

# Kolkata gets smoke savvy

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, Oct. 1: Ninety one per cent of Kolkatans are in favour of regulations for making workplaces and public places in the country smoke free, according to a survey conducted by Synovate's global omnibus.

The survey was commissioned by Healis Sekhsaria Institute for Public Health, Navi Mumbai. Apart from Kolkatans, residents in Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai were interviewed.

The survey revealed that 91% people in Kolkata feel that it is the right of the customers and employees to breathe clean smoke free air in work and public places.

Smoking in public is going to be banned from tomorrow. Public places include hotels, restaurants, workplaces, shopping malls, cinema halls, educational institutions and libraries, hospitals, auditorium, amusement centres, railway stations and bus stops.

The offender would be fined upto Rs 200. It may be mentioned here that the Union health minister, Mr A Ramadoss, a few days ago, had requested the state chief minister, Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, to give up smoking in office.

The latter, however, refused to comment on this issue. The Cancer Foundation of India (CFI) in collaboration with New Delhi based Voluntary Health Association of India would launch a campaign to create awareness against smoking from tomorrow.

A report published by WHO on global tobacco epidemic, 2008 (The MPOWER package) states that 57% of adult males and 1.4% adult females in the country use tobacco. Whereas, among youth (13 to 15 years), 57% males and 3.1% females use tobacco. The report states that tobacco use kills 5.4 million people a year and the condition is worsening especially in developing countries where more than 80% of tobacco caused deaths are predicted to occur in the coming decades.

The report recommends governments to adopt a package of six policies called MPOWER to fight tobacco menace. A city based respiratory medicine expert said numbers of children who are victims of passive smoking are fast increasing in the city and many of them have to be given inhalers for relief.

But despite requests from doctors parents refuse to give up smoking. He felt that campaign against smoking among educated Indians is urgently required.