

National Tobacco Quitline Service Centre, Mumbai

UNMASKING THE APPEAL

तंबाखूच्या आकर्षणाचा पर्दाफाश

TATA MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



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TO QUIT CALL NOW: 1800-11-2356

तंबाखू सोडण्यासाठी कॉल करा: १८००-११-२३५६



Centre for Cancer Epidemiology (CCE), Mumbai, India

Advanced Centre for Treatment Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC)

Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), Mumbai, India

Homi Bhabha National Institute (HBNI), Mumbai, India

With the Financial Support From Tobacco Control Division

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, New Delhi

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INTRODUCTION TO THE NEWSLETTER

“Unmasking the Truth for a Tobacco-Free World.”

Dr. Atul Budukh

Professor Epidemiology

Principle Investigator, NTQLS, Mumbai

Tobacco is a major risk factor for several chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and respiratory disorder. The WHO NCD Monitoring goals for 2025 have given countries the target to achieve a 30% reduction in tobacco use. As per the Global Tobacco Adult Survey (GATS) (2016-2017), 266.8 million adults (42.4% of men and 14.2% of women) use tobacco in either smoked or smokeless form in India. 55.4% of current smokers and 49.6% of smokeless tobacco users are planning or thinking of quitting tobacco.

Directed efforts and counselling are effective factors to support each individual who hopes to quit tobacco. With this objective, the ‘National Tobacco Quit Line Service’ (NTQLS) has been running at the Centre for Cancer Epidemiology (CCE-ACTREC), Tata Memorial Centre Mumbai, India with financial support from the Tobacco Control Division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of India (GOI), since 2019.

Tobacco users can call the toll-free Tobacco Quit Line number “1800-11-2356”, where trained counsellors will support them in tobacco deaddiction. NTQLS helps in reducing the prevalence of Tobacco use in India by assisting individuals who are willing to discontinue tobacco use. The NTQLS, Mumbai has been functional since 2019 and has helped more than 25,000 people quit tobacco habits ever since. Currently, 16 counselors and 2 supervisors are working at the Tobacco Quit Line Service - CCE, ACTREC who can provide counseling in different languages including Marathi, Hindi, Gujarati, and English.

Apart from the aforementioned services, the NTQLS Mumbai conducts virtual health education sessions for the public health department, school teachers by conducting camps, and several competitions such as essay, slogan and drawing competition. Such activities help in promoting the NTQLS as well as spread awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco consumption.

"Behind every tobacco product is a tactic designed to appeal. On World No Tobacco Day 2026, NTQLS Mumbai is 'Unmasking the Appeal.' We've teamed up with Mumbai's teachers and health experts to educate the next generation on the dangers of nicotine. Check out the third edition of our NTQLS Newsletter to see how we're tackling tobacco use and building a healthier future for our nation."

EDITORIAL

चांगल्या गोष्टी विकाव्या लागतात...वाईट गोष्टी विकाव्या लागत नाहीत

डॉ. अतुल बुडुख

प्राध्यापक व प्रभारी अधिकारी
सेंटर फॉर कॅन्सर एपिडेमिओलॉजी,
टाटा मेमोरियल सेंटर, नवी मुंबई



संध्याकाळ ६ ची वेळ होती. मी बाश्चीच्या बाजारात गेलो होतो. बाजारात जात असताना समोर गजबजलेली रहदारी दिसली. मी समोर जाऊन बघितले तर फळ विक्रेते, पालेभाज्या विक्रेते होते. त्यामध्ये तंबाखू विक्रेत्या चे पण दुकान होते. प्रत्येक जण आपआपल्या मालाचा दर सांगत होता. त्यामध्ये सुट देत होता.

केळी वाला म्हणाला ६० रु डझन केळी १०० रु. दोन डझन,
मेथी विकणारी बाई ओरडत होती, ३० रु १ मेथीची जुडी,..... ५० रु ला दोन जुड्या सांगत होती.
टोमॅटो विकणारा बोलत होता, ३० रु किलो टोमॅटो..... १०० रु ला ५ किलो देत होता.

प्रत्येक जण आपल्या मालाचा दर व सुट ओरडून सांगत होता. बरेच लोक त्यांच्याकडे जात होती. दर आणि सुट यामध्ये परत घासाघीस करत होते, वस्तू कमी किमती मध्ये मागत होते.

या सगळ्या आवाजामध्ये एक दुकान आवाज न करणारे होते. ते म्हणजे तंबाखूचे. त्या दुकानात कोणी व्यक्ती ओरडून दर सांगत नव्हता, दरामध्ये सुट ही सांगत नव्हता. मात्र गर्दी सर्व दुकानांपेक्षा जास्तच होती. कोणीही तिथे घासा-घीस करत नव्हते. प्रत्येक जण सांगेल त्या दरामध्ये तंबाखू घेत होता आणि पैसे देते होता. माणसं हिरव्या पालेभाज्या, फळे या आरोग्यासाठी पोषक गोष्टी कडे दुर्लक्ष करतात. पण ज्या तंबाखू सारख्या गोष्टी आरोग्यासाठी हानिकारक आहेत ते मात्र आवडीने सेवन करतात.

सारांश: आरोग्याच्या दृष्टीने चांगल्या असणाऱ्या
फळे व भाजीपाला ओरडून ओरडून विकाव्या
लागतात, परंतु आरोग्याच्या दृष्टीने वाईट असणारे
तंबाखू व तंबाखू-जन्य पदार्थ विकावे लागत नाहीत.



EDITORIAL

तंबाखूवरील एक विचार करायला लावणारी गोष्ट.....

डॉ. अतुल बुडुख

एका शाळेमध्ये विद्यार्थ्यांसाठी एक वेगळा प्रयोग आयोजित करण्यात आला होता. या प्रयोगासाठी विविध प्राण्यांना सहभागी करण्यात आले होते, यामध्ये गाय, म्हैस, माकड, गाढव, कोंबडी अगदी छोटी मुंगी सुद्धा सहभागी होती. सर्व प्राण्यांना विशिष्ट ठिकाणी बसवण्यात आले आणि एक तंबाखूने भरलेले टोपली ठेवण्यात आली. यापैकी कोणता प्राणी तंबाखू खात आहे का? ते पाहण्याची उत्सुकता ही मात्र विद्यार्थ्यांमध्ये वाढली होती.

थोडा वेळ गेला.....

गायीने भांड्याजवळ येऊन वास घेतला आणि शांतपणे तिकडून निघून गेली.

मग आली म्हैस ती तर ओरडत निघून गेली.

त्यानंतर माकड आले ते तर टोपली उलटी पलटी करून निघून गेले.

त्यानंतर आल्या कोंबड्या त्यांनी तर सर्व सांडलेली तंबाखू जमिनीत विखरून निघून गेल्या.

छोट्याशा मुंगीनेही तिचा मार्ग बदलला,

नंतर आले गाढव ते तर लाथ मारून निघून गेले, पण त्या तंबाखूला मात्र कोणीही स्पर्शही केला नाही.

एकामागून एक सर्व प्राण्यांनी तंबाखूपासून स्वतःला दूर ठेवले.

यानंतर प्रयोगाची शेवटची वेळ आली ती म्हणजे माणसाची.

त्याच्या समोरही तीच तंबाखू ठेवण्यात आली. मात्र माणसाने कोणताही विचार न करता ती तंबाखू सेवन केली.

हे पाहून सर्वजण स्तब्ध /आश्चर्य चकित झाले.....

