

TOBACCO CONTROL  
POLICY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2021

# Research Findings Dissemination Conference

March 21, 2022



Bangladesh  
Center for  
Communication  
Programs



Bangladesh Tobacco Control  
Research Network



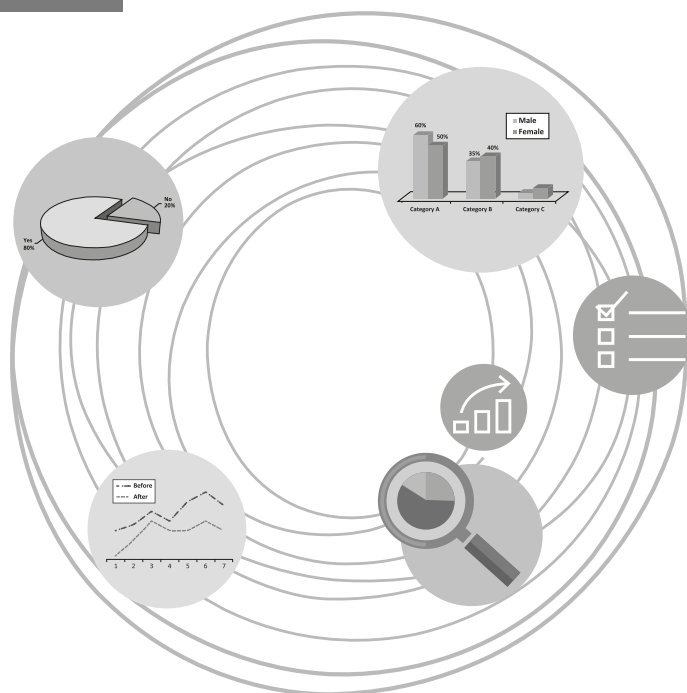
JOHNS HOPKINS  
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL  
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Institute for Global Tobacco Control

TOBACCO CONTROL  
POLICY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2021

# Research Findings Dissemination Conference

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Additional Secretary (World Health)  
Health Services Division  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
and  
Director, National Tobacco Control Cell



## Message

We all know that tobacco is a major killer in world as tobacco use is main risk factor for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as Cardiovascular Diseases (heart attack, stroke, etc.), Cancers, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (COPD). Tobacco use in any form (smoking or smokeless) is biggest preventable cause of death in Bangladesh that caused to enormous public health burden in terms of morbidity (including disability) and mortality and these burden derail to economic and social development. It is noted that every year, tobacco use causes more than 8 million deaths in world and more than 161,000 deaths in Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken different measures to reduce tobacco use and prevent premature deaths caused by tobacco. The Health Services Division, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has taken the initiative to further amend the existing Tobacco Control Act in order to make it more compliant with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. The Ministry also developed a 5-year National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) which is underway for approval. A roadmap has been drafted to achieve the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's commitment to make Bangladesh tobacco-free by 2040. Strengthening National Tobacco Control Cell (NTCC) is also under process and a Rules and NTCC organogram has been developed.

In this regard, research help us to identify better solution to reduce tobacco burden in Bangladesh. I am glad to know that the Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs (BCCP) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA completed Tobacco Control Policy Research Grant Program 2021 that started in 2013. I have been informed that the Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN) founded in 2016 for sustainability of this program in Bangladesh.

The on-going tobacco control programs will be benefitted by evidence generated through this program. I thank the organizers for organizing this Dissemination Conference and congratulate the research grantees for their research. I hope findings from these studies will provide policy guidance for an effective tobacco control program in Bangladesh.

**Kazi Zebunnessa Begum**



## Message

The Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Maryland, USA builds capacity locally with a mission to prevent death and disease from tobacco products by generating evidence to support effective tobacco control interventions.

An example is the Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN) and the Research Grants Program started in 2013 in collaboration with the Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs to manage the program. The aim is to encourage scientists in Bangladesh to conduct research and gather relevant local evidence for tobacco control policy and programs in the country. The program is supported by funding from the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use.

Over the past years, researchers in Bangladesh have gathered important information on tobacco-related issues with relevant policy implications through the Research Grants Program. It is an important resource that can be used by the Government of Bangladesh, Bloomberg Initiative partners, tobacco control advocates and leaders across the country to share best practices and advance tobacco control efforts in Bangladesh.

These research studies will continue to contribute towards addressing tobacco control priority issues in the country and generate useful evidence for tobacco-related policy and programs that can help Bangladesh attain its goal of a tobacco-free country by 2040. I encourage all the stakeholders who are supporting tobacco control efforts in the country to work together synergistically to achieve this goal.

At the occasion of the 9th Research Findings Dissemination Conference, I congratulate the researchers and BCCP for successful completion of the research studies and wish all the current tobacco control initiatives every success in Bangladesh.

*Joanna Cohen*

**Joanna Cohen, PhD, MHSC**  
Director, Institute for Global Tobacco Control  
Bloomberg Professor of Disease Prevention  
Department of Health, Behavior and Society  
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health





**Bangladesh  
Center for  
Communication  
Programs**



## Message

The Tobacco Control Research Grant Program with Bloomberg Initiative funding through the Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA, is being administered by the Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs (BCCP) since 2013. The objective is to build the capacity of researchers from universities and institutions focusing on Tobacco-related issues and generate local evidence that is essential for new or revised policy development, and for designing effective Advocacy and Communication Programs for Tobacco control in Bangladesh.

BCCP follows a systematic process to award the research seed grants each year that begins with announcements for research proposals made in the national dailies. The proposals received are evaluated by a Review Panel comprised of renowned researchers from home and abroad and the final selection is made based on collectively approved criteria. The BCCP Research team provides mentorship, traversing the comprehensive research process through capacity-building workshops and personalized attention to strengthen research capacity of the grantees.

This Tobacco Control Research Dissemination Conference presents the summary findings of the tobacco related research studies that were conducted in this round. I congratulate the researchers for successful completion of their research studies. I also appreciate the hard work of the BCCP Research team which provides technical guidance throughout the research process and beyond. It is encouraging to note that many of the research studies from the past years have been published in international journals and presented in conferences both in Bangladesh and abroad.

I would like to express my gratitude to IGTC for their technical and financial support to the program and for supporting the Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN) as an important forum for stakeholders to exchange and generate research ideas, enabling them to utilize research findings to strengthen existing tobacco control policies and programs.

I sincerely believe that the coordinated actions of the Government, the Bloomberg Partners, the World Health Organization, NGOs, leaders and activists will contribute to the effective planning and implementation of tobacco control strategies and programs in Bangladesh and help us to achieve the nation's vision of a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040.

**Mohammad Shahjahan**  
Director & CEO

## Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network Program Progresses

Tobacco use is a major risk factor for cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, over 20 different types or subtypes of cancer, and many other debilitating health conditions. Every year, more than 8 million people die from tobacco use. Most tobacco-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, which are often targets of intensive tobacco industry interference and marketing. In Bangladesh, the burden from tobacco is alarming: around 35% of adults are currently using tobacco either in smoked and/or in smokeless form. Furthermore, 43% and 39% of adults are exposed to secondhand smoke at their workplaces and in their homes, respectively. Seven percent of youth aged 13 to 15 years use tobacco. Tobacco kills up to half of its users and causes premature mortality and morbidity, contributes to health inequalities and exacerbates poverty. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2017 revealed the social gradient in tobacco use in Bangladesh in which prevalence increases with decreasing socio-economic status: 24% of those in the highest wealth quintile use tobacco compared to 48% of those in the lowest wealth quintile, where households are more at risk of suffering catastrophic health expenditure and impoverishment through high healthcare costs from tobacco-related diseases, loss of productivity and opportunity costs.



Focus on tobacco control research and its capacity-building programs are not sufficient to adequately meet the challenges. Tobacco control research has historically not been a popular topic within the academic community in Bangladesh. Therefore, there is a dearth of facts and figures needed to develop or strengthen tobacco control policy interventions in Bangladesh.



The Prime Minister of the Government of Bangladesh has made a commitment to make Bangladesh tobacco-free by 2040. In order to achieve the commitment, comprehensive tobacco control programs must be undertaken with a strong research component to gather local evidence that contributes towards planning and implementing effective policies and programs in the country.

Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs (BCCP) in collaboration with the Institute for Global Tobacco Control (IGTC) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, USA is giving much importance on increasing research capacity and generating local evidence for effective tobacco control policy measures. The Research Grant Program which is the first of its kind in Bangladesh was initiated in 2013 with 10 research grants. The outcomes of many studies since then were very encouraging with important policy implications.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Build the research capacity especially of the young researchers of different universities and organizations;
- Enhance the local evidence-base on tobacco control in Bangladesh;
- Take measures to make the Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN) sustainable and continue to serve as a forum for tobacco control researchers to exchange ideas, share research findings, generate new tobacco control research and utilize their findings.

### **Tobacco Control Policy Research Grant Program**



The Tobacco Control Research Grant Program is the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Involving capacity-building workshops covering the whole spectrum of the research process, the program was being implemented during the last nine years with an emphasis on engaging graduate student researchers. All Bangladeshi

graduate students and established researchers aspiring to contribute to tobacco control are eligible to apply for the grant.

### **Research Topic:**

BCCP and BTCRN organize a Consultative Workshop to Identify the Future Tobacco Control Research Needs in Bangladesh in collaboration with the National Tobacco Control Cell every year. Representatives of relevant government departments, public and private universities, BI partners and grantees and other organizations working on tobacco control attend the workshop. The outcome of the workshop is utilized to prepare the Call for Proposal for the Research Grant Program. Researchers are encouraged to choose topics related to priority issues of the Bloomberg Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use. Proposals generating local evidence that contribute to developing a new policy or strengthen an existing one in line with the components of the World Health Organization's MPOWER package are recommended.

