

Roundtable workshop Report

Activity: Organize implementation of pictorial health warning workshop with media, members of parliaments and civil society.

Workshop title: Implementation of 90 % Pictorial Health Warning; “A meet with media, members of parliaments and civil society”

Aim of workshop: This activity is to support and encourage the media to write on effective implementation of 90% PHW, to make civil more aware about the effect of 90% PHW as well as for assisting the enforcement of Tobacco products (control and regulation) Act-2068.

Purpose of workshop: Though 21 months have passed since the government enforced the guideline for including 90% PHW on tobacco products; carelessness is found in the implementation of 90% Pictorial Health Warning in Nepal. Even most of the international brands are complying the law and recently some domestic products like WINSTON have also started 90% PHW on their products, the largest manufacturing company Surya Nepal has not yet started to implement.

Attended personnel's: Dr. Karbirnath Yogi (Senior Physician), Mr. Radha Krishna Kadel (Member of Parliament), Mr. Bhogendra Dotel (Joint-Secretary and Spokesperson, Health Ministry), Mr. Mahendra Prasad Shrestha (Chief of Health Ministry), Shambhu Regmi (Health Minister of Law), Mr. Khimanand Bhusal (Chiefsecretary of Agriculture Ministry), Health Journalists and different media houses, Mr. Anand Bahadur Chand (Chairman/ Action Nepal) and Mr. Ram Prasad Neupane (Chief Editor of Nepali Health)

Venue: Indreni Banquate, New Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal

Time: 9:00 AM

Organized by: Action Nepal, Sinamangal, Kathmandu, Nepalihealth & HEAFON

Agenda sharing: Round Table Talk and ppt. presentation by Mr. Anand Bahadur Chand/ chairman-Action Nepal

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

Health Problem: 15,000 people suffered health problems only caused by the use of tobacco products every year in Nepal.

Effects of 90% PHW: Person who consumed 11 cigarettes per day earlier had started to consume only 5 cigarettes after the implementation of 90% PHW

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 leaded 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 round table workshop in the capital with aiming to ensure a 90% Graphic Health Warning in Nepal. Almost all media houses attended workshop, they were Nepal One TV, Gorkhapatra, Nayapatrika, Radio Sagarmatha, AV News TV, Nepal Samacharpatra, RSS, The Himalayan Times, SwasthyaKhabar, Nepalihealth, Kantipur, HEAFON, Sadhana, Hamrodoctor.com, Thahakhabar, Karobar Daily etc.

The workshop activity was printed in different national daily newspapers regarding the risk 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 before 21 months, some tobacco industries are not yet ready to implement 90% Pictorial Health Warning.

As per the amendment, tobacco companies must give more space on packets of cigarettes and tobacco related products to graphical warnings depicting health hazards related to tobacco consumption. The coverage area of pictorial warnings in wrappers, packets and other packaging of tobacco products were increased to 90 percent from the existing 75 percent. Giving 90 percent space to health warning messages on tobacco products through pictorial elements and texts on the bundles, packets, wrappers and parcels of tobacco product is mandatory which also bans tobacco use in public places. 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.

In the program, the focus point was to give 90 percent space health warning messages on tobacco products through pictorial warning and messages on the bundles, packets, wrappers and parcels of tobacco products which should be mandatory to ban tobacco use in public places. Supporting to the statement, Dr. Karbirmath Yogi, senior physician, said that smoking is the main cause behind cancer and it also causes different diseases related to heart and lungs. Giving prominence on why it becomes delay for the proper implementation of 90% pictorial health warning, Joint-Secretary and Spokesperson at the health ministry Bhogendra Dotel said that monitoring would be made strict and industries, home affairs and finance minister should have to coordinate in the days ahead for the implementation of the provision prohibiting smoking at public places. Similarly, member of parliament, Radha Krishna Kadel said the government himself is responsible for the delay in implementation of the law Act on tobacco products. He added that all including industries have to initiate for the effective implementation to get success. Khimanand Bhusal, Joint-Secretary Ministry of Agriculture, said that the stress taking place against act implementation. He also said it is the time to coordinate to solve the weakness on the implementation of law Act. Furthermore, Joint-Secretary of ministry of law, Shambhu Regmi said that the law has been already implemented. For the progress, district wise the authority has been given individually to responsible person to implement and control tobacco use. Moreover, he assured that the tobacco control Act will be strictly implement from coming 1 Chaitra, 2073. Mahendra Prasad Shrestha, District Health Officer of Kathmandu, said that the policy and tobacco Act-2014 is perfect; however, due to lack of proper coordination among responsible personalities and priority towards the act is raising the difficulties to access an effective implementation. Action Nepal Chairperson Ananda Chand urged the bodies concerned to strictly enforce the provision of incorporating 90 percent health warning messages and pictures in packets, parcels and wrappers of tobacco products. He added that diseases emerging due to use of tobacco products have become the main public health problem. Chand said the health ministry should make the guideline mandatory by carting out monitoring as domestic industries have not followed the government's provision. Likewise, Chief Editor of Nepali Health Online Ram Prasad Neupane said that media should not stop raising the issue as tobacco products (Control and Regulation) Act and Health Regulations-2016 remain always in the shadow due to frequent change of leadership at the health ministry.