

Bal Parishad

Introduction

In India, the conceptual framework for the Army that it exists for war against enemies of the country has been extended to attainment of specific objectives in social and political arena. In a similar move, the children of the Salaam Bombay Foundation schools have joined to form a Super Army. 'Soldiers' of the 'Super Army' wage a war against tobacco, using weapons like art, theatre, music, sports and advocacy.

Currently over 22,000 students from all over Mumbai are part of the Super Army Advocacy Program. They are working towards increasing awareness about the harms of tobacco and ensuring stronger implementation of the Indian tobacco control

law that guards their generation from becoming tobacco victims. Beginning with making schools and neighborhood tobacco free, these children work with government departments like the Police, Food & Drug Administration, Media, Health and Education departments to protect the public from tobacco, warn them about the dangers of tobacco use, and enforce bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. The Super Army program seeks to give children a strong sense of belonging and self that leads to tobacco control focused advocacy.



Objective

The objective of the Super Army Advocacy program is to empower and educate youth to advocate with governmental decision-makers to enforce laws to reduce tobacco use at the community level.

Methodology

A module has been developed by Salaam Bombay Foundation on tobacco control advocacy. This module is being implemented in Municipal schools of Mumbai. A comprehensive package of sessions, workshops, and activities have been developed to introduce students to the



advocacy process, different stakeholder groups, the government's role in tobacco control, and the tobacco control law in India. In the process, a school level Bal Panchayat is formed so students can participate in school level advocacy activities. Eight representatives from each school are elected as a member of Bal Panchayat. An intensive training workshop is organized for school Bal Panchayat leaders to further build up their advocacy capacity as well as leadership skills. Further, two leaders (who are members of Bal Panchayat) from each school are selected to participate in Bal Parishad. During Bal Parishad, the children from different schools collectively draft and submit a charter of demands to senior government officials.

7th Bal Parishad, 2013



Salaam Bombay Foundation convened the 7th Bal Parishad at Vanmali Hall, Dadar, Mumbai on February 6th for over 200 children (Bal Panchayat Leaders) from 119 Municipal schools across Mumbai. These children not only presented their tobacco control advocacy work to the different stake holders who in turn guided them on how they can take it to the next level but also questioned the respective authorities on their action on implementation of COTPA in the state.

As government representative, present at the Bal Parishad were Mr. Mahesh Zhagade - Commissioner, FDA, Maharashtra; Mr.

Asharam Pathre, Senior PI; Mrs. Sherin Lokhande - Deputy Commissioner, Labour Department, Maharashtra ; Dr Jadhav, Health Executive Officer, BMC and others.

The Bal Parishad questioned government representatives on implementation of all the sections of COTPA 2003 and discussed an appropriate tobacco control action plan for the year 2013. The children also presented a demand charter to the resource persons. The charter included the extension of the guthka and paan masala ban, inclusion of COTPA in police monthly crime report, the creation of tobacco free schools and a complete ban on



manufacture, sale and distribution of all forms of tobacco products, including cigarettes. Besides submitting a charter of demands, the Bal Parishad also discussed Various issues like the sale of tobacco within

a 100 yard radius of school premises, sale to minors, direct and indirect tobacco advertising, tobacco use in public places, stricter implementation of ban on Gutkha and the role of the government, the police, FDA and media were discussed in detail.



"The ban is valid for only one year starting July 2012. We have already done the necessary work to seek extension to the ban. Banning gutkha and paan masala was the first step; we will also focus on banning khaini and other such products."

"Children have immense power and should be missionaries of the movement. The ban will then spread all over the country."

- Mahesh Zaqade, Commissioner, FDA.

Media Coverage

Ban pan masala, gutkha and cigarettes forever: Students

YOUNG ACTIVISTS Ask law enforcers why police are still consuming banned tobacco substances

HT Correspondent

■ mumbai.hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Why is my school not tobacco free? When the police themselves consume gutkha, what action can be taken against them? Why is gutkha still being sold outside my school? Why are police not aware of the laws related to gutkha ban?

Questions such as these were asked by more than 200 class 8 and class 9 municipal school children from across the city to law enforcers, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), and police.

The workshop titled Bal Parishad, was organised by Salaam Mumbai, a non-governmental organisation working with children against tobacco consumption in the city. State FDA commissioner Mahesh Zagade, police inspector AK

NO SMOKING, CHEWING



ILLUSTRATION: SHRIKRISHNA PATKAR

Pathare, Sherin Lokhande Deputy Commissioner of labour department, Mumbai, among others, attended the workshop.

When children asked why cigarettes are not banned yet, Zagade said, "You should think of what is good and bad for you and avoid all things bad. The law will come later. We are first concentrating on gutkha because most Indians consume

tobacco in the form of gutkha."

The children said the amount of fine imposed for chewing or smoking tobacco in public should be increased. They also said that police remained ignorant Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) which prohibits the sale of tobacco within 100 metres of schools. On the issue of police officers consuming gutkha, Zagade said,

The Maharashtra government banned gutkha and pan masala on July 19, last year. The ban came in the wake of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2011, which prohibits production, distribution and sale of food products with tobacco.

