	1-5
2.	1 (b)	6-38
3.	1 (c)	39-59
4.	1 (d)	60-128
5.	2	129-135
6.	3	136-163
7.	4 (a)	164-168
8.	4 (b)	169-178
9.	4 (c)	179-190
10.	4 (d)	191-254
11.	5	255-258
12.	6	259-268
13.	7	269-272
14.	8	273-331
15.	9	332-339
16.	10	340-345
17.	11	346-358
18.	12	359-364
19.	13	365-373
20.	14	374-377
21.	15	378-383
22.	16	384-390
23.	17	391-398
24.	18	399-404
25.	19	405
26.	20	406-408
27.	21	409-418
28.	22	419-428
29.	23	429-435
30.	24	436-440
31.	25	441-446
32.	26	447-450
33.	27	451-454
34.	28	455-459
35.	29	500
36.	30	501-506



आरोग्यम् सुखसम्पदम्

National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
Munirka, New Delhi-110067

37.	31	507-508
38.	32	509-510
39.	33	511-519
40.	34	520-524
41.	35	525-530
42.	36	531-535
43.	37	536-552
44.	38	553
45.	39	554
46.	40	555
47.	41	556-560
48.	42	561-567
49.	43	568-575
50.	44	576-582
51.	45	583
52.	46	584-588
53.	47	589-594
54.	48	595-603
55.	49	604-609
56.	50	610-621
57.	51	622-625
58.	52	626
59.	53	627
60.	54	633-638
61.	55	639-644
62.	56	645-691
63.	57	692-700
64.	58	701-709
65.	59	710-714
66.	60	715-721
67.	61	722-726
68.	62	727-731
69.	63	732-737
70.	64	738-741
71.	65	742-746
72.	66	747-752
73.	67	753-757
74.	68	758-763
75.	69	764-765



आरोग्यं कुलसन्ध्या

National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
Munirka, New Delhi-110067

76.	70	766-772
77.	71	773-780
78.	72	781
79.	73	782-787
80.	74	788-793
81.	75	794-799
82.	76	800
83.	77	801
84.	78	802
85.	79	803
86.	80	804
87.	81	805-815
88.	82	816-820
89.	83	821-828
90.	84	829
91.	85	830-834
92.	86	835-839
93.	87	840-851
94.	88	852-857
95.	89	858-863
96.	90	864-869
97.	91	870-878
98.	92	879-883
99.	93	884
100.	94	885-889
101.	95	890-894
102.	96	895-913
103.	97	914-918
104.	98	919-923
105.	99	924-933
106.	100	934-939
107.	101	940-949
108.	102	950-953
109.	103	954
110.	104	955
111.	105	956-961
112.	106	962-968
113.	107	969-978
114.	108	979-983



आरोग्यं दृढसंन्यदा

National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
Munirka, New Delhi-110067

115.	109	984-988
116.	110	989
117.	111	990-998
118.	112	999-1006
119.	113	1007-1012
120.	114	1013
121.	115	1014-1021
122.	116	1022
123.	117	1023
124.	118	1024-1033
125.	119	1034
126.	120	1035-1041
127.	121	1042-1045
128.	122	1046-1049
129.	123	1050-1057
130.	124	1058-1063
131.	125	1064-1068
132.	126	1069-1075
133.	127	1076
134.	128	1077-1084
135.	129	1085-1090
136.	130	1091-1097
137.	131	1098
138.	132	1099
139.	133	1100-1103
140.	134	1104-1106
141.	135	1107
142.	136	1108-1110
143.	137	1111-1115
144.	138	1116-1117
145.	139	1118
146.	140	1119-1130
147.	141	1131-1136
148.	142	1137-1143
149.	143	1144-1151
150.	144	1152
151.	145	1153-1160
152.	146	1161
153.	147	1162



आरोग्यं कुशलं च

National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
Munirka, New Delhi-110067

154.	148	1163
155.	149	1164-1172
156.	150	1173-1179
157.	151	1180-1188
158.	152	1189
159.	153	1190-1194
160.	154	1195-1198
161.	155	1199
162.	156	1200
163.	157	1201-1203
164.	158	1204-1211
165.	159	1212-1219
166.	160	1220-1224
167.	161	1225-1229
168.	162	1230-1243
169.	163	1244-1252
170.	164	1253-1258
171.	165	1259
172.	166	1260
173.	167	1261-1267
174.	168	1268-1274
175.	169	1275
176.	170	1276
177.	171	1277
178.	172	1278-1283
179.	173	1284
180.	174	1285-1288
181.	175	1289-1296
182.	176	1297-1298
183.	177	1299
184.	178	1300
185.	179	1301-1308
186.	180	1309
187.	181	1310-1314
188.	182	1315-1318
189.	183	1319
190.	184	1320

