

Survey shows tobacco use down by 33% among youth, 53% plan to quit

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India has 81 lakh fewer tobacco users now than it did in 2010, with tobacco use falling by six percentage points in the past seven years, according to the latest Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS).

GATS is a global standard for systematically monitoring adult tobacco use (smoking and smokeless) and tracking key tobacco control indicators. Its latest edition involved a household survey of 74,037 people aged 15 and above across India between August 2016 and February 2017. The first was conducted in 2009-10.

GATS 2016-17 indicates India has made massive gains on account of recent anti-tobacco measures, including large pictorial war-

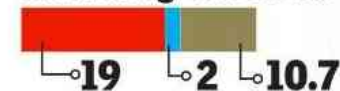
STUBBING IT OUT?

From GATS-1 to GATS-2, total number of tobacco users has reduced by about 81 lakh

Prevalence of tobacco use has decreased by 6 percentage points from 34 in 2009-10 to 28 in 2016-17 All Figures in (%)

Men Women All Adults

Smoking tobacco



Use smokeless tobacco



Either smoke tobacco and/or use smokeless tobacco



Source: Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS 2016-17)

nings on product packs, higher taxes and an intensive awareness campaign. According to the survey, since 2010, there has been a comparative reduction of 33% in tobacco use among 15- to 24-year-olds, and 54% among

minors (15- to 17-year-olds).

The survey shows the pictorial warnings are working, with 55% of smokers and 50% of smokeless tobacco users admitting to have plans to quit. The study shows greater prevalence of

smokeless forms of tobacco among Indian adults. *Khaini*, *bidi* and *gutka* are the most commonly used items among Indian men, while women primarily use betel quid with tobacco and *khaini*, in that order. The survey shows 19% of men, 2% of women and 10.7% of all adults currently smoke tobacco, while 29.6% of men, 12.8% of women and 21.4% of all adults use smokeless forms.

A significant finding of the survey is the fact that the age of initiation has gone up by a year between GATS 1 (2009-10) and GATS 2 (2016-17), from 17.9 years to 18.9.

“The reduction in consumption shows the government’s strong commitment to tobacco control,” said Bhavna Mukhopadhyay, chief executive, Voluntary Health Association of India.