ज्या माणसाला पृथ्वीवरील सर्वात बुद्धिमान प्राणी मानले जाते, ज्याला तंबाखूचे चांगले वाईट दुष्परिणाम माहिती आहेत तरी सुद्धा माणूस तंबाखूचे सेवन करत असतो आणि दुसरीकडे, बोलू न शकणारे प्राणी केवळ त्यांच्या नैसर्गिक बुद्धीने तंबाखूपासून दूर राहिले.

सारांश: मनुष्य सोडून कोणताही प्राणी तंबाखू खात नाही ज्याला प्राणी, पक्षी तोंड लावत नाहीत ते माणूस मात्र अगदी आवडीने आणि प्रेमाने सेवन करतो. जे प्राण्यांना समजले, ते माणसांना कधी समजणार....!



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

Tobacco Prevalence in India

Mrs. Suvarna Kolekar

Social Investigator, CCE



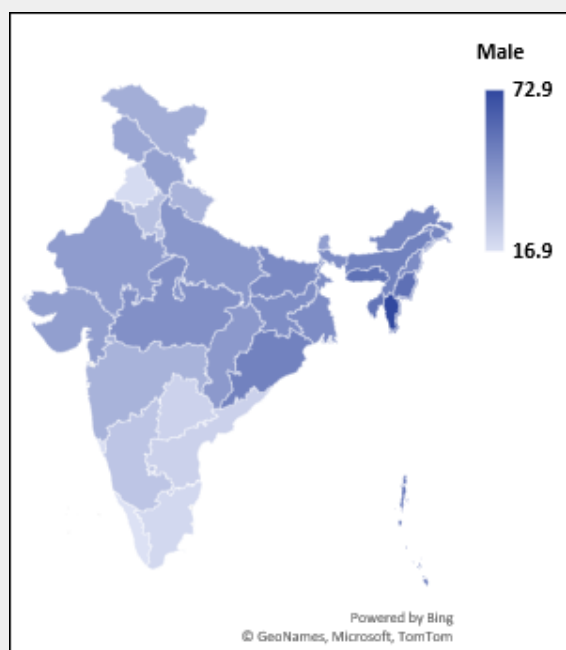
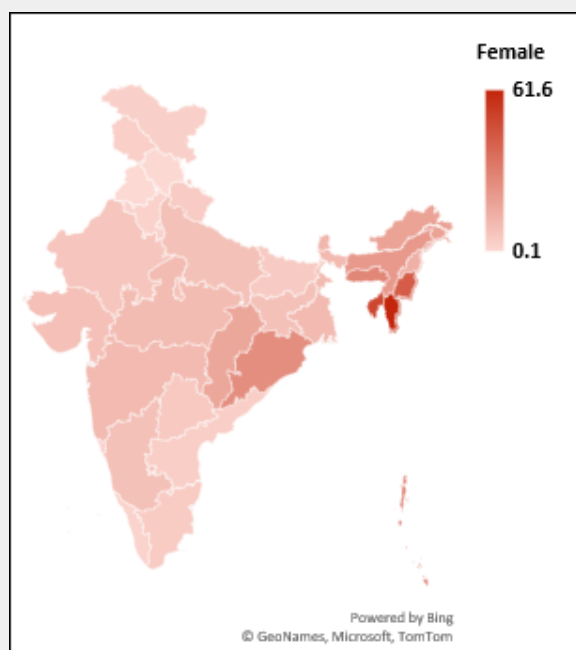
Tobacco is a major risk factor for several **Non-Communicable Diseases** such as **hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer**. Therefore, its prevalence is regularly monitored through surveys such as the Global Adult Tobacco Survey, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey, and the National Family Health Survey, conducted in collaboration with Government agencies.

In the latest round of the **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5)**, conducted for the years **2019-21**, **Tobacco** prevalence was **38%** among **men** and **8.9%** among **women**, of age **15 years and above**, in India.

Tobacco prevalence was **higher** among **men**, ranging from **16.9% to 72.9%**, in comparison to **women**, ranging from **0.1% to 61.6%**.

North-eastern states such as **Mizoram (male: 72.9%, female: 61.6%)**, **Tripura (male: 56.9%, female: 50.4%)**, and **Manipur (male: 58.1%, female: 43.1%)** report the highest prevalence of tobacco use in the country.

In **Maharashtra**, **tobacco** consumption was **higher** in **rural populations** compared to **urban populations**. Among **women** aged **15 years and above**, the prevalence of tobacco use was **14.7%** in rural areas and **6.6%** in **urban** areas, with an **overall prevalence** of **10.9%**. Among **men**, tobacco use was **40.6%** in **rural area** compared to **26.2%** in **urban** areas, resulting in an overall prevalence of **33.8%**.



Data Source: National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21. Mumbai: IIPS; 2021 Available from: <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR375/FR375.pdf>

Tobacco- A Costly Habit, A Deadly Return

Mr. Prithviraj Kadam
Sr. Research Coordinator



- The Tobacco industry remains one of the few industries that profits while gradually harming its own consumers. Every puff, chew, refill, or packet silently drains both health and finances, often without people realizing the cumulative burden over time.
- A person spending just **₹30** on a **packet of bidi** spends approximately **₹900 per month, ₹10,800 per year**, and nearly **₹54,000 over five years**.
- Similarly, smoking even **one cigarette** costing **₹12 per day** amounts to around **₹360 per month, ₹4,320 per year**, and **₹21,600 over five years**. What appears to be a “small daily expense” quietly transforms into a major financial drain over time.
- Smokeless tobacco products such as **masheri, gutka, khaini, zarda, mawa, and kharra**, usually costing between **₹5 - ₹40 per packet**, may appear inexpensive individually. However, if a person consumes **two ₹20 packets daily**, the expenditure rises to nearly **₹1,200 per month, ₹14,400 per year**, and approximately **₹72,000 over five years** enough to purchase healthier food, educational resources, or support household needs.
- Modern addictions now come with modern price tags. E-cigarettes and vapes, aggressively marketed with attractive flavours and “cool” lifestyles, may cost approximately **₹120 per refill** or flavour. This translates to nearly **₹3,600 per month, ₹43,200 annually**, and almost **₹2.16 lakh over five years**. Ironically, consumers spend large amounts of money on products specifically designed to damage their lungs while advertisements continue selling the illusion of glamour and sophistication.
- People work hard to earn money, yet addiction often redirects those earnings toward disease, dependency, hospital visits, and emotional distress for families. Behind the colourful packaging and attractive advertisements lies the harsh reality of **rising expenses, cancer risk, poor health, and preventable suffering**.
- That same money could instead support healthier choices such as **balanced nutrition, fitness, education, savings, travel, hobbies, or family wellbeing**. The real luxury is not addiction. It is **good health, financial security, and peace of mind**.
- Choose awareness over addiction. Protect your health, protect your finances, and commit to a tobacco-free life forever.

Message:

Spend wisely. Breathe freely. Choose health over addiction.

तंबाखू चा धूर काळा

Dr. Suvarna Gore

Scientific Officer



तंबाखू चा धूर काळा,
हा करतो हळूहळू घात जीवनाचा,
क्षणिक सुखाची असते हि फसवणूक,
पण, आरोग्यावर हा करतो आघात अचूक....

बिडी-सिगारेटचा झुरका बदलतो ओठांचा रंग,
अन करी हृदय आणि फुफ्फुसांवर आघात,
खैनी-गुटखा-मावा देई दुर्गंधी श्वास,
अन करी तोंडाच्या आरोग्याचा नाश....