### **Proposal Selection Process:**

BCCP follows a rigorous process for selecting research proposals every year. A Proposal Review Panel comprising of renowned researchers and tobacco control experts from home and abroad reviews the proposals. The Panel considers the following while selecting the winning proposals:

- Priority issues of Bloomberg Initiative
- Competitiveness
- Expected policy implications

The review panel follows a three-step review process. The first step involves preliminary screening to see whether proposals follow the submission guideline. The second step involves reviewing proposals and providing technical scoring while in the third step, applicants present their proposals in front of the review panel.



### **Implementation of the Grant Program:**

BCCP has a highly experienced and dedicated team with both technical and managerial expertise to manage the grant program. The research team is led by a Senior Deputy Director (Research and Evaluation) and has members representing diverse backgrounds including statistician, anthropologist, epidemiologist, and sociologist. The team nurtures grantees by providing mentorship in every step of research work, including questionnaire development, data collection, data management and analysis, developing effective PowerPoint presentation as well as presenting research findings in front of wider audiences, and report writing.

The following mentoring workshops are organized and facilitated for the research grantees:

- Proposal Review Workshop
- Research Method, Procedure and Data Collection
- Data Management, Analysis and Report Writing
- Effective Presentation Development and Facilitation Skills



The team also provides mentorship while the researchers develop manuscripts and recommends appropriate journals for publication. The team continues to provide mentorship even after the grant period is over.

### **Dissemination and Use of Research Findings:**

As of 2021, one hundred and four researchers including both established and graduate student researchers have been awarded research grants. Following each grant cycle, the research findings are disseminated through scientific conferences. Representatives of Government, NGO, INGO, universities, research community, Bloomberg Initiative partners and grantees, and media attend the conferences. Print and electronic media cover the news of the conferences and publish special news/articles on individual research studies. Around the dissemination conference, some selected in-country tobacco control research studies conducted by other researchers are also presented as posters.

Different organizations working on tobacco control are utilizing the research findings to design and implement Social and Behavior Change Communication and advocacy programs. Major research findings are available at [www.btcn.org](http://www.btcn.org). Twenty-five studies have been published in international journals. Some more studies are underway for publication. Thirty-one abstracts have been accepted and presented in different national international conferences.



### **Emergence of Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN)**

With the aim to provide a platform and support and guide the potential tobacco control researchers in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN) was launched in 2013 under the auspices of the JHSPH-BCCP Tobacco Control Project. BTCRN was established so that it can carry out systematic capacity-building programs even after the donor-funded project is over in order to ensure the sustainability of the research grant program. The Network is registered under the Joint Stock Companies and Firms.

The overall objective of the Network is to promote and nurture a tobacco control research culture in Bangladesh, developing a local evidence-based research repository to enhance tobacco control policy development and implementation in the country.



### The specific objectives of the Network are to:

- Review Bangladesh-specific tobacco control-related research activities and identify gaps;
- Document and disseminate tobacco control research findings that can be used to enhance support for tobacco control policy development and implementation; and,
- Serve as a resource for partners, implementers, activists, researchers, academicians, and the Government with respect to tobacco control research.

### Membership

BTCRN offers both institutional and individual membership, including student membership. Any Bangladeshi university, institution, national and local NGO, government, and individual who is interested in tobacco control and signs a declaration that they are in no way affiliated with the tobacco industry, including engaging in advertising or distribution of tobacco or tobacco-related products, can be a member of the Network.

### BTCRN Website

BTCRN has developed a resourceful website to act as a research hub for tobacco control in Bangladesh. The key findings of the research studies conducted under the Tobacco Control Research Grant Program are made available on the website. The website also posts links of other research studies on tobacco control that are being conducted by other organizations.



## A 7-Member Executive Board of BTCRN

President

***Dr. Nawzia Yasmin***

Pro-Vice Chancellor, State University of Bangladesh

Vice-President

***Dr. Shahida Haque***

Senior Deputy Director (Research and Evaluation), BCCP

Treasurer

***Dr. Mahfuzur Rahman Bhuiyan***

Project Manager, National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute

General Secretary

***Mr. Mohammad Shamimul Islam***

Deputy Director, BCCP and Team Leader, JHSPH-BCCP Tobacco Control Project

Members

***Dr. Sohel Reza Choudhury***

Professor and Head, Department of Epidemiology and Research, National Heart Foundation Hospital and Research Institute

***Mr. Md. Shamsul Alam Mian***

Tobacco Control Expert

***Ms. Farzana Rahman***

Technical Coordinator, DAI Global

### Unmasking Tobacco Industry Interferences at the University Campuses

Different multi-national tobacco industries carry out aggressive brand promotion activities targeting the educational institutions in Bangladesh. The industries do such activities in disguise in the name of “talent hunt” programs and most cases, the university authorities are not aware of their ill motivations. One of the multinational tobacco industries organizes an event called “Battle of Mind” at a regular interval involving the fresh graduates to promote itself in the name of employment generation. However, the tobacco control law bans all types of advertisements and promotion of tobacco industries in all types of media including the mass media. In the prevailing situation, the Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs (BCCP) in collaboration with the Bangladesh Tobacco Control Research Network (BTCRN) and Leaders in Tobacco Control Alumni Association has been organizing a series of University-based Lecture Program on Tobacco Control.



In 2020, five University-based Lecture Programs on Tobacco Control were organized at five private universities in Dhaka. Vice-Chancellors and senior faculties of the universities, representatives of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Bloomberg Initiative (BI) partners and grantees, BTCRN, Leaders in Tobacco Control Alumni Association attended the program as guests. Renowned tobacco control experts from the country made brief presentations on different tobacco control issues. In 2021, a University-based Lecture Program was organized at the Jahangirnagar University in collaboration with its Department of Public Health and Informatics.

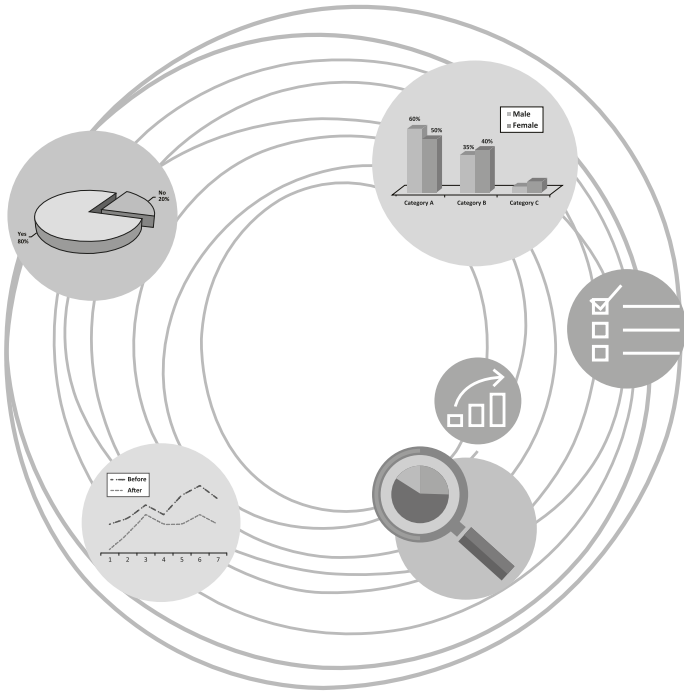


The programs have created a lot of enthusiasm among the students, faculties, and administrative staff members of the universities as evident from the fact that a huge number of participants attended the programs. The university authorities made commitments not to entertain the tobacco industries at their campuses. As an immediate outcome of program, the membership-base of BTCRN just doubled.



Research Grant Recipients 2021  
and their abstracts

Researcher Category





**Dr. Gopal Das**

Research Title:

**Risk Assessment of Pesticides Induced Health Hazards among the Tobacco Farmers: A Study towards Urging New Policy for Tobacco Cultivation Control in Bangladesh**

Dr. Gopal Das is presently working as Professor at the Department of Entomology, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh. He has more than 20 years of experience in teaching and research. He has completed his MS, Ph.D., and Post-doctoral research (JSPS) from the Tohoku University, Sendai, Japan. His areas of specialization included Integrated Pest Management (IPM), pesticide management, insect neuroscience and neuro-endocrinology, and insecticide toxicology. To date, he has successfully completed more than 25 nationally and internationally funded projects. Professor Das has participated in various national and international scientific meetings, workshops, seminars, and conferences for sharing his research findings. He has published more than 52 scientific research articles in peer-reviewed national and international journals. He is working as an expert reviewer and section editor of several peer-reviewed national and international journals.

