



## Report on PROGGA's Activities for Dissemination and Utilization of GATS Bangladesh Data 2009

### 1. Introduction

PROGGA, a non-profit organization in Bangladesh, undertook a package of activities around the official release of Bangladesh country report of the Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2009. While the official release of the survey was a joint initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) of the Government of Bangladesh and the World Health Organization (WHO), the PROGGA initiative was focused on wider communication the GATS finding through the media and utilization of the GATS data by the tobacco control NGOs.

#### *Purpose of the Activities*

The overall purpose of the set of activities focusing GATS was to ensure effective communication of the survey findings for strengthening the on-going tobacco control initiatives in Bangladesh. Specifically, the package of activities tried to achieve two objectives:

- (i) To communicate the most important findings of GATS to wider audience through the mass media;
- (ii) To enhance the capacity of the tobacco control NGOs on effective utilization of GATS findings for stronger tobacco control advocacies.

The following initiatives were undertaken to achieve the above objectives.

### 2. Wider Dissemination of GATS Findings using Mass Media

The GATS Bangladesh Report was released on 22 December 2009. While the official event of the release was confined within the Ministry of Health, the WHO and the tobacco control community, there were little opportunities for people outside the tobacco control community, even for the grassroots organizations working on tobacco control, to get acquainted with the survey findings. Although there was some media coverage of the event, the focus on the important findings of the survey in the coverage was rather limited. However, this was expected and that is why additional dissemination through the mass media was planned. Accordingly, a live TV talk show was arranged and special news report on tobacco control in a prime-time TV news with reference to GATS was telecasted on 22 December 2009.

### *TV Talk Show*

The 45-minute TV talk show was in fact a regular prime-time live program named ‘Road to Democracy’, which is very popular for discussion on contemporary issues and was recently awarded as the best TV talk show. This particular episode of the talk show was exclusively on tobacco control focusing mainly on GATS. The Health Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Sayed Modasser Ali, reputed tobacco control advocate Dr. Arup Ratan Chowdhury (Head of MANAS and Member of the National Tobacco Control Task Force), and PROGGA Chairman Taifur Rahman took part in the discussion at the live talk show. The show was hosted by one of the most popular anchors of the country Dr. Abdun Nur Tushar (who is also a medical professional).



In the talk show, a number of tobacco control issues were highlighted with reference to the GATS country report. The main discussion points were the following.

- The increasing rates of tobacco use (overall) was discussed as a major public health concern and importance of appropriate policy measures was underlined by the discussants, particularly by the Health Adviser representing the policy makers.

- The issue of smokeless tobacco came as a major point. The need of addressing the smokeless tobacco in the tobacco control law and other tobacco control policies of the government was discussed with due importance.
- Second hand smoking was the most important issue discussed at the show. The discussants highlighted the alarming rates of exposure to second hand smoking at workplaces and other public places. In this connection, the issue of revision and proper implementation of the existing tobacco control law of the country was discussed, especially in light of making the public places and transports smoke free. It was highlighted by all the discussants that strong policy measures and implementation of the policies are required for protecting people from exposure to second hand smoking.
- Tobacco control was discussed in the broader political economy contexts. The importance of strong political will and the need for sensitization of the political class for effective tobacco control were highlighted in the discussion. Also, the economic arguments for tobacco control came in the discussion.
- The issue of pictorial warning labels, need for effective use of media and some other tobacco control issues also came in the discussion.

### ***Special TV News Report on Tobacco Control***

The official event arranged for the release of GATS got some media coverage in most of the TV channels and newspapers. However, the main focus of the coverage was more on the event and the guests (including the health minister, the health adviser and other dignitaries) rather than on the contents of GATS. So, PROGGA facilitated a TV reporter to telecast a special report on tobacco control issues. The



report was telecasted in the prime-time news of the Desh TV, one of the popular TV channels of the country. The report highlighted the expansion of tobacco cultivation in the country and included brief interviews of the Health Minister, the WHO Country Representative, and the PROGGA Chairman. The report also included some exclusive video footages of the tobacco cultivation and *bidi* manufacturing provided by PROGGA.