याची सवय हळूच करते नायनाट आरोग्याचा,
अन हिरावून घेते सुखी आयुष्याचा,
तंबाखू खाणाऱ्यांनो उठा, आता घ्या नवा निर्धार,
तंबाखू सेवनाला द्या कायमचा नकार....

निर्धार करा स्वच्छ श्वासाचा आणि निरोगीपणाचा,
ध्यास घ्या तंबाखूमुक्त जीवनाचा,
हसा जगा आनंदाने युक्त,
तंबाखू सोडून आरोग्य मुक्त जगा....

आजच बोला मनाशी ठाम,
तंबाखूला नाही जीवनाला होकार.



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

The Dream that woke Mukesh Up!

A story about the moment it is never too late to choose life

Komal Raut

Counselor (TQLS)



The hospital corridor smelled of antiseptic and dread. Mukesh lay on the bed, staring up at the pale ceiling, watching the fluorescent light flicker once, twice as if it too were uncertain whether to hold on. His chest ached with a heaviness that no amount of willpower could lift. Around him, the world moved fast. Nurses in white streaked past. Doctors spoke in urgent, half-finished sentences. Machines beeped without mercy.

Somewhere outside the room, he could hear his family. He didn't need to see them to know what they looked like, his wife's hands pressed together, his children's wide, frightened eyes searching every face that walked out of a door, his friends standing awkwardly in the hallway, unsure of what to say or where to look.

And then through the chaos a voice cut through everything. His wife's voice. Broken. Exhausted. Carrying years of worry in every syllable. "I asked him to stop. I begged him. So many times. He didn't listen... and look where we are today." Mukesh's wife, outside the hospital room. The words landed like stones. Mukesh felt each one.

The diagnosis had come that morning, stark and unsparing: Advanced lung Cancer. The doctors hadn't sugar-coated it. His family had gone pale. His children, his little ones didn't fully understand, but they understood enough to be scared. They hovered near the doorway, trying to spot their father, trying to find him with their eyes as though seeing him would make everything alright.

As they wheeled him toward the operation theatre, Mukesh's mind began to drift. The anaesthesia was starting to take hold, pulling him backward through time not gently, but urgently, as if it wanted him to see something before it was too late.

Why didn't I listen to her? Why didn't I listen to my children? He saw himself as a boy in college. A group of friends loud, carefree, eager to belong. Someone passing around a cigarette.

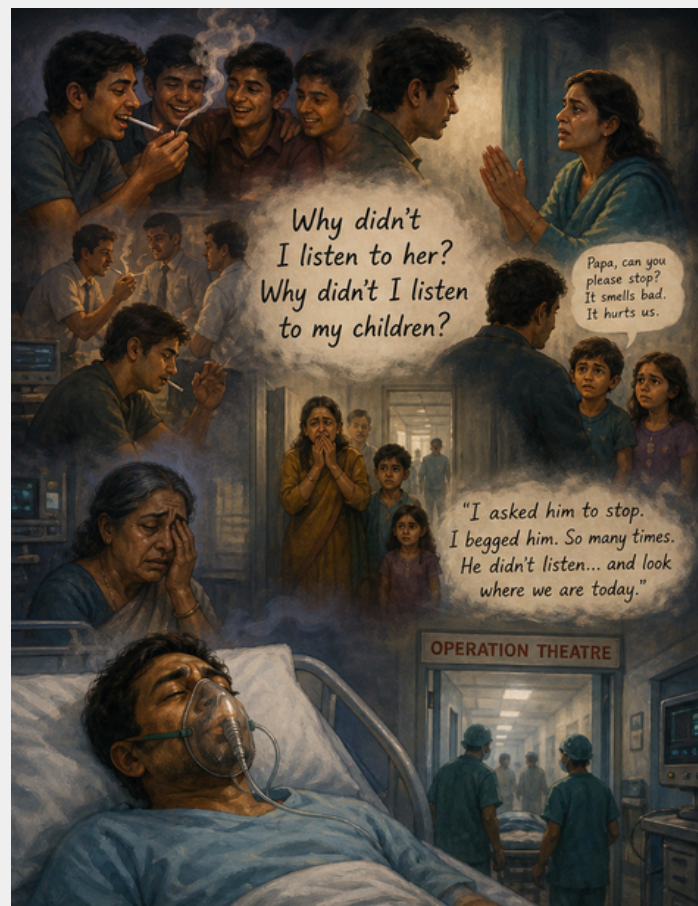


Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

Continued

The movies had made it look easy, effortless, almost romantic. The heroes on screen always had one hanging from their lips. Nobody told them it was a costume, not a lifestyle. Nobody told them that what looked like freedom was actually a leash, slowly tightening. **I could have said no. Right there. That first puff. I could have just said no.**

He saw his mother's face the day she found out. The silence that fell between them. She had stopped speaking to him for weeks. Not out of anger alone, but out of a grief she didn't know how to carry. Even that hadn't been enough to make him quit.

My colleagues at the office. The smoke breaks we all took together. It felt like bonding. It felt like belonging. But where are they now? Are they standing outside that room too, wondering what they could have done differently?

He saw his children asking him, in that quiet, careful way children have when they're trying not to upset a parent **"Papa, can you please stop? It smells bad. It hurts us."** He had smiled, ruffled their hair, and promised to try. He had not tried.

The theatre doors swung open. The light above was blinding. Mukesh felt the tears before he realised he was crying. I want to go home. I want to see them grow up. I want a second chance. Please. Just one more chance.

And then darkness.

Mukesh jolted awake.

His heart was hammered. His breath came in short, sharp gasps. He looked around wildly, desperately and slowly, the familiar shapes of his office came into focus.

His desk. His chair. The hum of the air conditioner. The faint sound of keyboards from the floor outside. A dream. It had all been a dream.

He pressed his palms flat on the desk, grounding himself. His hands were shaking. Slowly, he looked down. There, between his fingers, was a box of cigarettes. He had been about to go for a smoke break. For a long moment, he simply stared at it. He thought about the hospital room that didn't exist yet. He thought about his wife's voice, cracking under the weight of helplessness. He thought about his children's eyes searching for him from a doorway. He thought about his mother's silence. Not yet. But someday if I don't change, yes. He put the box down. He picked up his phone instead.

Continued



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

His fingers, still trembling slightly, dialed a number mentioned on the box.

National Tobacco Quitline Service 1800-11-2356

Free. Confidential. Available to everyone.

"Hello, ma'am," Mukesh said, his voice quiet but steady. "What seemed cool back then... I understand now that it needs to be corrected. I want to spend a happy life with my family. I want to be healthy for my children. I don't want everyone suffering. Please help me quit my habit"

There was a pause on the line. And then a calm, warm voice said: "You've made the right call. Welcome to **National Tobacco Quitline Services of Tata Memorial Center, Mumbai**"

Mukesh's story is a dream but the cancer it warns of is not. Every year, millions of families live the version of this story that doesn't end at a desk. They live it in real hospital corridors, in real waiting rooms, in real silences that stretch on long after the patient is gone.

Tobacco kills more than 8 million people globally every year. In India alone, over 1.3 million deaths annually are linked to tobacco use. What begins as a puff in college peer pressure, glamour, the need to belong quietly hardens into an addiction that is, social, and deeply difficult to break alone.