# Risk Assessment of Pesticides Induced Health Hazards among the Tobacco Farmers: A Study towards Urging New Policy for Tobacco Cultivation Control in Bangladesh

Author: **Dr. Gopal Das**

**Background:** The extent of tobacco cultivation remains substantially high in Bangladesh, which is the 12th largest producer in the world. About 45,869 hectares of land are being used for tobacco cultivation and there are about 100,000 tobacco farmers across the country. Tobacco farmers are always at high risk because of continuous dermal absorption of nicotine through the body skin as well as exposure to various toxic pesticides. Thus, there is a possibility that a tobacco farmer is more likely to suffer from pesticides and nicotine-induced health illness; however, those have rarely been explored yet. **Objective:** The objectives were to investigate the pesticides use, nicotine and pesticides related health hazards and perception among the tobacco farmers and provide evidence to the relevant stakeholders for urging tobacco cultivation control policy. **Methods:** The survey was conducted among the tobacco and non-tobacco farmers in Kushtia and Mymensingh through cross-sectional and comparative study. A total of 730 respondents were selected through two-stage stratified random sampling. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews using the semi-structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were adopted to analyze the data by applying SPSS. **Results:** Tobacco farmers used more toxic pesticides (crossed WHO toxicity limits) and less or no biopesticides than that of non-tobacco farmers. Most of the reported health illnesses were found to be significantly higher ( $p < 0.01$ ) among the tobacco farmers than that of non-tobacco farmers. Cramer's V statistic ( $p < 0.05$ ) showed that different health problems among the tobacco farmers were variably associated with various risk factors, such as income, daily working duration, pesticide use, duration of pesticide use, working with wet clothes etc. Moreover, the proportion of green tobacco sickness (GTS) was 23.5% among the tobacco farmers and it was associated with some risk factors. Almost all the tobacco farmers opined that tobacco farming is harmful for their health, 70% has given their opinion against tobacco farming, but they are still involved with tobacco farming due to high profitability, incentives from tobacco companies, fair or fixed price etc. Around 65% tobacco farmers have given their opinion in favor of crop shifting, 53% wanted a guarantee of low interest loans and notably, 22% reported to control tobacco cultivation immediately. Majority of the tobacco farmers supported any government initiative to execute policy related to tobacco cultivation control and to build a tobacco-free nation. **Conclusion:** The present study provides evidence that tobacco farming is harmful for the health of tobacco farmers. It also demonstrates that intense nicotine and pesticides exposure are potential risk factors for developing health illnesses. Majority of farmers have expressed support to formulate new policy to build a tobacco-free nation and willingness to crop shifting if Government takes initiatives. Thus, a comprehensive tobacco cultivation policy and an integrated effort should be taken from all concerned stakeholders to reduce or control tobacco cultivation in Bangladesh.



## Dr. Khursheda Akhtar

Research Title:

Tobacco Consumption and Severity of COVID-19 Patients:  
Bangladesh Perspective

Dr. Khursheda Akhtar completed her Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MBBS) from the Mymensingh Medical College in 2000. Later in 2003, she joined in government service. She obtained her MPH (RCH) degree from the National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM) in 2010 and MPhil degree in 2016. She stood first in the MPhil program and received “Prime Minister Gold Medal- 2016” from the University Grant Commission of Bangladesh. Since 2019, she has been working on her Ph.D program at the University of Dhaka. She has teaching and research experiences of more than a decade. She has many national and international publications. She has an intense fascination with public health research that leads her to work on different research projects and secure research grants. Her research interest is in breast cancer disease, health service research, research methods, systematic review, meta-analysis, etc.

# Tobacco Consumption and Severity of COVID-19 Patients: Bangladesh Perspective

Author: **Dr. Khursheda Akhtar**

**Background:** Tobacco consumption and health risk are going side by side, from the very ancient period until today. In COVID-19 pandemic, new dimension of search arises, to explore extent of tobacco consumption with severity of disease. No data are available in Bangladesh on the role of tobacco consumption on severity of COVID-19. **Objective:** To assess the association between tobacco consumption and severity of disease in COVID-19 patients. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was designed and conducted from May to November 2021. Around 583 COVID-19 positive patients were selected purposively from indoor and critical care units of four COVID dedicated hospitals in Dhaka city. Face-to-face and telephonic interviews were carried out by interviewers using semi-structured questionnaire and medical records were reviewed using checklist. Severity of COVID-19 was determined and categorized into four levels (Mild, Moderate, Severe, Critical) by following standard guidelines of the Government of Bangladesh, and further re-categorized into two levels (Severe/Non-severe). The severity of COVID-19 risk factors were identified by unadjusted odds ratio (OR) and adjusted odds ratio (AOR) with 95% confidence intervals, 5% level of significance after adjusting for a number of relevant co-variates. **Results:** Overall, 66.2% of respondents had ever-consumed tobacco throughout their life. Among them 64.2% consumed smokeless tobacco (SLT), 22.0% smoking tobacco, and 13.7% consumed both smokeless and smoking tobacco. Highest majority (92.0% to 98.0%) of current and former tobacco consumers consumed tobacco daily. Irrespective of tobacco using status and types, the average duration of use ranged from 20.4 to 29.3 years. Besides, current and former cigarette smokers used about 9-11 cigarettes daily on an average, whereas SLT users consumed zarda on an average about 6-8 times daily. About 35.0% of patients were in severe category and 26.4% were in critical category. The patients' ever tobacco using status was significantly ( $p<0.01$ ) associated with the severity of COVID-19. Also, there was significant ( $p<0.01$ ) association between the severity of COVID-19 and respondents those who were more than 60 years of age, male, in a nuclear family, and had co-morbidity. Patients who ever-consumed tobacco had 2.1 times greater experienced severity of COVID-19 (AOR 2.1, 95% CI: 1.4-3.1,  $p<0.001$ ) as opposed to non-consumers. Moreover, males were 2.5 times more likely to exhibit severity of COVID-19 than females (AOR 2.5, 95% CI: 1.1-5.9,  $p<0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** Tobacco consumption has a significant role on experiencing the disease severity among COVID-19 patients. In addition to conduct awareness programs, it is necessary to make the tobacco products unavailable during the pandemic situation like COVID-19. Hence, the steps should be taken to exclude the tobacco products as essential commodities from 'The Essential Commodities Act, 1957'.



## Md. Al-Amin Parvez

Research Title:

Exploring Ban on Selling of Single Stick Smoking and Unpackaged Smokeless Tobacco as a Policy Option for Bangladesh

Md. Al-Amin Parvez is a career researcher. His research exposure started while studying Economics as a sophomore at the department of Economics, University of Dhaka in 2008 under the supervision of leading Professors and Researchers of the country. Besides, participating in different research activities, Mr. Parvez presented his research works in different national and international conferences. He obtained his second master's degree in Economics from the University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), Beijing, with funding support from the Chinese Government. He obtained his third master's degree in Finance from the University of Dhaka. Apart from teaching Economics at Dhaka School of Economics, he is involved with different research projects focusing on development economics, economic efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and cost-effectiveness of various development interventions. He also has experiences working in different issues including education, health, human rights, and livelihoods of the marginalized people with many government and non-government projects with the Ministry of Planning of the Government of Bangladesh, UNDP, FAO, Save the Children, Water Aid, FES, USAID, and many other organizations.



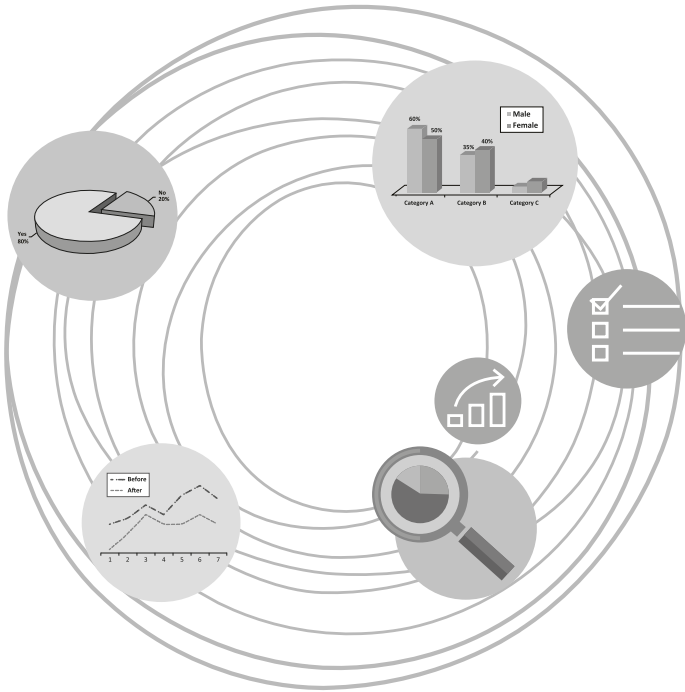
# Exploring Ban on Selling of Single Stick Smoking and Unpackaged Smokeless Tobacco as a Policy Option for Bangladesh