### 3. Workshop on Effective Utilization of GATS

Although GATS was released and generated discussions on tobacco control, the NGOs working on different tobacco control advocacies had little clue on how to benefit from the GATS data in their respective initiatives. To help them strategize the use of these valuable data in their initiatives, PROGGA arranged a day-long workshop for selected tobacco control NGOs including all the BI grantees and some other NGOs known for their work on tobacco control. The participants also included a number of media persons (from both electronic and print media).



The guests and resource persons included Raisul Alam Mandol, the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Health (also the Program Manager of the National Tobacco Control Cell), Dr. Mostafa Zaman of WHO, Dr. Akramul Islam of The Union and Mohammad Shahjahan of the Bangladesh Center for Communications Program (BCCP), who also represents the Johns Hopkins University in Bangladesh. From most of the participating organizations, two persons attended including one senior official involved in tobacco control. The whole workshop was facilitated by Taifur Rahman of PROGGA.

The workshop was conducted in three sessions. In the first session, Dr. Mostafa Zaman presented an overview of the GATS Bangladesh chapter and explained the important findings of it for clearer understanding of the NGO and media personnel. In second session, Taifur Rahman made a presentation on effective utilization of GATS data by the NGOs in light of the guideline developed by CTFK. The third session included a group exercise followed by a plenary.



In the group exercise, the participants identified the most relevant findings in the GATS for their respective advocacies and also tried to develop effective messages based on those findings. They also tried to devise some strategies for effectively communicating those messages. The group exercises were presented at the plenary and a healthy discussion and exchange of ideas took place.

The participants agreed that this was a useful start of thinking about the effective utilization of GATS data for the respective tobacco control advocacies, which need to be followed up by more activities.

The agenda of the workshop and the list of participants are annexed.

A brief on the GATS related activities by PROGGA can also be found in the web-site of the organization: <http://www.progga.org/activities.php>.

## Annex 1

### Workshop on Effective Utilization of GATS Data for Tobacco Control Advocacy in Bangladesh

*12 January 2010. Top of the Park, Hotel Sheraton, Dhaka*

#### **PROGRAM**

09:00 – 09:30 am	Registration of participants
09:30 – 10:30 am	Inaugural Session Speakers: Md. Raisul Alam Mandol, Deputy Secretary, MoHFW Amin-UI Ahsan, Senior Assistant Secretary, MoHFW Dr. Mostafa Zaman, WHO Dr. Akramul Islam, The Union
10:30 – 11:00 am	Tea
11:00 – 11:30 am	GATS Overview Presentation by Dr. Mostafa Zaman
11:30 – 12:00 pm	Using GATS Data for Tobacco Control Advocacy Presentation by Taifur Rahman
12:00 – 01:00 pm	How to Use GATS Data for Specific Tobacco Control Initiatives: Strategies for Individual Organizations (Group Work)
01:00 – 02:00 pm	Lunch
02:00 – 02:30 pm	Presentation by Groups
02:30 – 03:00 pm	Toward a common strategy for utilization of GATS: Consolidating the recommendations