This World No Tobacco Day, as we unite under the theme "Unmasking the Appeal - Countering Nicotine and Tobacco Addiction," we are asked to do something important: look past the packaging. Look past the lifestyle that the industry has spent decades carefully constructing. See the product for what it is and see the person behind the habit for who they are: someone who deserves support, not shame.

Quitting is hard. Nobody who has truly tried will tell you otherwise. But help exists. Counseling, support lines, medical guidance the tools are available. What is needed is imagining a future worth protecting, of picking up the phone instead of the cigarette. This moment Mukesh had at his desk and the trained counselors at the National Tobacco Quitline Service together can transform the person and guide them to a better tobacco-free life.

When Awareness Arrives Late, But Not Too Late

Gauri Akre

Supervisor (TQLS)



In the crowded streets of Mumbai, where survival often takes priority over self-care, a 54-year-old fruit vendor spent decades building his life - one day at a time. Like many daily wage workers his routine was simple, predictable, and demanding. What quietly accompanied him through these years however was a habit he never truly questioned-tobacco use for over 30 years. He did not see it as addiction. For him it was part of life. His journey into the healthcare system did not begin with awareness but with neglect. A small swelling on his left cheek and a lump appeared but like many he chose to ignore it. Work came first. Pain could wait....Until one day it couldn't.

When the discomfort turned into severe pain he approached a local doctor who after initial examination, referred him to Tata Memorial Centre for further evaluation. It was through a medical help group that he was connected for assistance - initially for documentation and hospital process. At that point he was calm. Almost too calm. He had stopped consuming tobacco recently but without fully understanding why. He followed instructions, completed basic investigations, and within a few days he was advised surgery.

The speed of decisions overwhelmed him yet he didn't voice resistance - only quiet confusion. **"Why operation? Why radiation?"** These questions stayed with him but without urgency. The turning point was not in a diagnosis report - but in a hospital ward. When he entered the ward for formalities, he saw patients around him - faces marked by swelling, stitches, and the visible weight of treatment. Some were recovering from surgery, others preparing for it. In that moment, reality no longer felt distant. It became personal. Fear replaced calm. Silence replaced questions. Despite prior explanations from doctors the seriousness of his condition finally reached him - not through words but through observation.

He felt numb, scared, and trapped in a situation he had never imagined for himself. Counseling at this stage was not about giving new information-it was about helping him accept what he now understood. Through multiple conversations he was gently guided to see treatment not as punishment, but as an opportunity. An opportunity to heal. An opportunity to reclaim control. What followed was not an easy journey. Alongside physical treatment, there was an emotional burden he carried deeply- **GUILT**.

Guilt for his habit.

Guilt for his condition.

Guilt for the impact on his family - his wife and three children.

At one point he expressed something many patients feel but rarely say aloud: "Because of my mistake, others are suffering." This is where empathy becomes as important as medicine. He was reassured that illness is not a moral failure.

Continued



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

That human beings make choices sometimes without full awareness - but they also have the ability to change. That seeking treatment is not regret - it is responsibility.

Gradually his mindset began to shift. The treatment process brought its own challenges. Dental complications required removal of teeth, affecting something as basic as eating. For a daily wage worker whose strength depends on physical health, this was emotionally difficult. There were moments of frustration, discomfort, and quiet sadness. But he continued.....Not with dramatic determination, but with steady acceptance. There was no sudden transformation. No single moment where everything changed.

Instead there were small consistent steps - showing up for treatment following medical advice and slowly letting go of the past. In time he completed his treatment and was discharged. His story is not extraordinary in scale - but it is deeply meaningful in truth. It reflects a reality seen across many lives: tobacco does not appear harmful in the beginning. It blends into routine, into stress, into daily survival. The damage however builds silently until it demands attention. But his journey also reflects something equally important - change is possible even when awareness comes late. Today, his story stands not just as a reminder of risk but as a message of hope and responsibility.

That acknowledging one's past is not the end - it is the beginning of a better decision.
Moral Reflection: Not everyone gets the chance early. But when the chance comes, it should not be ignored.

धुएँ में खोती ज़िंदगी

Alisha Khilare

Counselor NTQLS



शुरुआत हुई थी हँसी में, दोस्तों की महफ़िल में,
"एक कश ले ले" बस बात थी इतनी सी दिल में।
ना सोचा था तब, ये आदत बन जाएगी,
हँसती-खेलती ज़िंदगी यूँ सिमट जाएगी।

धीरे-धीरे धुआँ मेरी पहचान बन गया,
हर दर्द, हर तनाव का आसान बहाना बन गया।
सुबह की चाय हो या रात का सन्नाटा,
हर पल साथ रहा ये ज़हर का नाता।

खाँसी बढ़ी तो माँ ने चुपके से पूछा,
"सब ठीक है ना बेटा?" ये सुन दिल भी टूटा।
आँखें झुकीं, जवाब कहीं खो गया,
सच था सामने, पर मैं ही रो गया।

आईने में देखा तो चेहरा बदल चुका था,
मुस्कान कहीं दूर, डर दिल में पल चुका था।
तब समझ आया, ये खेल नहीं आग है,
जो धीरे-धीरे हर साँस को खा जाता है।

एक दिन हिम्मत करके खुद से कहा,
"बस अब नहीं... अब और नहीं सहा।"
हर दिन लड़ाई थी, हर रात इम्तिहान,
पर जीत की चाह ने दिया मुझे नया आसमान।

आज भी याद है वो पहला कश लिया था,
जिसने मुझसे मेरा ही वजूद छीन लिया था।
पर अब हर साँस में सुकून सा लगता है,
क्योंकि ये दिल अब धुएँ से आज़ाद लगता है।

सीख:

**तंबाकू पल भर का सहारा देता है,
पर उम्र भर का दर्द दे जाता है।**

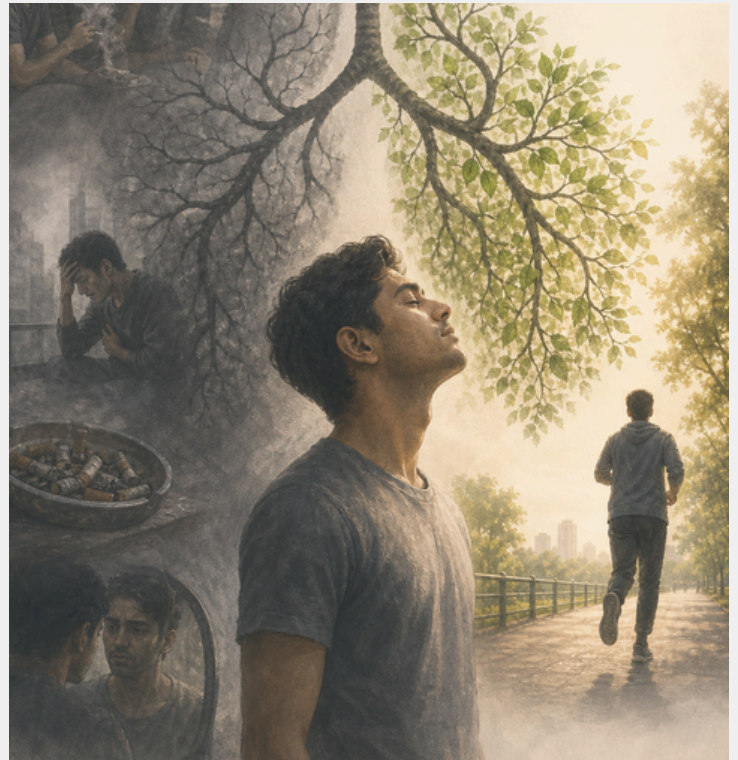


Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

तोंडाला आग: एक निरागस इशारा

Sonam Salave

Counselor NTQLS



संध्याकाळचा दगदगता प्रवास,
आई-वडिलांचा मायेचा सहवास...
लहानशी मुलगी, निरागस डोळे,
रात्रीच्या रस्त्यावर पाहते वेगवेगळे सोहळे...
आईला म्हणाली बोट दाखवून,
“त्या माणसाच्या तोंडाला आग लागलीय”

थोडी घाबरली, दचकली...
घरचीच ती पहिली शाळा,
आईने समजावलं प्रेमानं हळूच तिला...
“तो धूर आहे राणी, नाही खरी आग,
पण त्यात दडलाय आरोग्यासाठी मोठा
धोका जाग...”

