

Point-of-Sale Tobacco Advertising and Promotions, and Tobacco Product Display in Ranchi City, India

Background

In India, the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA, 2003) restricts tobacco advertising and product display at the point-of-sale (POS). COTPA further prohibits tobacco promotions at POS and requires vendors to display the appropriate warning signage to limit minors from accessing tobacco products.¹ The local government in Ranchi is implementing policies to strengthen enforcement of COTPA through the Tobacco Vendor Licensing (Ranchi Municipal Corporation memo Order number 284/Health, 2018).

From November-December 2020, this study examined the compliance of tobacco vendors with the tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship (TAPS) law, and the presence of tobacco product display and warning signage at the POS in all 53 wards in Ranchi. The study further assessed if the displayed tobacco products were within the reach of minors.

Key Findings

- ➔ A sample of **374 tobacco vendors** were observed across the 53 wards in Ranchi.
- ➔ **Nearly one-third (31%, n=115) of tobacco vendors observed had some form of tobacco advertising**
- ➔ 12% (n=45) of vendors had a direct tobacco advertisement such as posters, leaflets and boards with tobacco brand names
- ➔ 26% (n=96) of vendors had indirect advertisement in form of tobacco brand layouts, patterns, color schemes, and logos
- ➔ **17% (n=54) of vendors had tobacco products on display, and among this sample, 48 (89%) placed the tobacco products within reach of minors**
- ➔ **Nearly all tobacco vendors (99%) did NOT have the required COTPA section 6a signage displayed which prohibits the sale of tobacco products to and by minors.**

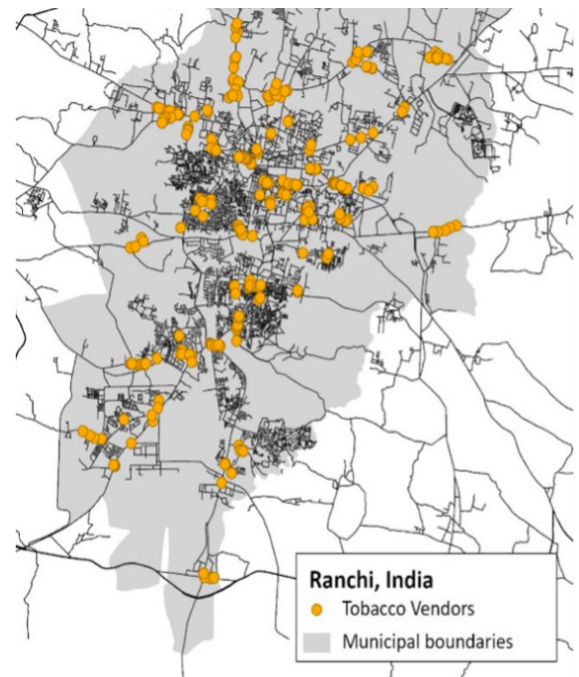


Figure 1: Types of tobacco vendors observed in Ranchi

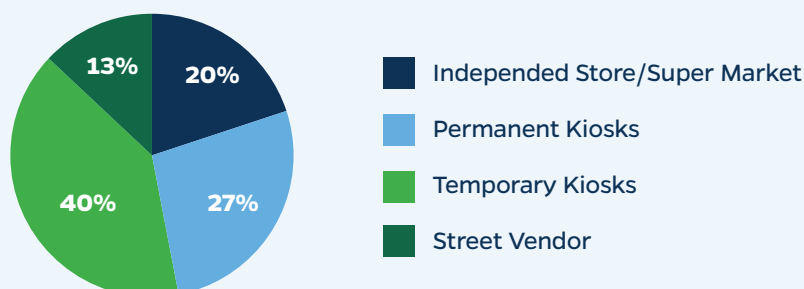


Figure 2: A temporary kiosk selling tobacco products in Ranchi and displaying direct tobacco advertising

Table 1. Type of advertising visible from outside the point-of-sale, by vendor type

Vendor type	Advertisement of any kind on the outside	Posters/ banners/ stickers/signs	Advertisement board - indirect	Advertisement board - direct	Leaflets/ fliers/ pamphlets
Independent Shop/ Supermarket (n=75)	11%	0%	11%	1%	0%
Permanent Kiosk (n=101)	35%	4%	28%	14%	0%
Temporary Kiosk (n=149)	32%	3%	28%	11%	0%
Street Vendor (n=49)	37%	4%	33%	8%	0%

Discussion

Overall, the compliance of tobacco vendors with the COTPA TAPS provisions at the POS is low, with nearly one-third of the vendors displaying direct and/or indirect advertising. Among the different vendor-types, street vendors and permanent kiosks had the greatest number of advertising violations visible from outside of POS (37%), followed by temporary kiosks (36%), as shown in Table 1. The most common form of advertising observed across all wards was an indirect advertisement board, such as tobacco brand color schemes or logos, with 25% (n=95) of the vendors displaying indirect boards on the outside.

There is a considerable need to improve compliance with the tobacco product display and POS advertising and promotion policies in Ranchi. Strategies, including training enforcement officers and educating vendors on the city's

tobacco control policies and any applicable penalties/ fines, can strengthen enforcement. Additionally, regular monitoring of tobacco vendors will help ensure that the policies are being complied with in full and that the tobacco products are not being displayed within the reach of minors.

By implementing the tobacco vendor licensing order, Ranchi will limit the number of tobacco vendors, and thereby increase the overall compliance of tobacco control law in Ranchi. Banning tobacco advertisements and restricting the visibility of and access to tobacco products at the POS are effective strategies for reducing tobacco use and initiation among youth. Global evidence assessing the impact of POS advertising bans have consistently found that such bans are associated with reduced smoking rates.²

Methods

On the request of the Ranchi Municipal Commissioner, an observational study of tobacco vendors was conducted by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health – Institute for Global Tobacco Control, SEEDS Jharkhand, and the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, to measure the presence of tobacco advertising, promotion, and product display at POS. Further, if tobacco products were displayed within reach of minors, and if the tobacco vendor displayed required health warning signage. Observations were done in each of Ranchi's 53 wards. Trained data collectors first identified appropriate stretches of road that had tobacco vendors; observations were conducted in each ward on 500-1000m of road frontage. Observations and geographic locations of tobacco vendors were recorded using a mobile data collection app. Data collectors measured the presence of both direct advertising (such as tobacco product posters/banners) or indirect advertising (such as the use of tobacco brand color schemes or logos). Observations also measured if tobacco products were on display at the POS and if these products were within reach of minors. The presence of required health warning signage was also measured. Observations are reported as a proportion of vendors observed across the 2020 sample.

¹ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Notification S.O 2814(E), November 28, 2008. Retrieved from <https://www.tobaccocontrollaws.org/files/live/India/India%20-%20.pdf>

² Shang C, Huang J, Cheng KW, Li Q, Chaloupka FJ. (2016). Global evidence on the association between POS advertising bans and youth smoking participation. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*, 13:306.