

Smokeless Tobacco - West Bengal

- There is a slight overall decline of 1.8% in SLT use in the state compared to 2009-10.
- Approximately 1.5 crore adults in the state use SLT products, this is almost seven and half times of the population of Howrah city.
- Most of adults have decreased betel quid usage with tobacco (2.8%) while there is slight increase in *Khaini* (1.9%) usage in West Bengal.

Table 1. Smokeless tobacco prevalence in West Bengal

Tobacco and Areca Nut use	GATS-1	GATS-2
Current SLT use	21.9	20.1
Betel quid with tobacco	9.2	6.4
<i>Khaini</i> /tobacco lime mixture	8.9	10.8
<i>Gutkha</i> , tobacco lime, areca-nut mixture	4.5	2.9
Oral tobacco (as snuff, <i>mishri</i> , <i>gul</i> , <i>gudakhu</i>)	4.3	4.9
<i>Paan masala</i> with tobacco	-	2.2
Snuff	-	0.2
Other SLT	2.1	0.1
<i>Paan masala</i> without tobacco	Non-Tobacco Products	4.8
Betel quid without tobacco,		5.7
Areca nut		11.6

SLT use and patterns across gender

- Oral tobacco (as snuff, *mishri*, *gul*, *gudakhu*) use among female has increased almost four times while use of *gutkha*, tobacco lime, areca-nut mixture has increased almost twice since 2009.
- There is greater decline in SLT use among men (3%) compared to females (0.6%) in the state during this period.

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Access to minors

- The age of initiation has increased by 2.1 years from 17.9 years in 2009-10 to 20 years in 2016-17 with 25% SLT users starting to use before the age of 18 years while 42% start using before the age of 20 years.

Cessation without any assistance

- The number of quitters (Former daily users of smokeless tobacco) has doubled in the state from 2.6% in 2009-10 to 4.1% 2016-17.
- There is a lack of interest in quitting SLT use as the number of users who are not interested in quitting has increased by about 9% during this period.
- Almost 60% SLT users were not asked by health care professionals (HCPs) if they used smokeless Tobacco and more than two third users of SLT were not advised to quit by the HCPs in the past 12 months.
- Pharmacotherapy (6.2%), counseling (17.2%) and other measures (10.0%) have played little role in quitting SLT use in the state. Six out of ten users responded that they preferred tobacco cessation without any assistance.

Economic Aspect

- Majority of SLT purchase is from Kiosks. There is significant decline in purchase from stores and huge increase in purchase from street vendors. SLT buyers have switched their buying from stores to kiosk and street vendors. Overall it is the minors (15-17 years of age) who buy more from street vendors. Such unrestricted sales not only make tobacco easily accessible but also create room for illicit trade. This calls for licensed sale to ensure compliance with COTPA and also prevent illicit trade in tobacco.
- The average expenditure for the last purchase has increased more than three-fold, from ₹5.0/- in 2009-10 to ₹18.4/- in 2016-17. This is 0.13% of the state GSDP if we consider the last purchase to be weekly and 0.93% if we consider it daily.

Advertising

- Adult SLT users who have noticed any kind of SLT advertisement have decreased by 2.4%
- However, the number of adults who noticed anti-tobacco advertisements have increased almost 26% compared to GATS-1.
- The number of users who thought about quitting because of the pack warnings has increased more than 20% from 17% in GATS-1 to 37.1% in GATS-2 in the state.

Knowledge, Attitudes & Perception

- It is observed that non-users are slightly more aware of the ill effects of SLT use than users.