धूर होता काळा, आग होती लाल,
भविष्यात आरोग्यासाठी उभी करावी लागेल ढाल...

न कळे तिला व्यसन, न कळे त्याची सवय,
तिला दिसला फक्त धोक्याचाच डाव...
तंबाखू, सिगारेट: विषारी घटकांचा साठा,
हळूहळू करतात आरोग्याचा तोटा...

**निरागस त्या शब्दांत दडलाय संदेश,
“आग लागलीय”**

**तंबाखूमुक्त वातावरण देऊया साऱ्यांना,
निरोगी, सुंदर बालपण देऊया आपल्या मुलांना**



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

नवा श्वास

Tanushree Kadam
Counselor NTQLS



धुराच्या त्या रेषांमध्ये, हरवतं आयुष्य हळूहळू,
क्षणिक सुखासाठी, आपणच तंबाखूमुळे जळू।

तंबाखू मुक्त होऊन, मिळवू शकतो नव आयुष्य नव
स्वप्न।

ओठांवर तंबाखू, पण मनात भीती खोल,
हसत जगायचं होतं, पण मन झालं अबोल।

टाटा स्मारक केंद्राची राष्ट्रीय तंबाखू मुक्ती
हेल्पलाइन देते साथ,
प्रत्येक पावलावर, हात धरून उभ राहते,
अंधारातून उजेडाकडे घेऊन जाणारी ही वाट।

आईच्या डोळ्यांतील स्वप्न, अजूनही वाट पाहतात,
“थांब आता” म्हणत, शांत आश्रु गळतात।

आजच ठरव, स्वतःसाठी, कुटुंबासाठी,
निरोगी आरोग्यासाठी, आनंदी आयुष्यासाठी।

तुझ्यासाठीच आहे ही एक संधी खास,
तंबाखू सोड, घे आयुष्याचा नवा श्वास।

कारण खरा विजय तोच, जो स्वतःवर मिळवतो,
तंबाखू सोडून, जीवनाला पुन्हा नव्याने जगतो।

एक फोन, एक निर्णय, बदलू शकतो तुझे जीवन,



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

हे व्यसनच मला खातंय

Shweta Pagare

Counselor NTQLS



भरपूर दिवसांनी आज मी मलाच भेटलो,
मीच सवय लावून घेतलेल्या या व्यसनात मीच कसा
अडकलो?

चालू तर मीच केलं मग का बरं सुटेना,
सुटू कसा यातून हेच मला कळेना?

टेन्शन होतं थोडं मन होत भरलेलं,
जिवलग मित्र म्हणाले घे रे थोडी तंबाखू सुटेल रे तुझं कोड,

एक मन म्हणाल माझं अरे हे चुकीचं,
पण मग वडील तर खातात त्यात काय चुकीचं?

मनात तर भीती होती थोडी,
पण तंबाखू ची मात्र होती गोडी,
नको नको म्हणत घेतलीच तंबाखू थोडी....

तंबाखू खाऊन वाटलं होतं बरं,
पण त्यात मी अडकलो हे सुद्धा खरं....

आता असं वाटतंय हे प्रमाण खूप वाढतंय,
नकळत का होईना हे व्यसनच मला खातंय....

अरे थांबव आता थोडं तरी किती तंबाखू खातोय,
यामुळेच तर तुला दमा अस्थमा चा त्रास होतोय....

वेळ नाही गेली बरं अजून
कॉल कर **राष्ट्रीय तंबाखू मुक्ती**
हेल्पलाइनला (१८००-११-२३५६)
घे बरं मदत त्यांची होतील ते तुझा आधार....



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

तंबाखूला नकार, आरोग्याला स्वीकार

Amit Kharat

Counselor NTQLS



आज मी तंबाखू या विषयावर सांगणार आहे. तंबाखू आपल्या आरोग्यासाठी खूप घातक आहे. यामुळे कॅन्सर आणि फुफ्फुसांचे आजार होतात. अनेक लोक मित्रांच्या संगतीमुळे किंवा उत्सुकतेपोटी तंबाखू वापरण्यास सुरुवात करतात. पण नंतर ती एक धोकादायक सवय बनते. ती फक्त त्या व्यक्तीला नाही तर त्यांच्या कुटुंबालाही नुकसान करते.

आपण तंबाखूपासून दूर राहिले पाहिजे आणि इतरांनाही सोडण्यासाठी मदत केली पाहिजे. निरोगी जीवन हीच आपण स्वतःला देऊ शकणारी सर्वात मोठी भेट आहे.

जर तुम्हाला तंबाखू सोडायची असेल, तर **टाटा स्मारक केंद्राची राष्ट्रीय तंबाखू मुक्ती हेल्पलाइन १८००-११-२३५६** वर मोफत संपर्क करा. प्रशिक्षित समुपदेशक तुमची मदत करतील आणि तुम्हाला तंबाखू सोडण्यासाठी मार्गदर्शन देतील.

म्हणून

“चला, आपण सर्वजण आज एक संकल्प करूया:

तंबाखूला नकार देऊया!”

तंबाखू चारोळी

Arjun Jangale

Counselor NTQLS



तंबाखू, गुटखा, सिगारेट मुळे तरुण मुले भरकटली वाट,
तुला काय वाटतंय क्षणभराची नशा कि आयुष्यभराची साथ!!
या नशेमुळे अनेकांना झाला कॅन्सर
पण वेसनापुढे झाले सगळे हतबल!!
घरामध्ये आली फक्त चिंतेची लाट,
जागा हो व्यसन सोड धर प्रगतीची वाट !!



मैत्रीचा आरसा

Rohan Dhivare

Counselor NTQLS



सुरुवात होते एका लहानशा घोटाने किंवा धुराने,
"अरे घे ना, काही नाही होत," अशा खोट्या सुराने.

ज्या हाताने सावरायला हवे होते पडताना तुला,
त्याच हाताने व्यसनाच्या गर्तेत ढकलले मला.
व्यसनाची ती पहिली पायरी, मित्राच्या सोबतीने चढलास,
आणि नकळत स्वतःच्या आयुष्याचा पाया आपणच
खणलास.

व्यसना ची सुरवात मात्र देतो लावून स्वतःच्या पैश्याने,
विचार प्रश्न स्वतः ला, व्यसना पासून जर झाला आजार
तर होईल का रे तयार खर्चायला.....

मित्र, एक असतो व्यसनाचा सोबती
जो म्हणतो, "एकदा ट्राय करायला काय हरकत आहे?"

पण त्याच ठिकाणी
एक म्हणतो, "हे तुझ्या आरोग्यासाठी
घातक आहे रे,
काळजी घे."

