

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 239
ANSWERED ON 22.03.2023

Consumption of tobacco among school children

239 Dr. Anil Sukhdeorao Bonde:

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Global Youth Survey Report has stated that school children are consuming tobacco before the age of 10 years;
- (b) what steps are being taken by Government to make aware these school going children about harmful effects of tobacco products;
- (c) the details thereof; and
- (d) whether Government has received any proposal or representation to address this deadly addiction/consumption of tobacco usage among children?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF THE RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 239 ANSWERED ON 22.03.2023 ASKED BY DR. ANIL SUKHDEORAO BONDE, HON'BLE MP REGARDING 'CONSUMPTION OF TOBACCO AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN'.

(a) The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has informed that as per the National Fact Sheet of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS-4), 2019, conducted among 13 -15 year age group school going children, the median age at initiation of cigarette and *bidi* smoking, and smokeless tobacco use were 11.5 years, 10.5 years and 9.9 years respectively.

(b) to (d) The Government has taken various steps to protect school going children against the harmful effects of tobacco products. As per Section 6 (a) of Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA, 2003) read with Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Rules, 2011, there is **prohibition on sale of tobacco products to and by persons below the age of 18 years** and as per Section 6 (b) of COTPA, 2003, there is **prohibition on sale of tobacco products in an area within a radius of one hundred yards of any educational institution**. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has also issued the “**Guidelines for Tobacco Free Educational Institution** (Revised)” for effective implementation of Section-6 of COTPA, 2003. Ministry of Education has also circulated the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare related to tobacco control initiatives in schools, to all the States/UTs time to time for effective implementation of these guidelines in all educational institutes. States are taking effective measures with Education departments for implementation of these Guidelines. Regular and sustained awareness is carried out about the adverse effects of tobacco usage on health through various anti-tobacco campaigns. Public Health is a State subject and the primary responsibility for enforcement of the Act, lies with the State Governments for effective implementation of the provisions of COTPA, 2003.

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 in its para 8.11 recommends that “careful attention must be paid to the safety and rights of children and adolescents enrolled in schools, particularly girl children, and the various difficult issues faced by adolescents, such as substance or drug abuse and forms of discrimination and harassment including violence. There must be clear, safe, and efficient mechanisms for reporting and for due process on any

infractions against children's/adolescents' rights or safety. The development of such mechanisms that are effective, timely, and well-known to all students will be accorded high priority."

The NEP, 2020 in its para 4.28 also states that "students will be taught at a young age the importance of "doing what's right", and will be given a logical framework for making ethical decisions. Basic training in health, including preventive health, mental health, good nutrition, personal and public hygiene, disaster response and first-aid will also be included in the curriculum, as well as scientific explanations of the detrimental and damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs."

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has taken following steps:

- i. The National Role Play and Folk Dance Competition organised by National Population Education Project of Department of Education in Social Sciences (DESS), NCERT from 06th to 09th December, 2022, has taken up the concern of harmful effects of Tobacco products as one of the themes.
- ii. The Training & Resource Materials on Health and Wellness of School Going Children under the aegis of Ayushman Bharat has a designated module on 'Prevention and Management of Substance Misuse'.
- iii. Some of the present NCERT textbooks, such as Science, Psychology and Biology, integrate concerns related to substance abuse across the various stages of school education.
- iv. Manodarpan is an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MoE) under "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan". It aims to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional well-being during the times of COVID-19 and beyond. Also, it raises awareness about substance abuse through its various activities such as Live webinars and discussion sessions organised for creating awareness and addressing mental health and well-being related concerns such as substance abuse for all stakeholders.
- v. A National Conference on 'Empowering Teachers for Promoting Mental Health and Well-being in Schools' (14th –16th December 2022) was organised in blended mode at North East Regional Institute of Education (NERIE), Shillong, NCERT and telecast live on NCERT Official YouTube Channel. Two sessions in the conference

focused on spreading awareness about substance abuse.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has issued 'Guidelines on Protection from Exposure to Tobacco Smoke' which conveys World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on protection from exposure to tobacco/smoke. They have made it mandatory for all schools to have a tobacco-free environment. They have also been issuing periodic circulars to schools for sensitizing all students about ill-effects of tobacco. Various competitions such as poster making, essay writing etc. on the theme of harmful effects of tobacco are regularly organized and special emphasis on this problem is laid on the occasion of World No Tobacco Day each year. They have also introduced Life-Skills education in the schools affiliated to it which enable students to abstain from tobacco and other addictive substances.

Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan conduct various awareness programmes in their Vidyalayas to sensitize students about harmful effects of tobacco use through talks in Morning Assembly, competitions, through co-curricular activities and Adolescence Education Programme.

The National Tobacco Control Programme is implemented in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs). JNVs campuses are notified as Tobacco Free Zone as per the recommendations of COTPA. Qualified counsellors engaged on contractual basis to create awareness among the students about harmful effects of consumption of tobacco products. House Master / Associate House Master / Vidyalaya doctor / Staff Nurse also spread awareness among students about the harmful effects of consumption of tobacco products. During the morning Assembly, the students are made aware from time to time about harmful effects of Tobacco products. Various campaigns are conducted from time to time to make the students aware about the harmful effects of Tobacco products.
