

Roundtable workshop with health media journalists

Activity: Organize pictorial health warning workshop for health media journalists

Workshop title: How to ensure a 90% Graphic Health Warning on tobacco products in Nepal

Aim of workshop: This activity would support to encourage journalists writing on tobacco control and pictorial health warning.

Purpose of workshop: Delay in implementation of 90% Pictorial Health warning in Nepal, even after the government amended new directives of tobacco control – 2014.

Attended personnel's: Health journalists from different media houses

Venue: Rosyo, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal

Time: 9:00 AM

Organized by: Action Nepal, Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepal

Agenda sharing:

Statement of problem: Current situation of Nepal;

Tobacco users: Male – 35.5 %, Female – 15 %

Death rate: 68 people/day & yearly 25,000 people

Global death rate: 6 million peoples

Situation of graphic health warning around the globe:

Nepal – 90%(Not implemented), Australia – 90%, Pakistan – 85%, India – 85%, Thailand – 85%, Uruguay – 80%, Sri-lanka – 80%, Brunei – 75%, Bhutan – tobacco free country, Bangladesh – 50%

Legal provision – Nepal:

Directive for printing and labeling of warning message and picture on box, packet, wrappers, carton, parcel and packaging of tobacco products – 2014. (New Directive – 90% graphic health warning)

Importance of PHW on tobacco products:

- Messages are more reliable by pictures representation technique.
- Graphic representation is the best method proven to warn about the danger of tobacco.
- Country like – Nepal, it is the most appropriate tool to save the lives of people due to illiteracy.
- Rotation of pictures may recall the danger to users.
- Help to stay quit to ex-smokers.
- Discourage the new users.
- Help to quit the current smokers.

Tobacco industries tactic:

Tobacco industries try to launch their product by mentioning mild, menthol, polar ice, low tar, sponsorship, scholarship, purse, court, political influence etc.

Past experience:

Constitutional assembly has passed the tobacco act 2000 but Health Minister was unwilling to do that, we Action Nepal have convinced the editor of Naya-patrika national daily to ink for tobacco campaign.

- Naya Patrika and other media houses pain staking effort results the new directives get approved.
- Govt. of Nepal started to monitor the tobacco products in market to ensure the PHW after the two years of tobacco products control and regulatory act 2010, only after the media and public pressure. Minister for Health and Population led team went in market for monitoring accompanied with other government officials along with media.

Responsible agencies of the problem in delaying the new directives:

- Ministry of Health and Population
- Ministry of Industry
- Inland Revenue Department
- Custom Department
- Home Ministry

Summary and Conclusion:

We Action Nepal team conducted a press meet in the capital with aiming to ensure a 90% Graphic Health Warning in Nepal. 9 media houses attended the workshop, they were Nepal One TV, Gorkhapatra, Nayapatrika, Radio Sagarmatha, AV News TV, Nepal Samacharpatra, RSS, The Himalayan Times and Swasthya Khabar.

The workshop activity was printed in different national daily newspapers regarding the danger of tobacco use and the key points of the discussion were poor enforcement of “Tobacco products control and Regulatory Act”. The summary of particular workshop was also broad-casted in various online news and TV channels.

Though the government amended the Directives for Printing and Labelling of Warning Message and Graphics in the Boxes, Packets, Wrappers, Carton, Parcels and Packaging of tobacco products- 2011, it is delaying implementation.

As per the amendment, tobacco companies must give more space on packets of cigarettes and tobacco related products to pictorial warnings depicting health hazards related to tobacco consumption. The coverage area of pictorial warnings in wrappers, packets and other packaging of tobacco products was increased to 90 percent from the existing 75 percent. We will move the court if the government took too long to implement the new amendment related to tobacco related products. The main objective of the new amendment is to discourage people, especially the young generation, from using tobacco products. Tobacco products cause various non-communicable diseases and the amendment in the law is expected to help minimize the health hazards through pictorial warning.