Author: **Md. Al-Amin Parvez**

**Background:** Users' perspectives, prevalence and socio-economic aspects of single stick or loose (unpackaged) tobacco selling, and its implications have rarely been studied among adult tobacco users of Bangladesh. **Objective:** To assess perceptions, prevalence and correlates or underlying factors of single stick or loose (unpackaged) tobacco purchasing behavior. **Methods:** It was a cross-sectional study conducted using mixed methods during March-November 2021. Survey was conducted among a population-based sample of about 3000 adult tobacco users from all the eight divisions through CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing) using pre-tested semi-structured questionnaire. Besides, 8 focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted among adult tobacco users in the capital city, Dhaka following FGD guideline. Data were analyzed and presented through descriptive and inferential statistics to explore the purchasing pattern of single stick or loose tobacco at last purchase. **Results:** Survey data indicated that 93% was smoking tobacco users and 12% was smokeless tobacco (SLT) users, with around 90% used them daily and by type of tobacco it was 89% cigarette and 12% Zorda. Besides, among 51% who intended to quit using tobacco in the next six months, it was higher among SLT users (64%) than smoking tobacco (50%). Considering the purchasing pattern, 92% purchased loose smoking tobacco (57% purchased single stick), whereas 94% purchased loose SLT in their last purchase. Around 62% of the single stick or loose purchasers reported that they crave for smoking after seeing single unit sale. Last purchase of single stick or loose smoking tobacco was 2.4 times greater likelihood among respondents aged 18-24 years (OR 2.4, 95%CI: 1.3-4.3) and 1.7 times higher among aged 25-39 years (OR 1.7, 95%CI: 1.2-2.3) than aged 40 and above years. Moreover, this purchasing behavior was 2.7 times higher among respondents with no formal education (OR 2.7, 95%CI: 2.7-5.0) than with education above higher secondary, 3.9 times higher among those having monthly income less than BDT 5000 (OR 3.9, 95%CI: 1.6-9.3) and 2.4 times greater among those having monthly income BDT 5000-15000 (OR 2.4, 95%CI: 1.6-3.8) compared to BDT 25000 and above. Highest majority (81% to 95%) of the respondents perceived the negative impact of smoking/tobacco on their health, their family members, and possible financial burden of medical treatment of them and their family members in future. Qualitative data showed mixed evidence regarding tobacco users' perceptions towards single stick or loose tobacco, where they considered it as cues to both smoking/SLT use and consumption reduction strategy. **Conclusion:** Study results showed that highest majority of respondents purchased single stick or loose tobacco at their last purchase, and it is much higher among young and low-income earning respondents. Nevertheless, promotion of the availability of single stick or loose tobacco as a harm reduction strategy could provide additional smoking/SLT consumption cues that undermine quit attempts and promote smoking among youth, low income and low asset holding population; thereby, imposing ban in this regard could be a giant step to achieve the goal of tobacco-free country.

Research Grant Recipients 2021  
and their abstracts

Student Category







## Maruf Hasan Rumi

Research Title:

Effect of Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship on E-cigarette Consumption among the Young Adults in Bangladesh

Maruf Hasan Rumi has recently obtained his postgraduate degree from the Department of Public Administration, University of Dhaka. He got an excellent academic background by securing a CGPA 3.92 out of 4 (1st class 1st position) during the undergraduate program. He is interested in social research, especially in public health, governance, human rights, and gender-related issues. Earlier, he has contributed to a number of research projects including Study on the Implementation Status of FCTC's Article 5.3 in Bangladesh; Knowledge, Attitude and Practice on Antibiotic Usage: A Case Study on Community Clinics of Meherpur; Youth's Trust on Government Response in COVID-19 Pandemic Period in Bangladesh: A Social Survey, and Study on Livelihood Pattern and Challenges on Barber Community in Bangladesh. He is currently working as a reviewer of reputed journals such as Springer Nature, Sage, and Frontier publishing group within the public health discipline. He is ambitious about working in the academic field and explores the research opportunities in his interested fields.

# Effect of Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship on E-cigarette Consumption among the Young Adults in Bangladesh

Author: **Maruf Hasan Rumi**

**Background:** E-cigarette has been a new wave of tobacco consumption throughout the world. Young Adults are the key target of the Advertisement, Promotion and Sponsorship (APS) of E-cigarette products with more than 24 million youths using E-cigarette globally (CDC, 2020). Bangladesh is also concerned about the unexpected rise in e-cigarette smoking. **Objective:** The objectives of the study were to identify the ways and effects of APS on e-cigarette consumption among young adults in Bangladesh and to explore the best practices of banning its APS around the world. **Methods:** This study was conducted following cross-sectional study design and mixed method approach. Two hundred young adults who were using or knew about e-cigarettes were chosen from Dhaka city through convenient sampling for questionnaire survey. Public health professionals, tobacco control activists, psychologists and government officials working in different health departments were chosen purposively for the Key Informant Interviews (KII), whereas secondary data was gathered by document analysis from government reports, internet materials and public health reports of the global health organizations. Descriptive and inferential analysis were conducted for quantitative data. Chi-square test was conducted to see if there were any association between APS and e-cigarette consumption or susceptibility to e-cigarette use. Thematic analysis was used to explain the qualitative data. **Results:** Findings of this study showed that most frequent mediums of e-cigarette advertisement were Facebook (77.1%), online shopping platform (64.2%) and YouTube (60.7%). Though 70.1% of current e-cigarette users first knew about e-cigarette from their friends, 57.7% started using e-cigarette from college life. Respondents' use of e-cigarettes were significantly associated with exposure to advertisement ( $p < 0.001$ ), promotion ( $p < 0.05$ ) and sponsorship events ( $p < 0.05$ ). On the other hand, only exposure to promotional events of e-cigarette products had significant association with the susceptibility of using e-cigarette ( $p < 0.05$ ). Besides, participation of celebrities in advertisements of e-cigarette ( $p < 0.01$ ) and on social media page ( $p < 0.001$ ) had significant association with the e-cigarette consumption. The study also analyzed the current global status on ban and regulation on e-cigarette. The countries with ban and restrictions on e-cigarette sale and use had less consumption rate like India (0.02%), Mexico (1%), Hungary (0.3%) than the countries where there were no restrictions like Britain (7.1%), France (5.6%), United States (3.2%) etc. **Conclusion:** Influence of peers and digital marketing strategies of tobacco industries provoke the young adults to start e-cigarettes in Bangladesh. Effective monitoring and strict application of tobacco control law by the government agencies are deemed important to reduce the rate of tobacco use burden in our country. Anti-e-cigarette campaign should be run in our media and raising awareness among the celebrities on e-cigarette products will encourage them towards negative promotion of the product among the youth. The campaign should also run the colleges and universities to demotivate the young adults towards e-cigarette consumption. There should be legislation prohibiting e-cigarette APS and sales and need to review and revise the existing law.



## Md. Mominur Rahman

Research Title:

### Does Higher Tax Rate Affect Tobacco Usage? Determinants of Tobacco Control Mechanism

Md. Mominur Rahman has completed his Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Accounting and Information Systems from Comilla University, Bangladesh. Currently, he is a researcher at Comilla University. He worked as a Research Associate under Prof. Dr. Bishawjit Chandra Deb at Comilla University. Some of his research articles were published in the national journals including Bangladesh Economica (ICAB), The Cost and Management (ICMAB), and Comilla University Journal of Business Studies. Some of his research articles were also published in the international journals including Future Business Journal (Springer), International Journal of Emerging Market (Emerald Publishing), Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change (Emerald Publishing), and Energy and Environment (Sage). He completed training on Social Research Method in 2021 organized by the Department of Economics, Comilla University. His focal research interests include Business Intelligence, Corporate Governance, International Trade, Human Capital Investment, Corporate Taxation, Tobacco Taxation and Control, Sustainable Development, Renewable energy, and Environmental Management Accounting.

# Does Higher Tax Rate Affect Tobacco Usage? Determinants of Tobacco Control Mechanism

Author: **Md. Mominur Rahman**

**Background:** Bangladesh is one of the leading tobacco consuming countries in the world, where 37.8 million adults are users of different tobacco products (cigarettes, bidi, zarda, gul, etc.). The consumption of tobacco killed nearly 161,000 people, accounting for 13.5% of all deaths in the country in 2018. Bangladesh is applying a multi-tiered ad-valorem tobacco tax structure that includes four types of cigarettes (low, medium, high, and premium) in terms of price and two types of bidis (filtered and without filtered) as smoked tobacco items. So, tobacco products become less costly and more consuming as tobacco users have a chance to switch from premium brands to low brands.

**Objective:** The purpose of the study was to investigate whether higher tax rate is an effective control mechanism in reducing the consumption of tobacco. **Methods:** This research applied a mixed-method approach that collected quantitative data for 2000-2020 from secondary sources, such as GATS, WHO, NBR, etc. The Ordinary Least Square (OLS) method was employed to analyze the quantitative time-series data after confirming the stationarity of data at level. Besides, qualitative data was gathered through key informant interviews (KII) of 9 participants and analyzed using thematic analysis. EVIEWS 10 and NVivo 12 were used for data analysis for quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. **Results:** The study found a negative relationship between tobacco tax rate and tobacco consumption. More specifically, the higher tax rate of tobacco is significantly related to reducing tobacco use at 1% level of significance [low ( $\beta = -0.3495$ ), medium ( $\beta = -0.2319$ ), high ( $\beta = -0.9033$ ), premium ( $\beta = -0.7322$ ), filtered ( $\beta = -0.2114$ ), and non-filtered ( $\beta = -0.3452$ ) categories]. The study found similar results when it applied tobacco retail price instead of tobacco tax rate as the independent variable. The study employed average tax rate and average retail price to conceptualize a uniform tax base and found a significant relationship that reduces tobacco consumption uniformly. It is surprising that without considering inflation, tobacco tax rate was found as a significant factor to reduce tobacco consumption, but it was found opposite if inflation was considered. Moreover, the qualitative findings summarized the barriers as the failure of current tobacco tax structure in reducing tobacco use, and not considering the inflation rate in imposing tobacco tax. While the application of specific tax rate and uniform category with increased tobacco tax rate revealed as suggestions to reduce tobacco use. **Conclusion:** Higher tax rate on tobacco products is necessary to increase the retail price so that tobacco products will be less affordable to its users. Specific and uniform tax bases are needed so that tobacco users cannot switch to lower priced brands, and these will help to achieve the goal of tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040.



