

SUCCESS STORY GOA: A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO TOBACCO CONTROLS 30 YEAR SAGA

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Cancer is an emotive issue and its prevention appeals to the community. 40% cancers in India are tobacco related and prevention of cancer through tobacco control was accepted by the community easily. Extensive campaigns with rallies carrying a torch akin to Olympic torch, cancer detection camps, public meetings, use of electronic media, school children as messengers, coalition building with women's organizations, universities etc were used to arouse community action.

The success of the movement was monitored by parental habit surveys, youth tobacco use surveys and opinion surveys over the years. Parental smoking habits declined from 50% to 34% and per capita consumption of cigarettes per annum declined from 420 to 320 during the period 1990-1998. Yearly death rates per 100,000 from tobacco related cancers declined from 57 to 38 in men and from 18 to 11 in women from 1971-86 to 1992-96 while the total cancer death rates were unchanged.

Briefing and motivating the bureaucracy and politicians and the impact of public pressure succeeded in "The Goa Prohibition of Smoking and Spitting Act, No.5 of 1999". The Act bans direct and indirect advertisements, access to persons below 21 years and smoking and spitting in public places. It is expected that mortality from all tobacco related diseases would decline in the next decade.

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