Mahesh Zagade, the state Food and Drug Administration commissioner, said they would concentrate on other food products that contain tobacco such as khaini, masher, among others. There are 86 kinds of tobacco being sold all over the country.

STUDENTS' DEMANDS

Ensure all school premises in the state are tobacco free by atleast a 100 metres
impose ban on khaini, cigarettes and beedi
impose ban on direct and indirect advertising of tobacco products
implement the ban on smoking in public places and places of work

"If any officer does not implement the law, the officer becomes a burden on the society. You children should come forward and protest against these officers," Zagade told the students to be inspired by Malala Yousofzai, the Pakistani student who was attacked by the Taliban who called for a ban on girls' education. Zagade said that they would

focus on other forms of tobacco such as khaini, masher after the apex court clears the notification that bans gutkha and pan masala. When a school girl pointed out that the ban on gutkha and pan masala was only for one year, Zagade said they had written to the central government for a permanent ban on the substances which will definitely come into effect next year.

Hindustan Times

तंबाखूवर कायमची बंदी घाला

मुंबई, दि. ६ (प्रतिनिधी) - तंबाखू आणि तंबाखूयुक्त अन्य पदार्थांवर कायद्याची काटेकोरपणे अंमलबजावणी व्हावी. तसेच तंबाखूवर असलेली बंदी वर्षभरापुरतीच न ठेवता ती कायमस्वरूपी करावी, असा टाहो विद्यार्थ्यांनी एफडीएचे महेश झगडे यांच्यासमोर फोडला. आज दादर येथील वनमाळी सभागृहात आयोजित केलेल्या बालपरिषदेत ते बोलत होते.

'सलाम बॉम्बे फाऊंडेशन' या संस्थेच्या वतीने आज 'बालपरिषद' - मुंबई चिल्ड्रेन हेल्थ असेम्ब्ली कार्यशाळेचे आयोजन केले होते. यावेळी महेश झगडे यांचे प्रमुख उपस्थिती होती. यावेळी विद्यार्थ्यांनी तंबाखूचे उत्पादन बंद करायला हवे. सर्वाना कायद्याविषयी माहिती करून घायला हवी असेही सांगितले. विद्यार्थ्यांनी ठरवले तर बरेच काही बदल शक्य हे सांगताना मुलींच्या शिक्षणासाठी झटत असलेल्या पकिस्तानची मलाला युसुफजायचाही आदर्श समोर ठेवा. तिचा आदर्श समोर ठेवत विद्यार्थ्यांनी स्वतः पुढाकार घेऊन

परिस्थिती बदलायला हवी. तुमचे आरोग्य तुमच्या हातात आहे. ते सुदृढ ठेवायचे की अशा व्यसनांच्या अधीन व्हायचे हे तुमचे तुम्हीच ठरवायला हवे असेही ते पुढे म्हणाले.

यावेळी विद्यार्थ्यांच्या प्रश्नांवर सविस्तर चर्चा करण्यात आली. या परिषदेत मुंबईतील ११६ शाळांतील विद्यार्थ्यांनी उत्कृष्ट सहभाग घेतला होता, तसेच याबाबत जनजागृतीसाठी विद्यार्थ्यांनी तयार केलेली पोस्टरही होती. या परिषदेत कामगार उपायुक्त शैरीन लोखंडे, अग्रवाल, पाठारे, जाधव, देविका आदी उपस्थित होते.

विद्यार्थ्यांचे 'एफडीए' च्या आयुक्तांना साकडे



विद्यार्थ्यांच्या मागण्या

- महाराष्ट्रातील सर्व शाळांचा परिसर तंबाखूमुक्त करा.
- सार्वजनिक ठिकाणी सर्रास होणारे धूमपान बंद करा
- सिगारेट, गुटखा, विडी-यावरचा टॅक्स वाढवावा
- तंबाखू उत्पादक शेतकऱ्यांना पर्यायी पीक उत्पादनासाठी प्रोत्साहन द्या

प्रत्येकाने पुढाकार घेणे आवश्यक

गुटखामुक्त हिंदुस्थान होण्यासाठी प्रत्येकाने पुढाकार घेणे आवश्यक आहे. शाळेच्या आवारात चुकीचे घडत असेल तर वेळीच मुख्याध्यापकांच्या निदर्शनास आणण्याचे आवाहन एफडीएचे महेश झगडे यानी केले आहे.

Saamana

After gutka, FDA seeks more ban

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, FEB. 6

After banning gutka, the Food and Drugs Association is planning to seek a ban on other tobacco products like pan masala, bidi, khaini from the Supreme Court.

The Bombay high court had given a verdict in favour of the Maharashtra government, after which, not only gutka, but also pan masala has been banned in Maharashtra. The manufacturers then appealed in the SC against the judgments.

However, even without gutka and pan masala, there are 86 different ways of tobacco consumption, which are all equally dangerous to health, experts said.

