

## Smokeless tobacco – Tamil Nadu

- From GATS-1 to GATS-2, there is a statistically significant relative increase of 30.9% in smokeless tobacco use.
- In absolute terms, almost 62 lakhs adults in the state use SLT products, this is almost three times of the population of Coimbatore city.
- There is marginal decline in the use of oral tobacco i.e. snuff, *mishri*, *gul*, *gudakhu* in the state.
- More adults in Tamil Nadu have started using betel quid with tobacco and *khaini*.

**Table 1. Smokeless tobacco prevalence in Tamil Nadu**

Tobacco and Areca Nut use	GATS-1	GATS-2
Current SLT use	8.1	10.6
Betel quid with tobacco	4.7	6.0
<i>Khaini</i> /tobacco lime mixture	0.5	2.4
<i>Gutkha</i> , tobacco lime, areca-nut mixture	0.7	0.7
Oral tobacco ( <i>mishri</i> , <i>gul</i> , <i>gudakhu</i> )	1.9	1.6
<i>Paan masala</i> with tobacco		0.1
Snuff		1.2
Other SLT	1.6	0.0
<i>Paan masala</i> without tobacco	Non-Tobacco Products	0.2
Betel quid without tobacco		18.6
Areca nut		19.1

### SLT use and patterns across gender

- Number of female users of betel quid with tobacco and *khaini* has marginally increased as compared to 2009-10. The use of *khaini* among men has increased four times during this period
- SLT use among male has increased 4.2%, same time among females it showed increment by 0.9% from GATS-1 to GATS-2.

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### Access to minors:

Though, the age of initiation has increased significantly in the state (from 18.6 years to 20.6 years), yet 29.3% SLT users start it before the age of 18 years and almost 37% start it before the age of 20 years.

### Cessation without any assistance:

- Adults who stayed quit in last 1 to four 4 years have increased from 25% to 34.5%.
- However, there is lack of interest in quitting as the number of users who are not interested in quitting has increased from 33.4% to 55.7%.
- Almost 40% users were not asked by health care professionals (HCPs) if they used smokeless Tobacco and about two third users of SLT were advised to quit by the HCPs.
- Pharmacotherapy (4.6%), counseling (8.2%) and other measures (3.8%) have little role in people quitting SLT use in the state. Six out of ten users responded that they preferred tobacco cessation without any assistance.

### Economic Aspect

- Majority of purchase is from Stores (ten-fold increase to 58.3%) and Street Vendor (in spite of a sharp decline from 43% to 25%). SLT buyers have shifted to stores for their purchase. 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 been increased by five-fold, from ₹4.2/- in 2009-10 to ₹22/- in 2016-17. This is 0.05% of the state GSDP if we consider the last purchase to be weekly and 0.35% if we consider it daily.

### Advertising

- There is a significant reduction in adults who noticed any type of advertisement or promotion of SLT at point of sale or at other place in the state.
- The number of adults who noticed anti-smokeless tobacco advertisements have increased by 4% compared to GATS-1.
- The number of users who thought about quitting SLT use has increased in the Tamil Nadu after observing warnings on pack from 19.8% in 2009-10 to 42.5% in 2016-17.

### Knowledge, Attitudes & Perception

- The percentage of adults who believe that use of smokeless tobacco causes serious illness is 95.1%. This percentage is slightly lower among adults not using smokeless tobacco.