## Anika Nawar Fagun

Research Title:

Exploring Conception of Vape Among Young Adults of Dhaka City

Anika Nawar Fagun completed her Master of Social Science degree in Agribusiness and Marketing from the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, Dhaka. Earlier, she completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from the same institution. She has research interest in agricultural economics, development economics, health and nutrition, and micro-credit. Very recently, she conducted studies titled “COVID-19, Food Security, Food Prices and Urban-rural Interrelationship for Sustainable Food and Nutritional Security: A Study on Dhaka City” and “Determinants of Fertility Trend at District, Divisional and Regional Levels and Policy Implication for Poverty Alleviation”. She also contributed to several studies as Research Assistant in the past. She is a member of the Bangladesh Agricultural Economist Association.

# Exploring Conception of Vape Among Young Adults of Dhaka City

Author: **Anika Nawar Fagun**

**Introduction:** Tobacco use is one of the persistent problems of Bangladesh. About 37.8 million people use tobacco. Vaping issue is the recent addition to this tobacco use problem, and the perception of young adults of Bangladesh about this still needs to be explored. **Objective:** This study aimed to find the conception of vape among young adults of Dhaka city and the association with different socioeconomic status. **Methods:** The study was a cross-sectional survey of 640 young adults (18-25 years). A cluster sampling procedure was followed to collect a representative sample. Initially, from the list of public and private universities, universities were selected randomly, where each university was considered as cluster. Then, individual students were interviewed from the selected universities. For data analysis, descriptive statistical techniques were used, and chi-square test was performed to find the association. **Results:** Among the respondents, 13.2% were current smokers, 3.9% former smokers and 82.6% never smoked. Results showed that friends' attitudes towards smoking had an impact on tobacco smoking status of respondents. Around 65.4% (420) respondents knew about vape; mostly from friends (48.8%) and internet (41.9%). About 4.3% of students used vape at least once and 26.2% of students had the intention of vaping. Respondents' knowledge and conception about vaping were partially clear but misconception was still high. About 22.9% of university students did not consider vape as tobacco product, 41.9% thought vaping is non-addictive, and 58.4% thought that it has no psychological effect. Although vape contains elements like Nicotine, diacetyl, benzene, nickel, lead and ultrafine particles, most of the students (73.1%) had no idea about the elements and 27.3% knew about nicotine only. Regarding vaping-related diseases, 56.4% students had no idea and mostly knew about lung (10%) and heart (7.3%) diseases. About 10.5% of students did not think vape as harmful, 13.8% considered vape as a safe alternative to cigarettes and 9.3% considered it as a smoking cessation tool. Students who were vulnerable to vaping thought that the use of vape should not be restricted (35.3%). Test of association found that respondent's conception of vaping had a significant association with gender, current education level, father's occupation, cigarette smoking status of the respondents, parental indoor smoking status, number of smoker and vaper friends, source of knowledge, seen cigarette smoking within university area, used vape at least once, and duration of knowing vape. **Conclusion:** Based on the findings, the study concluded, though two-thirds of the students knew about vape, still one in four students had an intention to vape in the future. Considering the fact, Government may take a comprehensive policy to ban vaping. University authorities should impose strict regulations on vaping in addition to smoking within the university. Also, they should hold awareness and anti-vaping campaigns frequently.





## Dr. Nasrin Akter

Research Title:

**Opinions to Minimize Tobacco Consumption and Complying  
Tobacco Control Law: Setting Approach in Private University**

Dr. Nasrin Akter is a public health specialist as well as a dental surgeon. She is currently working as a core faculty member at the department of public health, Northern University Bangladesh. She completed her MPH degree from the same institution and achieved the Vice-chancellor award. She has research interests in preventive modeling for non-communicable diseases, primary health care, and health economics. She received the 'Young Researchers Fellowship' grant from WaterAid Bangladesh in 2019 to conduct a study on 'Compliance on existing WASH facilities in community clinics of Bangladesh: A comparative study.' She also conducted another study titled 'Knowledge, attitude and practice of hydraulic horn use and its perceived health effects among the drivers of Dhaka city, Bangladesh.' She was also contributed to a number of research studies on COVID-19 issues. She was involved with several research projects on preventive approaches for communicable and non-communicable diseases. She is the author of several peer-reviewed journal articles. She has also participated in national and international conferences and presented her research findings. She aims to be a global public health leader with sound research skills and apply her knowledge, experiences, skills to achieving sustainable health wellbeing among the population throughout the world.

# Opinions to Minimize Tobacco Consumption and Complying Tobacco Control Law: Setting Approach in Private University

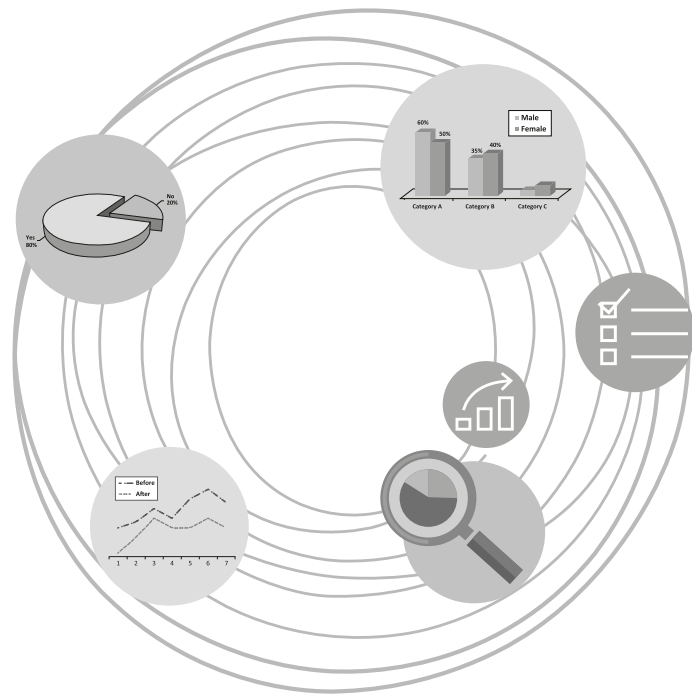
Author: **Dr. Nasrin Akter**

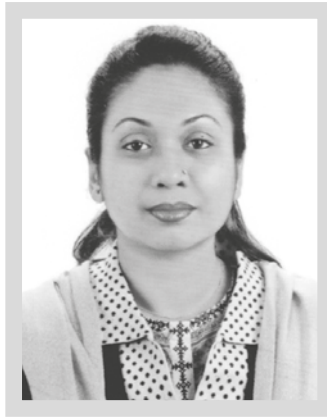
**Background:** Tobacco consumption is one of the major preventable causes for non-communicable diseases and found to be an epidemic among young adults and the working-class groups. Majority of those belong to the university settings in Bangladesh; where it is pivotal to apply tobacco prevention strategies, such as the national tobacco control law (TCL). However, tobacco consumption and compliance or implementation of the TCL have rarely been explored under university settings, that have already been declared as public place under TCL. **Objective:** The aim of this study was to identify the opinions to minimize tobacco consumption and increase compliance with tobacco control law in a private university setting. **Methods:** This study was planned with the descriptive type of cross-sectional design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and was conducted among the 385 randomly selected students of Northern University Bangladesh (NUB). Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and topic guide through survey and In-depth Interviews (20), respectively. After the data management procedure, both descriptive and inferential analysis were done for the quantitative data and considered all results with p-value <0.05 as being statistically significant. Thematic analysis was performed to interpret the qualitative data. All ethical issues were considered to conduct the study. **Results:** Among 385 respondents, around 90% were male and more than half (54%) belonged to the age of 23 years and above. Around one-third (32%) of the respondents consumed different types of tobacco such as cigarette, bidi, hukkah, e-cigarette, smokeless tobacco etc., while 30% reported medium to high Nicotine Dependency. About 35% of the tobacco consumers initiated tobacco use in their university life. Highest majority (95%) of the respondents had overall poor to moderate knowledge on Tobacco Control Law (TCL), health hazards, and quitting tobacco. Based on self-reported responses, it was found that 11% of the smoker respondents smoked within university building, while this proportion was higher in the campus area. Respondents who smoke and seniors (second year and above) were significantly less likely to notice no-smoking sign compared to their counterparts. Regarding possible way outs, student respondents opined that teacher support (64%), self-awareness (47%), and friend's influence (46%) can be the effective strategies against tobacco consumption. The qualitative data revealed that there is no effective policy to minimize tobacco consumption in university as a dominant barrier and the implementation of the TCL is not satisfactory. Moreover, strict monitoring policy, development of tobacco control cells, counseling from teachers and guardians were proposed as effective way-outs by the teachers and administrative staff. **Conclusion:** Knowledge of tobacco control laws was found significantly poor as the laws are not properly implemented in a university setting. Besides, compliance with the TCL is not satisfactory. University authorities and management teams need to develop effective policies incorporating TCL with a strong monitoring system. On top of this, University Grants Commission (UGC) could enforce such strategies through issuing notice/circular with proper monitoring system.



