


Call to regulate smokeless tobacco use

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Amaravati: Taking into account the World Health Organisation (WHO) report that revealed that about 69 per cent of smokeless tobacco users of the world are from India, experts in the tobacco industry have advocated regulation of the smokeless tobacco consumption.

The industry experts want the Centre to bring all varieties of tobaccos cultivated in India under the control of the Tobacco Board for better regulation, revenues and health of the public. At present, the Indian Tobacco Board is regulating only FCV tobacco, which is just around 25 per cent of the total tobacco produced in the country.

NEED FOR BETTER REGULATION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ By bringing non-FCV types of tobacco under Tobacco Board purview, production can be monitored in a systematic manner 	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The current taxation policy puts pressure only on 8% of tobacco consumption, represented by cigarettes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Prompt payment to non-FCV type of tobacco farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tobacco consumption in the country in the form of duty-paid cigarettes has been shrinking steadily and currently accounts for a mere 8% of total tobacco consumption
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Monitoring of 450 to 550 million kgs of non-FCV tobacco through the Tobacco Board will help the Centre fetch more revenues 	

Though the Union government passed the Act with an intention to cover all tobacco products in India, the Tobacco Board confined its activities only to FCV to-

bacco growing areas.

“Surprisingly, the Board has not made any attempt to take over the regulation of Non-FCV type of tobaccos, which is around 450 to 550

million kgs, even after 50 years after bringing in the legislation,” said president of Federation of All India Farmers Association (FAIFA), BV Javare Gowda.

Meanwhile, tobacco consumption behaviours have changed as a large number of people have switched to gutka, pan masala, and chewing tobacco (non-smoking tobaccos) due to regulation and high taxation faced by the cigarette and bidi industries. “High level of consumption of non-smoking tobaccos is not only denting revenues of farmers and the government, but causing massive damage to public health. It is high time the government focussed on the issue,” said a public health activist.