Mahesh Zagade, commissioner of FDA Maharashtra said, "As long as only tobacco is being sold, it cannot be procured by us. But, any product, which has tobacco and has been processed, or contains nicotine can be seized by the FDA."

He added that the FDA has been busy implementing the ban on gutka and pan masala, but after the SC verdict, even products like khaini and masherai will be targeted. The FDA, along with senior government officials and the police par-

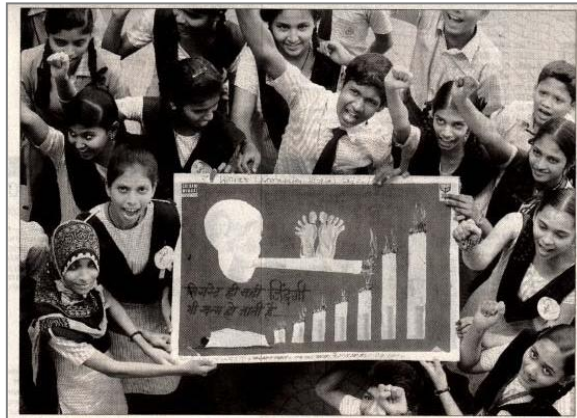
Any product, which has tobacco and has been processed, or contains nicotine can be seized by the FDA

— Mahesh Zagade
FDA commissioner
Maharashtra

ticipated in an advocacy workshop, wherein 200 children from 104 municipal schools across Mumbai collectively submitted a charter of demands to senior government officials, seeking an extension of the gutka ban in the state and support towards strictly implementing tobacco laws in the city.

The Salaam Bombay Foundation, an NGO that has been working against tobacco, organised the workshop Balparishad. Modelled on the Parliament Assembly, Balparishad is a first-of-its-kind health assembly for school children.

In a question and answer session with authorities from the BMC, the state government, FDA, media, police, NGOs, children from class 11 and 12 evaluated and discussed effective tobacco-control advocacy programmes.



The charter includes demands such as extension of gutka and pan masala ban, ban on khaini, beedi and cigarettes, increase in tax on tobacco products and ban on ads of these products. GANESH SHIRSEKAR

Make schools tobacco-free, students petition FDA, police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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OVER 200 students of 104 BMC schools submitted Wednesday a charter of demands to state Food and Drugs Administration (FDA) and police, seeking implementation of gutka ban.

At a workshop titled Mumbai Children Health Assembly by Salaam Bombay Foundation, the children aged 13-15 years put some tough questions to FDA commissioner Mahesh Zagade and police inspector A K Pathare.

"There is a shop selling beedi and pan masala near my school. I went with a couple of friends to the closest police station and lodged a complaint. However, we were not taken seriously and the shop still stands. The ban in such cases becomes pointless," said a student of Maulana Azad School in Agrpada.

"A complainant can always approach a senior officer in case of inaction (by a junior). Definitely, action will be taken," Pathare promised.

The charter includes demands such as extension of gutka and

pan masala ban, ban on khaini, beedi and cigarettes, increase in tax on tobacco products and ban on ads of these products.

"The ban is valid for only one year starting July 2012. We have already done the necessary work to seek extension to the ban. Banning gutka and pan masala was the first step, we will also focus on banning khaini and other such products," Zagade said, adding, "Children have immense power and should be missionaries of the movement. The ban will then spread all over the country."

FDA lens on tobacco abuse

Pratibha Masand | TNN

Mumbai: The Food and Drugs Association (FDA) is planning to crack down on other forms of tobacco once the ban on gutka and pan masala is cleared by the Supreme Court. There are 86 different ways in which tobacco can be consumed that are dangerous to health, say experts.

"As long as only tobacco is sold, we can't curb the menace. But any product which has tobacco and has been processed or any product containing nicotine can be seized by the FDA," FDA commissioner Mahesh Zagade said.

"After the SC verdict, even products like khaini and masherai will be targeted," he added. The FDA held a workshop in which 200 children from 104 municipal schools across Mumbai participated.

Kids learn more about ban on gutka

200 students participate in 'Bal Parishad' workshop

By A Staff Reporter

More than 200 students from around 104 BMC schools in the city participated in a workshop called Bal Parishad - Mumbai's Children's Assembly 2012-13 organised by Salaam Bombay Foundation (SBF). In this first of its kind health assembly for school children, the children not only asked questions about the ban on gutka and pan masala in the state, its implementation, action taken against offenders and about measures to keep not only gutka and pan masala but also tobacco away from everybody and more so from children's reach to senior government and BMC officials present there, but also submitted a

charter of demands to them. The charter demanded extension of gutka ban and strict enforcement of the Control of Tobacco Products Act (COTPA).

Present among several officials who had to answer the children's questions were state FDA commissioner Mahesh Zagade and Asaram Pathare, Sr. PI from Bhoiwada police station. They assured the children that they will always strive to do their best to make the state gutka and pan masala free. "We are doing what is in the law but everything can not be done by us alone. We need people's support too. We need children like you to come and join us in the fight against gutka. All of us have to come together," said Zagade.