Research Findings  
Dissemination Conference 2022

## Poster Session





**Bilkis Banu**

Associate Professor, Department of Public Health, Northern University Bangladesh and  
PhD Scholar, Heidelberg Institute of Global Health, Heidelberg University, Germany

## **Perceptions related to smart phone application for stopping tobacco consumption among diabetic patients: Bangladesh context in a qualitative approach**

Bilkis Banu\*, Alina Greis, Liaquat Ali, Till Barnighausen, Rainer Sauerborn, Aurelia Souares

**Background:** Diabetic patients are at risk of different complications due to tobacco use which are leading causes of mortality. Considering the rapidly evolving practices of smart phone in Bangladesh, an application had been developed which may help patients for avoiding tobacco use through reminder system. **Objective:** This qualitative study aimed to explore the perceptions regarding the future use of Smartphone applications for stopping tobacco use. **Methods:** Participants were aged  $\geq 18$  years of diabetic patients, relatives, health care providers and policy makers. 25 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) [05: male-senior, 05: male-young, 05: female-senior, 05 female-young, 05: relatives] and 20 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) [15: health-care providers, 05: policy makers] were conducted among subjects available under Diabetic Association of Bangladesh. Interviews were based on the benefits and challenges to use smart phone applications for stopping tobacco use. **Results:** All participants of 25 FGDs (n=150) reported the self-management activities to control diabetes but reported difficulties in stopping tobacco use in addition to dietary and insulin intake. Senior-female diabetic patients (FGDs=03, n=18) were asked not to consume tobacco (tobacco leaf, jarda, and betel leaf) by their children. Both senior- and young-male (FGDs=07, n=42) were asked for avoiding cigarette smoking by the family members. Smokers (n=19) or tobacco consumers (n=40) stated that, a reminder through smart phone application for not to consume tobacco would be useful for them. Specifically, senior-male smokers and senior-females users supported this statement. But young-male group (FGDs=01, n=06) strongly reported that reminding people would not work. From their experience, they said that they tried many times to stop smoking but failed, even though they knew the danger of smoking. Health care providers and policy makers reported positively regarding the reminder of application among smokeless tobacco users where pictorial health warnings are still not available in the pack by solving some technical challenges. **Conclusion:** Majority of participants were found interested to use this application in near future because they hope that this reminder system would be very much helpful for stopping tobacco use among diabetic patients.



**Md. Bazlur Rahman**

Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration  
Dhaka International University

## **Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS): Threats for Youth, Challenges and Way Forward**

**Background:** Currently, 37.8 million people are using tobacco in Bangladesh. The current user of electronic cigarettes in Bangladesh is 0.2 %. Overall, 66.2 % of adult current tobacco users both men and women thinking about quitting (GATS-2017). For those who are trying to quit tobacco, the tobacco industry is trying to convert or motivate them to use electronic cigarettes. **Objective:** The Objectives of the study were to identify the import, promotion & distribution policy and find out the challenges to regulating the e-cigarette in Bangladesh. **Methods:** 15 big e-cigarette shops in 4 market areas in Dhaka city were purposively selected and a semi-structured questionnaire was used for collecting the primary data. Observed 25 websites and in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative information. **Results:** Before 2018 there was no legal order but now the industries are imported under the Bangladesh Government Gazettes 2018 (edited), Law number 22, Heading No 38.24 (Tobacco industry hide all information intentionally and included in the gazettes). E-cigarette shops were situated nearby the university area that targeted youth. Two-way sales- one is direct sales and secondly, they use the online shopping system. The market has been rapidly expanding using aggressive marketing tactics. Existing law does not properly cover E-Cigarette as a tobacco product. E-cigarettes are regularly promoted as safe to their own web pages & displayed picture and video with details. The tobacco industry has some fixed doctors, who suggest intentionally to the patient (tobacco user) to use e-cigarettes as nicotine replacement therapy. **Conclusion:** Bangladesh is the first signatory country of FCTC but still now e-cigarette is an unregulated product and Tobacco Control Law has no specific definition regarding e-cigarettes and so the company aggressively markets their products. So, the Government should ban importing and amend the law.



**A K M Maksud**

Executive Director, Grambangla Unnayan Committee

## **Surveillance on Point of Sales of Tobacco Products and Enforcement of Tobacco Control Laws and Tobacco Control Program Implementation Guideline of Local Government Institutions: An Integrated Strategy to Stop Interference of Tobacco Industry**

A K M Maksud\*, Khandaker Reaz, Hossain, Sabrina Alamgir and Afia Anjum Raisa

**Background:** Grambangla Unnayan Committee (GUC) is working in tobacco control with the support from The Union and Bloomberg Initiatives to reduce tobacco use at six district towns and six Upazilas under Barisal Division. The major component of the intervention included conducting surveillance for documenting and generating an electronic database on the incidences of violations against Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS) ban at the Point of Sales (POS) and to facilitate enforcement of tobacco control laws and tobacco control program implementation guideline of Local Government Institutions (LGI) to stop interferences of the tobacco industry. **Objective:** The objective of this paper is to disseminate the operational mechanism of online surveillance system to monitor incidences of violations of bans on TAPS at POS and the integrated strategy to stop interferences of tobacco industry through facilitating enforcement of laws and tobacco control program implementation guidelines of LGI. **Methods:** This online surveillance has been established on the idea of census of all POS at project areas using android software to fill out an online data collection format with mobile phones and taking a photo of the POS. After that, data collectors uploaded the filled-in form onto the server with the photo and GPS location. The program management team prepared hardcopy of databases of each of the 18 towns having the name and address of POS, phone number of the owner, type of violations against TAPS ban provision of tobacco control laws, information on neighboring schools and hospitals etc. Grambangla tobacco control program team officially shared those databases in hardcopies to District Commission, Civil Surgeon, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer and Mayor of cities. **Results:** The online surveillance during 2018-2020 identified a total of 6821 POS and 21480 incidences of violations of bans on TAPS at 12 towns of Barisal division. Types of advertisement materials on tobacco products were stickers, shop signage, cash box or showcase with tobacco signs, big dummy packets of tobacco products etc. The data collection team visited 6821 POS and removed 7283 advertisement materials on tobacco products. Grambangla team has been working with Local Government Institutions so that each of the 6821 POS took license to sell tobacco products and no POS sell tobacco products within 100 meters of the educational institutions and hospitals. **Conclusion:** This integrated strategy for combating interferences of tobacco industry using online surveillance system can be replicated across all areas of Bangladesh.



**Sayyida Akhter**  
Director, UBINIG



## **Standard packaging for smokeless tobacco products: a crucial tobacco control measure to save the poor and rural women**

Sayyida Akhter\*, Hasanul H.A. Galib

**Background:** Standard packaging for tobacco products, particularly of smokeless tobacco products, is an effective tobacco control mechanism, the absence of which gives way to non-compliance of the graphical health warning, non-disclosure of product-related information, and widening the market to the poor and women. **Objective:** To assess the current situation of the packaging of the SLT products and focus on the role of standard packaging as a substantial tobacco control measure. **Methods:** UBINIG collected 1271 Zarda containers from 64 districts of the country during the period 2019-2020. Secondary data were collected from various sources and KII and FGD were conducted for analyzing the data. **Results:** From the UBINIG study, it came out that currently Zarda and Gul products are being marketed in 45 and 2 different sizes of containers respectively whereas Sadapata is being sold without any packaging. There is no GHW in 33% of the containers; 40% have GHW but not in the proportion stipulated in the law. Moreover, GHWs are often placed in such a place of the packet that they may be concealed or damaged when opening the pack. Under the tobacco control law of Bangladesh, constituents and emissions disclosures are not required though Article 10 of WHO FCTC requires such disclosures. In many cases, the packaging of SLT products does not contain the required information such as production and expiry dates, MRP, etc. whereas the owner's photo, or other attractive pictures and provocative messages are often found to be portrayed vividly. The materials for packaging the SLT products include low-grade tin, plastic and polythene. **Conclusion:** Standard packaging must be introduced as it decreases the appeal of SLT products, increases the effectiveness of health warnings, and decreases the ability of the package to mislead consumers about the harmfulness of SLT products. For this, the TC law amendment is necessary.



**Md. Mukhlesur Rahman**  
Assistant Director  
Health Sector, Dhaka Ahsania Mission

## **E-cigarette use among university students in Dhaka, Bangladesh: A regulatory opportunity**

Md. Mukhlesur Rahman\*, Iqbal Masud, Sharmeen Rahman  
Md. Adut Rahman, Md. Hayatun Nabi, Md. Ataur Rahman

**Background:** E-cigarette use among youth is becoming increasingly common. E-cigarettes are not harmless – they expose users to nicotine, a highly addictive substance that can harm adolescent brain development and negatively affects fetal development when used during pregnancy. In addition, e-cigarettes contain at least 80 other harmful ingredients. The increasing popularity of e-cigarette use among youth threatens to create a new generation of young nicotine and tobacco users, as youth who use e-cigarettes are up to three times more likely to use tobacco products in the future. **Objective:** To understand the students' knowledge about e-cigarettes and how and why they use. **Methods:** A total of three focus group discussions (FGDs) (1 female group, 2 male groups) were conducted with current e-cigarette user students selected by using snowball sampling technique from North South University and the University of Dhaka in Dhaka. Each FGD lasted approximately 90 minutes and was audio-recorded then transcribed. **Results:** Students first heard about e-cigarettes from social media, older siblings, friends, other family members, movies, shopping malls, or gift shops. Most of the students tried their first e-cigarette with friends. While first trying an e-cigarette, most participants were not sure if it contained nicotine or not. 15 out of 23 participants reported that they were trying e-cigarettes because of the flavors. Majority of the participants reported using e-cigarettes helped them to quit smoking conventional cigarettes. Participants perceived e-cigarettes to be less harmful to health compared to conventional cigarettes. Almost all the participants reported seeing e-cigarette advertisements only on social media, particularly on Facebook and Instagram. **Conclusion:** To protect the health and safety of youth and future generations, the government should completely ban E-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and other emerging tobacco products.