Index for letters of support from Directors of 16 Regional Cancer Centers

SR NO	NAME OF THE INSTITUTE	PLACE/STATE	LETTER SIGNED BY	NAME OF THE PERSON
1	Tata Memorial Center	Mumbai, Maharashtra	Director	Rajan A Badwe
2	ACHARYA TULSI REGIONAL CANCER TREATMENT AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE	BIKANER, RAJASTHAN	DIRECTOR	DR. R.K. CHAUDHARY 9414314294
3	THE GUJRAT CANCER-AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE	AHMEDABAD, GUJRAT	HON. DIRECTOR	DR. PANKAJ M. SHAH 9426006244
4	REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE: PT. B.D. SHARMA, PGIMS	ROHTAK, HARYANA	HEAD OF SURGICAL ONCOLOGY	DR. R.K. KARWASRA 9215050301
5	RASHTRA SANT TUKDOJI REGIONAL CANCER HOSPITAL (AND RESEARCH CENTRE)	NAGPUR, MAHARASHTRA	DIRECTOR	DR. S. CHAUDHURI 9823073992
6	DR. BHUBANESWAR BOROOAH CANCER INSTITUTE	GUWAHATI, ASSAM	DIRECTOR	DR. A.C. KATAKI 9864096972
7	CHITTARANJAN NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE	KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL	DIRECTOR	DR. JAYDIP BISWAS 9830026696
8	CANCER INSTITUTE (WIA)	CHENNAI, TAMILNADU	DIRECTOR	DR. T. G. SAGAR 9840083780
9	CANCER HOSPITAL AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE	GWALIOR, MADHYA PRADESH	DIRECTOR	PROF. DR. B.R. SHRIVASTAV 9425109174
10	KIDWAI MEMORIAL INSTITUTE OF ONCOLOGY	BANGALORE, KARNATAKA	DIRECTOR I/C	DR. VIJAYAKUMAR 9448467765
11	M N J INSTITUTE OF ONCOLOGY & REGIONAL CANCER CENTER	HYDERABAR, ANDHRA PRADESH	DIRECTOR	DR. T. MANDAPAL 9963104040
12	REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE	RAIPUR, CHATTISHGARH	DIRECTOR	PROF. VIVEK CHOUDHARY 9826064727
13	REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE	AGARTALA, TRIPURA	MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT	DR. GAUTAM MAJUMDAR 9436131423
14	ACHARYA HARIHARA REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE	CUTTACK, ORISSA	DIRECTOR	DR. U.R. PARIJA 9437023451
15	REGIONAL CANCER CENTER	Trivandrum, Kerala	Director	Paul Sebastian 9847124165
16	INDIRA GANDHI INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES	Patna Bihar	DIRECTOR	Dr Arun Kumar 9431044957

Hos EPBX : 2226334-38
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1

Gram : BIKMEDC
College : 2226300-C
Hospital : 2226304

(A GOVT. OF RAJASTHAN UNDERTAKING)

ACHARYA TULSI REGIONAL CANCER TREATMENT AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE, BIKANER
(REGIONAL CANCER CENTER)

ASSOCIATED GROUP OF HOSPITALS, S.P. MEDICAL COLLEGE, BIKANER-334 003 (RAJ.)

Ref. No. RT/ATR/BKN/04

Date: 02-01-2011

To,

The Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

Sub: Appeal for ban on sale of Gutka and other tobacco products.

Your Excellency,

This is true and hard fact that habit of Gutka is increasing day by day in our population specially in younger population due to its easy availability at all kinds of shop. Gutka is a preparation of crushed areca nut (betel nut), tobacco, eatechil, paraffin, lime and sheet or savoury flavourings. It is consumed much like chewing tobacco and is considered to be responsible for oral cancer and other severe negative health effects. The most serious side effect associated with prolonged Gutka use is a risk of cancer, Gutka is suspected to elevate the risk of cancers of the gum, mouth, throat, lung, liver, stomach, prostate and oesophagus.

Gutka can also lead to abrupt changes in blood pressure, dizziness, blurring of vision and even palpitation cardiac arrhythmias. It increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Our institute Acharya Tulsi Regional Cancer Treatment & Research Institute, S.P. Medical College, Bikaner is situated in North-West Part of the Rajasthan. Patients from Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh also approach for treatment at this center. Oral cavity is one of the commonest malignancies at our center contributing 10% of all malignancy. 70-80% of all malignancy are tobacco related in our centre. In view of these ill effects of tobacco, we appeal to you to take necessary steps for complete ban on Gutka and impart education programme for people about ill effect of tobacco.

Sir, our government is spending huge amount of money for cancer control programme and on the other hand we are not removing the root causes of cancer i.e. Tobacco and Gutka which are known causes of cancer development. We expect from government to ban such products completely and strictly to save the population of our country from ill effects of these products.

Yours,

(Dr. R.K. Chaudhary)

Director
Acharya Tulsi Regional Cancer
Treatment & Research Institute,
Bikaner (Raj.)

Copy to:

The Hon'ble Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi

(1)

(Dr. R.K. Chaudhary)

Director



A joint venture of Govt. of Gujarat & Gujarat Cancer Society

THE GUJARAT CANCER & RESEARCH INSTITUTE

[M. P. Shah Cancer Hospital]

REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE

(Recognized by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)

No. GCRI/EST/D/ 16501
January 4, 2011

To
Dr. Manmohan Singh
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
Prime Minister's Office
South Block, Raisina Hill,
New Delhi - 110 101.

