

Smokeless tobacco - Assam

- Nearly two in every five people in the state consume any form of smokeless tobacco (SLT) and there has been an increase in SLT use in the state from Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2009-10 (GATS-1) to Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2016-17 (GATS-2).
- More than 9 million adults in the state use SLT products, this is almost ten times of the population of Guwahati city.
- Huge increase is evident in the use of betel quid with tobacco (mainly due to increased use among females) and *khaini*/tobacco lime mixture while slight increase is recorded in use of *gutkha*, tobacco lime, areca-nut mixture in the state.

Table 1. Smokeless tobacco prevalence in Assam

Tobacco and Areca Nut use	GATS-1	GATS-2
Current SLT use	32.7	41.7
Betel quid with tobacco	14.7	19.0
Khaini/tobacco lime mixture	14.3	23.1
<i>Gutkha</i> , tobacco lime, areca-nut mixture	7.3	8.2
Oral tobacco (as snuff, <i>mishri</i> , <i>gul</i> , <i>gudakhu</i>)	1.7	1.1
<i>Paan masala</i> with tobacco		2.9
Snuff		0.2
Other SLT	10.4	0
<i>Paan masala</i> without tobacco		10.9
Betel quid without tobacco,		46.6
Areca nut		11.9

SLT use and patterns across gender

- Nearly half of the men in the state currently use SLT products, while the corresponding figure among women is 32.5% this is significantly higher than GATS-1 for both.
- Among women, oral tobacco (as snuff, *mishri*, *gul*, *gudakhu*) has slightly declined. Whereas among men, decline was observed in use of betel quid with tobacco and oral tobacco (as snuff, *mishri*, *gul*, *gudakhu*).
- Use of *khaini*/tobacco lime mixture has increased among both males and females, which call for SLT control efforts focused on both genders.

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Access to minors:

- The age of SLT initiation has only increased by six months (from 17.9 years to 18.5 years) and still nearly 41.4% SLT users reported starting tobacco use before the age of 18 years. Almost 62% SLT users reported starting by the age of 20 years.

Cessation without any assistance:

- The percentage of successful quitters have more than doubled (from 1.2% to 2.5%) and there is overall motivation and interest to quit SLT use. Users of SLT who made quit attempts in past 12 months increased from 21.2% to 30.1%.
- Adults who stayed quit in last 1 to 4 years have increased from 26.2% to 43.9%.
- More than 35% users were not asked by health care professionals (HCPs) if they used SLT and nearly 30% users of SLT were not advised to quit by the HCPs.
- Pharmacotherapy (2.3%), counseling (7.2%) and other measures (1.5%) have little role in people quitting SLT use in the state. Over three in every five SLT users responded that they preferred tobacco cessation without any assistance.

Economic Aspect

- Majority of purchase is from stores (67.8%) and kiosks (25.8%). SLT purchase has declined substantially from street vendors (from 45% to 3.4%).
- The average expenditure for the last purchase has increased more than threefold, from ₹6.1/- in 2009-10 to ₹19.0/- in 2016-17. This is greater than nine other states and UTs and twice the amount that an SLT user spends in Bihar. This is 0.37% of the state GDP if we consider the last purchase to be weekly and 2.63% if we consider it daily.

Advertising

- There is not much change in exposure to SLT advertisements as adults who noticed any type of advertisement or promotion of SLT products at point of sale or at other places has a marginally declined of 1% from 25.2% to 24.2 from 2010 to 2017.
- The percentage of adults who noticed anti-tobacco advertisements during the last 30 days at any location increased from 39.5% to about 46.1%.
- The number of SLT users who thought about quitting because of the pack warnings has increased more than three times in the state from 14.6% to 48.1%.

Knowledge, Attitudes & Perception

- Non-users are slightly more aware than users about the serious ill effects of SLT use and the various diseases caused due to its use.