**A.K.M. Khalil Ullah**

Project Coordinator, Tobacco Control Project  
NATAB

## **Implementation of TAPS ban laws in Bangladesh through capacity building, effective enforcement and strengthening reporting and monitoring system**

**Background:** The current estimate shows that 35.3% (37.8 million adult people) of people above age of 15 years are using tobacco in any form in Bangladesh. Among adults, 46.0% of male and 25.2% of female use tobacco products (GATS Bangladesh Report, 2017). The Tobacco Control Law 2005 of Bangladesh banned advertisements of tobacco products and that was a partial ban leaving a number of loopholes. Through those loopholes, the tobacco industries developed different strategies including 'point-of-sale advertisement. In 2013, the Government amended the 'Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) (Amendment) Act, 2013', including strong measures to prohibit most of these promotional tactics of tobacco industries. **Objective:** NATAB through its TAPS ban implementation project was able to reduce TAPS from the POS in its project areas. Program Intervention: NATAB Team with the support and direction from the Community leaders, Local Government people, Local Transport Owners and Workers Associations, NGO representatives, journalists, lawyers, religious leaders and social workers aware the related TAPS activities in 12 districts of Bangladesh. **Results:** At the beginning, during first visit NATAB found 90% of shopkeepers depended upon the direct advertisement. After the first visit about 80% of shopkeepers removed their promotional materials. However, after some days, 40% shops reinstated the advertisement having support from the tobacco companies. Giving intervention by the NATAB team and other stakeholders, ultimately, TAPS were reduced to 80%. NATAB team was able the tobacco industry to follow TAPS ban laws. **Conclusion:** Total ban on tobacco advertisement in the POS will put the tobacco company into hardship. Strategically designed tobacco control interventions contribute to reduce TAPS by the tobacco industries.



**Farhana Zaman**

Research Associate and Program Manager  
Tobacco Control Research Cell (TCRC), Dhaka International University

## **Standard packaging to ensure effective enforcement of graphical health warning on Smokeless Tobacco products: current status and gaps in Bangladesh**

Farhana Zaman\*, Aminul Islam Sujon, Md Bazlur Rahman

Md. Mohiuddin, Syed Mahbubul Alam, Barrister Shameem Haider Patwary

**Background:** Among adults aged 15 years and above, the consumption rate of Smokeless Tobacco products is 20.6%, or 22 million that higher than smoking (18.0% or 19.2 million) in Bangladesh (GATS 2017). Graphical Health Warnings (GHW) on both sides of all tobacco products covering 50% or more surface area imposed from 19th March 2016 as per amendment of the Smoking and Tobacco Products Uses (Control) Act 2005 in 2013 and its Rules in 2015. This law made it mandatory to write “approved for selling only in Bangladesh” should also be written in all tobacco packs. **Objective:** To identify the gaps in enforcement of GHWs (section 10 of tobacco control law) in the most common SLT products; zarda/smashed tobacco with betel leaf and gul/tobacco powder in lower gum. **Methods:** Tobacco Control and Research Cell (TCRC) of the Dhaka International University conducted survey from October 2018 to September 2019. Packets of smokeless tobacco products were collected from 295 wholesale shops situated in the 131 bazars (market area) in the 32 district towns. These 295 wholesale shops distributed or sold SLT products to all other local and small shops of these districts. **Results:** GHWs enforcement on the SLT products packs were very weak as only 3% of zarda (out of 667) and none of gul packs complied with the law. Size varied from 5 grams to 120 grams; small size of packs didn’t have enough space for GHWs and written text. 75% of zarda’s packs and 85% of gul packs didn’t provide the sentence “approved for selling only in Bangladesh”. Packing material (such as tins, plastics, polythene, paper) is another problem that can be resolved by standard and unique packets. **Conclusion:** Standard packaging of SLT products based on size can ensure full compliance with Tobacco Control law. TCRC initiated sensitization to concerned government agencies with these findings to make standard packaging for tobacco products.





**Methun Baidya**

Project Officer

World for Better Bangladesh Trust

## Raise Taxes on Tobacco

**Introduction:** Tobacco products have been proved to be a major source of human ailments in developed countries. Every year, 161,000 people die from tobacco-related diseases in Bangladesh and the figure is steadily rising. The low base price of tobacco products in South Asia, numerous price structures, easy availability, and the lack of tobacco control regulations are some of the reasons behind this. **Objective:** This study aimed to document the changing effect on tobacco use in case of raising price in comparison with the price increases of regular commodity with the raising structure of GDP. **Methods:** Two rounds of tobacco retail price survey were conducted in the several areas in Dhaka city and surrounding areas in 2020 and 2021. The surveys were conducted based on the retail price in comparison with the price of regular commodity and purchasing power of the people. A google form was prepared containing number of questions related with the survey. Three hundred people were participated in the survey. Respondents were divided the into two different age groups named “Youth” and “Aged”. The age of the participants in the youth group was between 15-25 years and in the case of the aged group it was 26-45 years. **Results:** The selling price of tobacco products is less than 25% of the purchasing power of the people of Bangladesh which is very alarming. Moreover, the survey found that conventional price structure is a major barrier to discourage them from using tobacco. When asked if the increase in tobacco prices would have any effect on their tobacco use. Their answer to that question was very alarming because most of the smokers reported about receiving low-priced tobacco products instead of the high-priced products. Many of them have even suggested that they continue to use tobacco despite saving money from their daily expenses. **Conclusion:** Increasing the price of an unhealthy product like tobacco in comparison with GDP growth and inflation rate is not consistent with the government's commitment to make a tobacco free Bangladesh by 2040. Impose taxes on tobacco products at higher rates and allocating increased revenue to the health sector will play a big role in tobacco control as well as health development.



**Lylun Naher**

Program Officer, Department of Epidemiology & Research  
National Heart Foundation Hospital & Research Institute

## **Role of Physicians' Network for Effective Tobacco Control in Bangladesh**

Lylun Naher\*, Md Mahamudul Hasan, Dr. Mohammad Mahbus Sobhan, Dr. Shamim Jubayer  
Dr. Mohammad Abdullah Al Mamun, Dr. Mahfuzur Rahman Bhuiyan, Professor Sohel Reza Choudhury

**Background:** According to WHO, in Bangladesh, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are attributable to 67% of total death whilst tobacco claims more than 1,61,000 lives (Tobacco Atlas 2020) yearly. Effective tobacco control is one of the most important components to prevent and control NCDs. In Bangladesh, renowned physicians have been individually working enthusiastically where the integrated effort was not so visible. Hence, a collective and coordinated platform was incredibly important. Realizing this, under the leadership of National Professor Brig. (Rtd.) Abdul Malik, a common platform “United Forum Against Tobacco (UFAT)” was formed in 2010. Subsequently, in 2015, this network was expanded and formed the “Bangladesh Network for NCD Control and Prevention (BNNCP)” involving more physicians’ and civil society members’ organizations which are potentially contributing to combat NCDs and tobacco menace. **Objective:** To act in a collective and coordinated way aimed to support the government to strengthen NCD control and prevention as well as tobacco control program. **Program Intervention:** The key instrument of this network is national level policy advocacy to bring policy changes for NCD control and prevention including tobacco control. Published informative educational content and developed documentaries for awareness building and drawing policy makers’ attention to control deadly tobacco products. Meetings with the Honorable President, Prime Minister, Speaker, relevant ministers, parliamentarians and PMO were the milestones. Conferences, round-table meetings, seminars, orientations, and training programs have been done through this network. **Results:** Robust advocacy of the network brought many significant policy changes in tobacco control arena. This network sensitizes policy leaders, parliamentarians, government high officials and works to achieve Honorable Prime Minister’s committed Tobacco-Free Bangladesh by 2040. Largely, such endeavors will also contribute to enhance achieving the SDG goals where NCDs control is one of the important agendas. **Conclusion:** For any noteworthy movement in public health, physicians’ groups have the greatest potential in preventing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and curbing tobacco hazards. The physician’s network should continue to be actively engaged in tobacco control in Bangladesh in the coming days.



**Samiul Hassan Shajib**

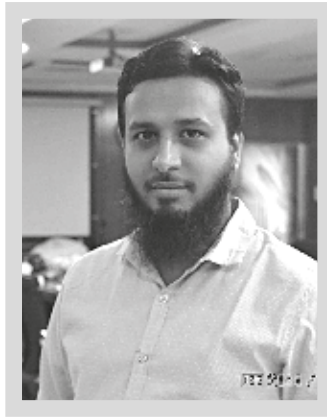
Project Officer

Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust

### **III Tactics of the Tobacco Industry in Bangladesh**

Samiul Hassan Shajib\*, Md. Arif Hossain, Syeda Anonna Rahman, Tresa Krishna Gomes

**Background:** Bangladesh agreed and ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2004 and established a national law in 2005. Later, the law was amended in 2013. However, there is no guideline on how to implement FCTC Article 5.3. As a result, tobacco control programs including other public health programs remain unprotected from Tobacco Industry Interferences (TII). Tobacco industries' violations over the tobacco control rules are common in Bangladesh. **Objective:** To find out the Tobacco Industry Interference that hinders national and local level policymaking as well as decision making. Besides, making a tobacco-free Bangladesh by 2040 as per the commitment made by the honourable Prime Minister. **Methods:** WBB Trust responded quickly wherever the interference of TIs became public and interrupted government policies. WBB Trust collected TII information published in the newspapers, magazines and social media in the year 2021 and considered those reports available as significant TII news. **Results:** From the analysis, WBB Trust found that a total of 604 industry interferences were reported between January-December 2021. Among those reports, some notable interferences were planting trees on several areas in the name of Bonayan, implementing a project of safe drinking water named as 'Probaho', the Managing Director of BATB presented a keynote speech on a NBR hosted event, organizing a workshop on a sustainable model of sugarcane cultivation practices, etc. **Conclusion:** Tobacco businesses use cash to meddle tobacco control drives and common social orders working with moral fortitude. To stop TII, it is urgently needed to establish FCTC 5.3, strengthen the existing tobacco control laws by making an amendment in the existing Tobacco Control Law and developing and enforcing code of conduct for government employees.