Dear Sir,

Gutka sold in small pouches across the country has become a very serious health hazards to citizens of our nation. Easy availability of this mixture of toxic substance which include tobacco, Betel nut (Supari), Lime etc. is available very freely and many time at cost of less than 1 rupee. It has affected health of many people and cause cancer, anemia, Sub-Mucous Fibrosis etc. The trend of cancer after introduction of this oral cancer including mixture of toxins has changed dramatically. As per the records of our Institute before two decades cancer of the throat was number 1 type of head and neck cancer. Now it is cancer of mouth, particularly oral cavity and cheek is number 1 type of cancer in head and neck region. It also affects age group of 20 to 40 years. This causes cancer earlier than cancer caused by smoking previously. This Gutka affects the prime of the life of our citizens where their need to the society of the country is maximum. Our Institute has done many pioneering studies on this and effect of the Gutka on Buccal Mucosa also. We also appeared before the High Court of Gujarat to give the expert opinion in the petition filed against Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service and Gujarat State Transport Service to display the Pan Masala and Gutka advertisement. I am happy to inform you that the High Court of Gujarat has disposed off the application of the AMTS and GSRTC and now asked them not to display advertisements on the city and State buses.

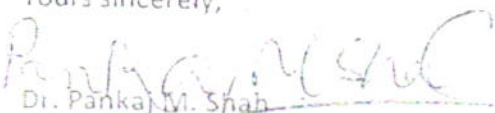
Sir, we firmly believe that Gutka is poison for health and its distribution in any form is to be banned in our country. I would like to emphasis that the country need good human resource.

As a Director of the Regional Cancer Centre and also in my personal capacity, I have observed for last 4 decades about the hazards of the tobacco and Gutka. I would like to join hands with all the tobacco control organizations in the country and recommend that the strict action should be taken in this issue.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

(11)


Dr. Pankaj M. Shah
Hon. Director

Member of UICC

DEPARTMENT OF SURGICAL ONCOLOGY
REGIONAL CANCER CENTRE : PT. B.D. SHARMA,
PGIMS, ROHTAK – 124001, Haryana.

Dr. R.K. Karwasra MBBS, MS, FIAS, FICS, FACS (USA)
Head of Surgical Oncology
Pt. B.D. Sharma, PGIMS, Rohtak.

Sub : The Gutka related Health Hazard.

Gutkha is a preparation of crushed areca nut (also called betel nut), tobacco, catechu, paraffin, lime and sweet or savory flavorings. It is consumed much like chewing tobacco, and like chewing tobacco it is considered responsible for oral cancer and other severe negative health hazards. India has 75,000 to 80,000 new cases of oral cancers a year. According to WHO Country profiles, India has one of the highest rates of oral cancer in the world and rates are still increasing. This disproportionate incidence of oral cancer has been related to the high proportion of tobacco, gutkha, khaini or pan masala chewers, a habit unique to Indians. This is true across a broad spectrum of people, rich and poor, male and female, old and young. Gutkha use begins at a very young age. It is highly addictive and a known carcinogen. Due to its often flavorful taste, easy availability and cheapness, it is popular with poor children, who can exhibit precancerous lesions at a very early age as a result. Symptoms of cancer often appear by high school or college age. At our center we have seen similar trend and have diagnosed oral cancer in as young as 15 year old.

Gutka causes chronic irritation and leads to submucous fibrosis, leucoplakia & oral cancer. Apart from this it is also responsible for chronic sore throat & poor hygiene. In the absence of Cancer registry it is not possible to quantify the exact burden of the gutkha related diseases at Regional Cancer Centre, Rohtak. However Oral cancer accounts for one-third of the total cancer cases and 90% of the patients are tobacco/gutkha/khaini or pan masala chewers.

In any educated society such habits should be shunned but rather than this strangely the habit has a high degree of social acceptability in India. A popular advertisement showed the parents of a bride and groom agreeing to greet guests with pan masala. Due to such publicity People who would not dream of smoking, have no such qualms about consuming several packets of pan masala every day, simply because they are unaware of the dangers involved. While packets of these products do bear health warnings, they are rendered almost invisible by the bright shiny packaging and the small size of the warnings.

Proliferation of companies producing these products reflects failure of our governance as a welfare state. Mumbai's annual film festival - the Bollywood Oscars - is sponsored by one of the main producers of Gutkha. What is this? We are actually exploiting our fellow human beings simply because they are illiterate and poor and we want to use them as slaves. No body wants the growth about which we keep on discussing all the time.

The government should be prepared to ban the production of these products. This will mean loss of revenue but we have to do it. The cost should be increased many fold so that they are out of reach for most of people. The children should be taught about the harmful effects of Gutkha etc. The people working in this huge industry should be rehabilitated.

(Dr. R.K. Karwasra)