एक जो फक्त पाट्यांमध्ये आणि मजेत सोबत असतो.
आणि एक जो संकटात आणि प्रगतीच्या वाटेवर सोबत
असतो.

एक फक्त जो तुमच्या कमकुवतपणाचा फायदा घेतो.
आणि एक जो तुम्हाला तुमच्या सामर्थ्याची जाणीव
करून देतो.

एक वाट दाखवणार आणि एक वाट लावणार असतो,
म्हणूनच म्हणतात, प्रत्येक मित्र जरी असला 'जरूरी',
तरी चुकीच्या मित्रापासून राखलेली बरी 'दूरी'.



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

एक पुडीची किंमत

Kalpesh Yadav

Administrator NTQLS

लोक फोनवर आम्हाला विचारतात
 “तंबाखू विकलीच का जाते?”
 “सरकार बंदी का घालत नाही?”
 “एका बाजूला कमाई, तर दुसऱ्या बाजूला जनजागृती,
 ही दुहेरी भूमिका का?”
 आम्ही शांतपणे सांगतो...
 तुमचा प्रश्न अगदी योग्य आहे, पण त्याचं उत्तरही ऐका.
 दुकानात ठेवलेलं प्रत्येक विष
 कोणाच्या मजबुरीमुळे नाही,
 तर आपल्या सवयीमुळे विकलं जातं.
 विचार करा...
 जर कुणी हात पुढेच केला नाही,
 तर ती पुडी स्वतःहून तोंडापर्यंत येईल का?
 जर कुणी खिशातून पैसेच काढले नाहीत,
 तर मृत्यू दुकानातून घरापर्यंत पोहोचेल का?
 आपणच आपल्या ओठांवर
 त्या विषाची पहिली रेष ओढली...
 घराची चिंता, कामाचा ताण,
 प्रत्येक वेदनेवर तंबाखूला औषध मानलं.
 पण जी गोष्ट दुःख कमी करणार होती,
 तीच हळूहळू दुःखाचं मूळ बनली.
 जी सुरुवातीला फक्त सवय होती,
 तीच नंतर चिंता आणि आजार बनली.
 सवय लागली...
 सवयीचं गरजेत रूपांतर झालं,
 आणि गरजेचं शेवटी आजारात.
 दातांचा रंग गेला,
 ओठांची चमक हरवली,
 तोंडातील ताजेपणा निघून गेला,
 आणि नकळत आत्मविश्वासही कमी झाला.
 पण सर्वात मोठी वेदना तेव्हा होते...

जेव्हा हॉस्पिटलच्या बेडवर पडलेला एक बाप
 आपल्या मुलाला मिठीही मारू शकत नाही.
 आणि त्याचं छोटंसं मूल विचारतं
 “बाबा... आता घरी कधी येणार?”
 तेव्हा त्या बापाकडे उत्तरच उरत नाही.
 आज मी सरकारला नाही,
 तर तुम्हालाच हाक देण्यासाठी आलो आहे...
 दुकानं बंद झाली किंवा नाही झाली,
 पण आपण आपल्या वाईट सवयी बंद करूया.
 मित्र आग्रह करतील तर नकार द्या,
 ताण आला तरी धैर्य ठेवा.
 काहीही झालं तरी मनावर नियंत्रण ठेवा
 आणि तंबाखूपासून दूर राहा.
 चला, आज एक शपथ घेऊया
 ना गुटखा, ना बीडी, ना धूर निवडूया.
 हे जीवन देवाने दिलेली अमूल्य देणगी आहे,
 आता विष नाही, तर आरोग्य निवडूया.
 कारण दुकानं बंद करण्यापूर्वी
 आपण स्वतःच्या सवयी बंद करूया.
 तंबाखू सोडण्याची सुरुवात
 सरकार नाही...
 तर आपण स्वतःपासून करूया।



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

Unmasking the Illusion: One Call. One Choice. A Tobacco-Free Life.

Sakshi Tondwalker
Supervisor (TQLS)



Every day at the Tobacco Quit line, the phone rings with stories: some filled with determination, others with hesitation, and many with silent struggle. As counselors, we work at the crossroads of addiction and change, assisting people to "unmask" the appeal of tobacco and reclaim control of their lives. For many people, tobacco is a stress reliever, a buddy during loneliness, or even a sign of "coolness" But underneath this facade lies a tremendous addiction that silently takes control. The appeal feels genuine. "It helps me relax," "I can't focus without it," or "It's just one cigarette" are frequent beliefs. However, via counseling, we gradually begin to peel back these layers.

Nicotine, the principal ingredient in tobacco, acts like a trickster. It provides a brief rush of relief or pleasure, leaving people feeling calm or focused. But this emotion does not last. Soon, the body begins to need more, transforming a minor habit into dependency.

What is the truth? Tobacco does not relieve stress; it simply masks it for a while. So, why do individuals continue? Sometimes it's peer pressure or curiosity. It often becomes a routine: something associated with tea breaks, friendships, or feelings. Quitting gradually becomes more difficult than starting. But there is hope, and it begins with consistent steps. Developing better behaviors such as walking, chatting to someone, or deep breathing can gradually replace the impulse. Friends, relatives, or a counselor can all provide valuable support.

Relapse is also part of the journey. Instead of seeing it as failure, we reframe it as learning by helping callers understand what led to it and how to move forward stronger. Working as a counselor at the **National Tobacco Quit Line Service at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai** is not just about quitting tobacco rather it is about restoring confidence, building motivation, and empowering individuals to make healthier choices. Each call is a reminder that behind every addiction is a human story, and behind every story is the potential for change. And sometimes, ***all it takes is one conversation to begin that change.***



Image Source: Generated using Gemini AI with editor-directed prompts.

How to Handle Tobacco Cravings

Arya Jade

Counselor (TQLS)



In Clinical Psychology we have always been taught that everyone has **Core Needs**, its the **Strategy** that one uses to achieve those needs. Therefore, when the callers call us at the **NTQLS, Tata Memorial Hospital Mumbai**, and tell the counselors that they *need* tobacco, it's important to understand their Core Needs that tobacco consumption is fulfilling and we need to help them see that consuming tobacco is a **Maladaptive Strategy** to reach their needs and we must show them alternate strategies.

Here are some ways that the Counselors at the NTQLS recommend to deal with cravings:

1. Delay and Distract Method

Cravings usually peak and fade within minutes. In which case, one must tell themselves to wait for 10 minutes, move physically: go to another room, walk outside, exercise. Start a small task immediately.

Why it works: You interrupt the automatic cue and each time you delay successfully, that habit pathway weakens.

2. Replace the ritual, not just the nicotine

A lot of tobacco use is tied to routines. Such as while drinking tea/coffee, after meals, with friends, office smokebreaks and when stressed. One must Replace elements of these routines. Such as having carom or fennel seeds after meals, chewing gum while driving or having a biscuit with tea.

Why it works: The brain often misses the routine more than the tobacco itself. So modifying routine is the key.

3. Change your environment

Your surroundings trigger cravings automatically. So, throw away tobacco products, remove lighters/ashtrays, wash clothes, bedsheets, car interiors and reduce exposure to people smoking around you.

Why it works: Environmental cues activate conditioned responses before conscious thought even starts. So reducing exposure to these cues inhibits cravings.

4. Use oral substitutes for the mouth habit

Part of addiction is the hand-to-mouth and oral fixation pattern. Useful substitutes, such as sugar-free gum, fennel seeds, carrom seeds, cold water through a straw, toothpicks, fruits or salad.