**Md. Mohiuddin**

Research Assistant, Tobacco Control & Research Cell (TCRC)  
Dhaka International University

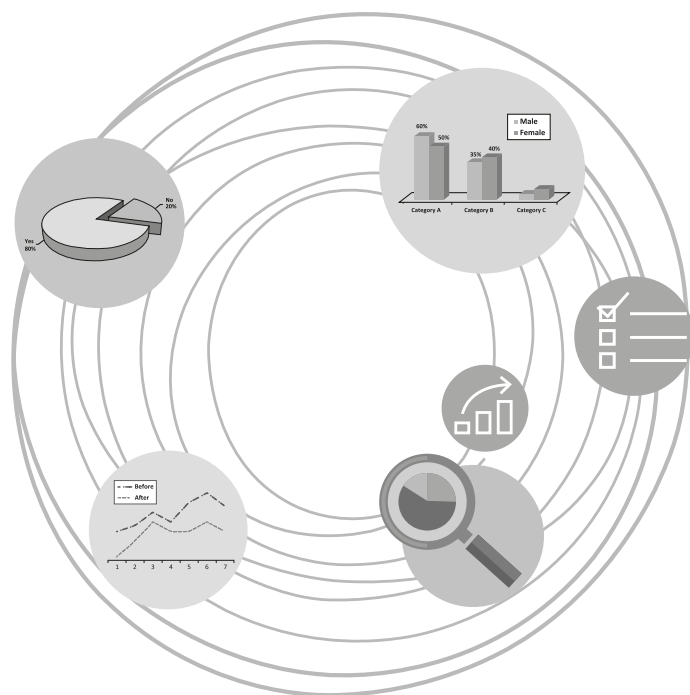
## **Graphical health warning on *bidi* packets in Bangladesh: current gaps and way forward**

Md. Mohiuddin \*, Farhana Zaman , Aminul Islam Sujon , Md Bazlur Rahman,  
Syed Mahbubul Alam, Shameem Haider Patwary

**Background:** *Bidi* (local handmade non-filtered cigarettes) is a low-cost tobacco product in the world and more than 100 sticks *bidis* (5 packs, one pack = 25 sticks) cost around US\$1 only. Poor, ultra-poor and illiterate people smoke bidis. 5.3 million or 5% of adults (15+ years) smoked bidis and on an average of 13.7 *bidis* smoked per smoker per day (GATS Bangladesh 2017). Graphical Health Warnings (GHW) on both sides of all tobacco products covering 50% or more surface area, and “approved for selling only in Bangladesh” were imposed from 19th March 2016 as per amendment of the Smoking and Tobacco Products Uses (Control) Act 2005 in 2013 (section 10) and its Rules in 2015. **Objective:** The purpose of this study is to find out how the legal obligations of GHWs are maintained on *bidi* packs. **Methods:** Samples of *bidi* packets were collected from 160 wholesale shops situated in the 270 bazars (market area) in the 64 district towns from October 2017 to September 2019. Total 139 samples of different packets were collected owned by 39 brands of 30 companies. **Results:** Among the tobacco products available in Bangladesh, GHWs enforcement on the *bidi* packs was worst. Only 18% of packets contain both sides of GHWs, 82% of *bidi* packets have no GHWs on both sides which is a clear violation of the law. GHW in 91% packs were covered by band-roll (tax-stamp). 94% of *bidis* packets did not write the words “approved for selling only in Bangladesh” which is a legal obligation of tobacco packets. None of the *bidi* packets were found fully in compliance with the tobacco control law. **Conclusion:** Standard and unique packaging of *bidi* packets can ensure full compliance with TC law. TCRC initiated sensitization to concerned government agencies with these findings to make standard packaging for tobacco products.

Research Findings  
Dissemination Conference 2022

## List of Research Studies





Sl.	Research Studies Conducted in 2021
1.	Risk Assessment of Pesticides Induced Health Hazards among the Tobacco Farmers: A Study towards Urging New Policy for Tobacco Cultivation Control in Bangladesh
2.	Tobacco Consumption and Severity of COVID-19 Patients: Bangladesh Perspective
3.	Exploring Ban on Selling of Single Stick Smoking and Unpackaged Smokeless Tobacco as a Policy Option for Bangladesh
4.	Effect of Advertisement, Promotion, and Sponsorship on E-cigarette Consumption among the Young Adults in Bangladesh
5.	Does Higher Tax Rate Affect Tobacco Usage? Determinants of Tobacco Control Mechanism
6.	Exploring Conception of Vape Among Young Adults of Dhaka City
7.	Opinions to minimize tobacco consumption and complying tobacco control law: setting approach in private university

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03.	Implication of Unadopted Measures on Reducing Cigarette Smoking: A Study from Corporate Employees' Perspectives
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05.	Investigating Policy Gap Related to Tobacco Advertising, Promotion and Sponsorship (TAPS) Ban in Bangladesh
06.	Situational Analysis of E-Cigarette Usage in Bangladesh
07.	Smoking Zone Facilities in Restaurants and Attitudes and Experiences on Tobacco Smoke among Adults in Dhaka City
08.	Demystifying Tobacco Industry Interferences to Undermine Graphic Health Warning Implementation in Bangladesh

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03.	Enforcement of Tobacco Control Law Regarding Smoke free Public Place and Public Transport: A Case of Bangladesh Railways Jurisdiction
04.	Tobacco Related Content on New Media and its Exposure among University Students in Bangladesh
05.	Implementation Status of Article 5.3 of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to Curb Tobacco Industry Interference in Bangladesh
06.	Determining Density of Tobacco Retail Outlets and Patterns of Tobacco Use Near Schools in Dhaka
07.	Smoke-free Housing Policy for Multiunit Housing Complexes: Evidence from Divisional Cities of Bangladesh
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09.	Shifting of Marketing Paradigm of Tobacco Industry in Bangladesh: Challenges to the Tobacco Control Policy

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03.	Toxicants Release from Different Tobacco Products: Alarming for Environmental Pollution and Health Hazards in Bangladesh
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05.	Compliance with Tobacco Control Law in Uttara Model Town: A Way Forward to a Smoke-free City
06.	Adoption of Tobacco Retail License in Bangladesh: Exploring Possible Outcomes and Implementation Challenges
07.	Graphic Health Warnings on Cigarette Packs: Exploration of its Effectiveness in Deterring the Youth of Bangladesh
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09.	Barriers to Implementing the Tobacco Control Law in Bangladesh

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03.	Factors Influencing Tradition of Smokeless Tobacco Use in Rural Communities of Bangladesh
04.	Business of Loose Cigarettes and Losing of Tobacco Control: Current Situation in Urban Areas of Bangladesh
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06.	The Relationship between Tobacco Consumption Habits and Road Traffic Accidents: A Study among the Heavy Vehicle Drivers in Bangladesh
07.	Implementing Tobacco Control Law in Bangladesh: Challenges and Way Forward
08.	Effectiveness of Tobacco Control Measures at Public and Private University Campuses in Bangladesh
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05.	A comparison of avoidance behavior to secondhand smoke (SHS) among male and female residential students of Dhaka University
06.	Smokeless tobacco use among floating people in Dhaka city
07.	The prevalence of tobacco consumption and its determinants among university students in Sylhet division: A cross-sectional study
08.	Adult smokers' views about tobacco warning labels on cigarette packages: A study in Dhaka city
09.	Determinants of exposure to secondhand smoke at home among children in rural Bangladesh
10.	Emotional, behavioral problems and cigarette smoking behavior: A survey among Bangladeshi adolescents
11.	Factors influencing farmers to turn to tobacco cultivation in khulna division of Bangladesh
12.	Effects of maternal smokeless tobacco use on birth weight and gestational age: A case control study in rural Dhaka, Bangladesh
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14.	Compliance with Tobacco Control Law in public places: A survey in Dhaka city
15.	Patterns of electronic-cigarette use and users' beliefs about its harmful effects
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14.	Disability and Economic Burden of Tobacco Related Illnesses: Experience from Rural Bangladesh
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16.	Dynamics of Smoking Behavior among Urban Adolescents and Young Adults of Bangladesh: Peer Effect and Family Influences
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18.	Perception about Health Effects of Passive Smoking among Young Adults in Dhaka
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20.	The Tobacco Consumption Practice of Female Day Labourers at Brick Kilns in Dhaka





Sl.	Research Studies Conducted in 2013
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02.	Trade-off between the Informal Economy of Tobacco and Tobacco Control Policy in Bangladesh
03.	Form and Effect of Indirect Advertisement and Promotion Activities of Tobacco Products in Khulna
04.	Tobacco use among Rickshaw Pullers of Dhaka City: Behavior, Awareness and Prevention
05.	Tobacco Smoking among the Adult Students: A KAP Study in Dhaka City
06.	Secondhand Tobacco Smoke and Respiratory Problems among the Infants of Smoker and Non-smoker Parents
07.	Study on Health Hazards among the Tobacco Curing Workers of Bangladesh
08.	The Practice and Consequences of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by Tobacco Companies in Bangladesh
09.	Effect of Raising Taxes on Tobacco Consumption
10.	Prevalence of Smoking among Physicians of Bangladesh

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