Why it works: This gives the brain a replacement sensory behavior while cravings pass.

5. Learn stress management early

Stress is one of the biggest relapse triggers. Hence, using mindfulness based breathing work, meditation and grounding exercises will give callers healthier strategies to deal with stress. Simple evidence-based methods such as progressive muscle relaxation and body scan relaxation also helps.

Why it works: These techniques activate the Para symphetic Nervous System which relieves anxiety and stress biologically.

6. Expect withdrawal peaks in the first few days

Knowing the timeline and being prepared reduces surprises and prevents panic, one must be aware of the possible symptoms such as irritability, restlessness, headaches, stronger appetite, trouble focusing, anxiety, insomnia etc. Withdrawals actually mean improvement, it's a sign that your nervous system is re-calibrating.

Typical pattern:

- Day 1-3: strongest physical withdrawal
- Week 1-3: mood swings and habit cravings
- Later: mostly trigger-based cravings

7. Watch out for the “just one” trap: Most relapses begin with: “just one puff”, “only socially”, “only today”. One must not negotiate like this with their cravings.

Why it's risky: Nicotine rapidly reactivates old reward pathways and cue associations. One lapse can restart automatic cravings very quickly.

8. Track progress visibly: Tracking creates positive reinforcement. It shows you your path out of the addiction is possible. So track everything, all the positive changes.

Track:

- days tobacco-free
- money saved
- cravings survived
- energy improvements
- breathing improvements

Why it's useful: Visible progress helps motivation during difficult periods. Write it down in an App or a notebook.

9. Healthy Lifestyle matters more than people expect

Helpful habits like Regular sleep schedule, Nutrition, Hydration, Exercise and good social connections play a huge supporting role in this film of deaddiction.

10. However, If cravings remain severe, one must go seek a doctor's opinion.

A mindful approach to tobacco cessation

Jijai Kokane

Counselor (TQLS)



Quitting any addiction is rarely just a physical challenge it is an emotional one too. In my experience working with clients on this journey, I have found that the most effective tools are often a little uncomfortable ones. These are the approaches that have made a real difference in my practice here at **Tata Memorial Hospital's National Tobacco Quitline Service Mumbai**.

1. Feel it to heal it!

I ask my clients to write down their thoughts and observe which parts of their body feel stiff or triggered when they experience restlessness, irritation, upset, loneliness, or anger while quitting their addiction. This practice encourages reflection and mindfulness of bodily sensations, which aids in emotional regulation.

I motivate my clients by reminding them that their journal will never judge them the way people sometimes do it. Your book will always listen, help them feel lighter, and support them in processing their emotions. This in turn helps them find solutions to uncomfortable emotions rather than reaching for cigarettes or tobacco, which numbs the body and mind. That numbness itself can reinforce addictive behaviour, as individuals begin to prefer feeling numb over sitting with difficult emotions such as stress, cravings, and restlessness.

Journaling is a simple yet powerful self-help tool that promotes mindfulness and encourages independence in the client's recovery journey.

2. What If Falling Back is Part of Moving Forward?

When it comes to addiction, consistency is key but consistency does not mean perfection. Progress in recovery is rarely linear, and expecting it to be so can set clients up for unnecessary disappointment.

One of the most important things I encourage my clients to embrace is flexibility; the freedom to make mistakes, reflect, forgive themselves, and begin again. Failure is not shameful; it is inevitable. We are humans, after all. Quitting an addiction is a deeply complex process that demands motivation, self-compassion, empathy, and forgiveness.

In my counseling sessions, I often remind clients that it is okay if some days are harder than others and if they end up smoking more than their decided limit, or if life simply gets in the way. What matters is not the slip, but the decision to try again the next day.

That willingness to keep going, even imperfectly, is what makes all the difference in the long run.

3. You do not have to do this alone

One of the most underrated tools in the journey of quitting tobacco is having the right people around you. In my experience working with clients, I have noticed that those who have even one person - be it your 'panwala' who refuses to sell you or a friend, a family member, or a colleague who genuinely understands and supports their journey tend to do significantly better than those who try to quit alone.

I often tell my clients that you do not need an entire village you just need one safe person. Someone who will not judge you on your difficult days, who will celebrate your small wins with you, and who will remind you of how far you have come when you feel like giving up.

Quitting tobacco can feel like a deeply lonely process, especially when cravings hit at unexpected moments. Having someone to call, text, or simply sit with in those moments can make all the difference.

However, I also acknowledge that not everyone has access to such support. Some clients come from environments where tobacco use is normalised or even encouraged by those around them. In these cases, I encourage them to find their support elsewhere whether through our other counseling line called 'Tele Manas' or their therapist, a support group, or even a journal that always listens without judgement. Ultimately, no one should have to walk this road alone.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER: Anganewadi Camp

On **22nd & 23rd Feb 2025** Tobacco Quitline ***Awareness Campaign*** was organized at **Anganewadi, Sindhudurg**. The aim of the camp was to create awareness among the Devotees, villagers, shop owners etc. regarding the harmful effects of tobacco.



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER: World No Tobacco Day 2025



On the occasion of World No Tobacco Day Tata Memorial Centre had organized a Tobacco Quitline ***Awareness and Screening Campaign*** at **Mankhurdh Railway Station: 29th May, 2025** Screening **1500** Individuals.



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER: Pandharpur Camp



On the occasion of Ashadhi Ekadashi on **3rd July and 8th July, 2025** ***Awareness camp*** for The Harmful Effects of Tobacco and Oral ***Screening Camp*** At Pandharpur, Solapur, Maharashtra Screening **5000 Individuals**.



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER: Gondavle Camp



On the occasion of the Punyatithi of Shri Bhrahma Chaitanya Gondavalekar Maharaj Tata Memorial Centre had organized a Tobacco Quitline ***Awareness and Screening Campaign*** at Gondavale, Budrukh on 10th and 11th December, 2025 Screening **2000 Individuals**.



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

CHAPTER: ACTREC, Kharghar

Feb 7, 2025	A Tobacco Awareness Campaign Was Conducted in the Breast,Head and Neck OPD at ACTREC, Kharghar, Impact made on 180 Individuals.
Aug 15, 2025	On the Occasion of Independence Day the TQLS Team Performed a a Traditional Marathi Folk Art Form Called Bharud to Raise Tobacco Awareness, Impact made on 250 Individuals.
Sep 14, 2025	The TQLS Team Participated In The Hindi Diwas Programme and Raised Awareness About the Harmful Effects of Tobacco by Performing a Skit, Impact made on 50 Individuals.

FEEDBACKS 2025

How our counselors at the TQLS
Mumbai made a tangible and
significant difference in people's
lives....

Client 1: 17/01/2026

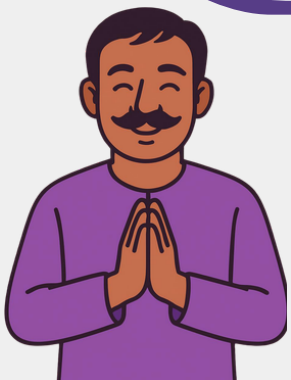
मी अगोदर तंबाखू आणि सिगारेट चे खुप सेवन करत होतो. कित्येक वेळेस मी हे व्यसन सोडण्याचा प्रयत्न केला पण माझ्या कडुन ते सोडणं शक्य होत नव्हते. मी दिवसातून १ तंबाखू आणि ५ ते ६ सिगारेट असे सेवन करत होतो. आणि माझी ट्रीटमेंट पण चालु होती तरी डॉक्टरांनी मला सांगितले होते की तुम्हाला हे सर्व सेवन बंद करावा लागेल मी १/२ दिवस मनावर कंट्रोल करून बंद केले पण नंतर तेच सेवन सुरू करायचो. बंद करण्यासाठीही माझ्या घरचे पण खूप बोलायचे पण तरीही मी ते काही बंद करू शकलो नाही. एकदा मी सिनेमा बघत होतो. तिथे जाहिरात आली तिथे हेल्प लाईन नंबर होता तर मी फोन केला तर मला सरां सोबत माझे बोलणे झाले. त्यानी खुप चांगल्या पद्धती सांगून मला व्यसन सोडण्यास मदत केले आणि प्रत्येक आठवड्यात ते मला फोन ही करत होते. अगोदर थोडा त्रास झाला पण सरांनी त्याचा ही उपाय सांगितला की त्रास झाल्या वर काय करायचं किंवा तंबाखू खाण्याची इच्छा झाली तर काय करायचं सिगारेट पिण्याची इच्छा झाली तर काय करायचं. मी तेच करत होतो जे सरांनी मला सांगितलं होत. आता मला व्यसन सोडुन ३ महिने झाले आहे .मी खूप खुश आहे आणि माझे घरचे ही खुप खुश आहेत. व्यसन सोडल्या पासून मी जेवण पण वेळेवर करत आहे. थकवा पण लागत नाही आणि चेहरा पण खुलला तब्बेती मध्ये पण सुधार झाली आहे.

**टाटा स्मारक केंद्राची राष्ट्रीय तंबाखू मुक्ती हेल्पलाइनचे मनापासून
धन्यवाद**



Client 2: 29/10/2025

"मैं आपका धन्यवाद करता हूँ सर मुझे लगभग 3 साल से सिगरेट पीने की आदत थी। बहुत कोशिश किया लेकिन छूट नहीं रहा था डॉक्टर से भी सलाह लिया लेकिन नहीं छूटा. एक दिन hotstar पर वेब सीरीज देख रहा था तो disclaimer में तंबाकू quit के लिए एक टोल फ्री नंबर दिखा. तो मैं कॉल किया सौभाग्य से सर से बातचीत हुआ जिन्होंने सिगरेट छोड़ने में बहुत मदद हुई. हर सप्ताह कॉल करके जिस तरह से हमेशा डॉक्टर नहीं एक अच्छा दोस्त हो माँ बाप हो या बड़े भाई हो उस तरह से समझा कर उन्होंने जितना मदद कि उनका एहसान जिंदगी भर नहीं भूल सकता. बिना गुरु का ज्ञान नहीं होता वैसे वो मेरा गुरु बनकर मदद कि उनका जितना तारीफ करें कम है. सिगरेट छोड़ने से फायदा ये हुआ की पहले 100 रुपया रोज का जाता था वो बचत हो रहा है. खाना पहले तीन रोटी खा पाता आज 5 रोटी खाता हूँ. शरीर में एक अलग एनर्जी आ गया जहाँ काम करता हूँ वहाँ पहले थोड़ा ज्यादा काम होता तो थक जाता था आज थकान महसूस नहीं होती है. कहीं जाता हूँ तो किसी भी बिल्डिंग में लिफ्ट से नहीं सीढ़ी चढ़ कर जाता थकान नहीं होता है. 20 kg का बॉक्स उठाकर इधर से उधर रख देता अब एक अलग ही शरीर में एनर्जी आ गया है. और सबसे बड़ी बात ये है कि ये बिलकुल मुफ्त सेवा है. सर ने कोई फीस नहीं लिए, मैं दिल से चाहता हूँ जिस भी व्यक्ति को तंबाकू, बीड़ी ,सिगरेट छोड़ना हो वो टोल फ्री नंबर पर बात करके मदद ले सकते हैं. अंत में आपको प्रणाम करता हूँ और जब तक ज़िंदगी है आपका एहसान याद रखूँगा."



Client 3: 29/10/2025

"I am overwhelmed with a heart-felt sense of gratitude towards the tobacco cessation helpline and to a special individual, Madam, who I worked with in particular, when I think back on my journey to becoming nicotine-free. Today, I am 67 days into a phase in my life that, initially seemed impossible, and proudly wear my nicotine-free badge. Previous attempts to quit resulted in relapses, and had given me such severe feelings of defeatism, which made myself doubt whether I was capable of attaining my goal of quitting smoking. This experience turned, thanks to the support and encouragement from Madam and our phone line, into one. In the most testing times, filled with cravings, emotional pressure and uncertainty, she gently pulled me back on track. Calming me down and checking in with me when I needed it most. She was my rock, giving me the emotional strength to push through every struggle and helped make me feel like I was never on my own. Coming dashing towards the change in my behavior, I also did some things myself, for instance substituting nicotine cigarettes with herbal cigarettes, which broke up the routine of smoking. Since giving up nicotine, I've discovered a brand-new lease on life, with a clearer mind, greatly improved focus and lots more energy. My physical fitness journey has also got a huge boost, as I breathe better, can run longer and feel physically lighter and healthier. It wasn't just a case of kicking the habit, it's basically a new way of life. I am so grateful to the team and to Madam in particular for playing such a key part in getting me to this point, and I don't know what the future holds, but I do know that this milestone will stay with me forever."



Editorial Credits

EDITORIAL TEAM

Dr Atul Budukh

Professor & Officer

In Charge

(Principal Investigator, NTQLS)

Mrs Suvarna Kolekar

Social Investigator, CCE

Ms. Arya Jade

Counselor, TQLS

Mr. Prithviraj Kadam

Sr. Research Coordinator

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the following dignitaries for their support in running the National Tobacco Quitline Centre at CCE, ACTREC, TMC-Mumbai.

Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), Mumbai

Dr. Sudeep Gupta, Director, TMC

ACTREC, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai

Dr. Pankaj Chaturvedi, Director, ACTREC

Dr. Rajesh Dikshit, Director, CCE

Dr. Navin Khattri, Deputy Director, ACTREC

Dr. Gauravi Mishra, Deputy Director, CCE

Wg. Cdr. Anand Kumar Tiwari (Retd.) CAO, CCE

Wg. Cdr. P.J. Monterio (Retd.) CAO, ACTREC

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

Smt. V Hekali Zhimomi, Additional Secretary

Dr. L Swasticharan, Additional DDG

Dr. Pulkesh Kumar, Deputy Secretary

Ms. Deepshikha Arora, Senior Statistical Officer

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- International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF. 2021. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21. Mumbai: IIPS.
- Some visual illustrations/images included in this work were generated with the assistance of AI-based tools, specifically Google Gemini. These tools were used solely for image generation and creative visualization purposes.



**Centre for Cancer Epidemiology,
ACTREC, Navi Mumbai**



**Advanced Centre for Treatment,
Research and Education in Cancer,
Navi Mumbai**



**Tata Memorial Centre (TMC),
Mumbai**



**National Tobacco Quitline Service Centre,
Centre for Cancer Epidemiology, ACTREC, Navi Mumbai**

National Tobacco Quit line Service (1800 11 2356)

Room No 225,
Centre for Cancer Epidemiology,
Advanced Centre for Treatment, Research and
Education in Cancer,
Tata Memorial Centre,
Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra,
India, 410210.

Contact Details

Mobile Number: 8655997921

**Email: tobaccoquitlinenm2018@gmail.com
medrec@tmc.gov.in**