## Annex 2

### Workshop on Effective Utilization of GATS Data for Tobacco Control Advocacy in Bangladesh

#### List of Participants

SL no.	Name	Designation & Organization
1.	Mr. Khondoker Ehsanul Amin Emon	Project Coordinator Association for Community Development-ACD
2.	Mr. Parvez Ahmad	Program Officer Association for Community Development-ACD
3.	Mr. Shamsul Alam	Program Director Alliance for Cooperation and Legal Aid Bangladesh-ACLAB
4.	Mr. Aminul Islam Bakul	Executive Director Action in Development-AID
5.	Mr. Shahidul Islam Babu	Consultant Action in Development-AID
6.	Mr. Altab Hossain	Executive Director Beel Chalan Unnayan Sangstha-BCDP
7.	Mr. Golam Shahanee	Senior Staff Reporter Bangladesh Sangbad Shangstha-BSS
8.	Mr. Quazi Faruque	President Consumers Association of Bangladesh-CAB
9.	Mr. Ahmed Ekramullah	Assistant Program Coordinator Consumers Association of Bangladesh-CAB
10.	Ms. Mahfida Dina Rubaiya	Program Officer Dhaka Ahsania Mission-DAM
11.	Mr. Harun ur Rashid	Counselor Dhaka Ahsania Mission-DAM
12.	Mr. Md. Hafiz Rahman	Executive Director Development Council-DC
13.	Ms. Suzana Rahman	Staff Reporter Desh Tv
14.	Ms. Tamanna Majumder	Senior Staff Reporter N Tv
15.	Ms. Sagufta Sultana	Program Coordinator NATAB
16.	Dr. Nasir Uddin	Consultant NATAB
17.	Mr. Sk. Md. Abu Hasanat Shaid	Chief Coordinator Pollee Unnayan Prokolpo-PUP
18.	Ms. Tamanna Rahman	Program Officer RTM International
19.	Dr. Mizanur Rahman	Program Manager SHIMANTIK
20.	Ms. Tania Nazmun Nahar	MIS Officer SHIMANTIK

21.	Mr. Ahmed Tofail	Staff Reporter The Daily Jai Jai Din
22.	Mr. FHM Humayan Kabir	Staff Reporter The Financial Express
23.	Mr. Chinmoy Mutsuddi	Project Coordinator-PATT Unnayan Shamannay
24.	Ms. Abida Sultana	Program Officer-PATT Unnayan Shamannay
25.	Mr. Syed Mahbubul Alam Tahin	Program Manager WBB Trust
26.	Ms. Laboni	Program Officer WBB Trust
27.	Mr. Md. Ali Shahin	Program Officer Young power in Social Action-YPSA
28.	Mr. Md. Nazmul Haider	Program Officer Young power in Social Action-YPSA

## Annex 3

### Selected Media Coverage of the Workshop

# The Daily Star

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

## Call for effective steps to curb tobacco use

**Bss, Dhaka**

Speakers at a workshop yesterday underscored the need for taking effective measures to control use of tobacco products to save huge amount of people's funds and protect users from health hazards.

They said 81 percent of people consider imposition of higher taxes and duties on tobacco products is an effective measure to reduce tobacco uses without affecting government's revenue collection.

The workshop titled "Effective utilisation of GATS date for tobacco control advocacy in Bangladesh" organised by Progga in cooperation with Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

Md Raisul Alam Mandol, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, inaugurated the workshop. Dr Mostafa Zaman, National Professional Officer of World Health Organisation (WHO), spoke with Progga Chairman Taifur Rahman in the chair.

Dr Mostafa Zaman presented the report on Global Adults Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2009 in the workshop.

According to the report, 44 percent of men and 1.5 percent of women use smoking tobacco across the country while non-smoking tobacco is used by 26.4 percent of men and 27.2 percent of women in both urban and rural areas.

He said although the Tobacco Control Act covers smoking tobaccos, but non-smoking tobaccos like jarda, sada pata, gul are still out of the purview of the act.

"Both smoking and non-smoking tobaccos have similar impacts on health and incur financial loss, so non-smoking tobaccos like jarda, sada pata, gul should be brought under the coverage of the act," he added.

The report said the use of tobacco is higher in lower education and poor families than higher education and rich households.

The use of cigarettes per day is five sticks on an average while that of bidis is seven, the report said, adding that the price gaps between cigarettes and bidis should be reduced to discourage smoking tobacco among lower income groups and youths in rural areas.

Dr Mostafa quoting his survey said 47.3 percent of the smoking tobacco users and 28.5 percent of non-smoking tobacco users attempted to give up tobacco last year. This group of people needed support for making their efforts successful, he added.

Despite lower capacity on both financial and institutional aspects, the anti-smoking drive was 49.8 percent successful, while giant tobacco manufacturers' efforts of marketing tobacco products was 48.7 percent successful.

In his paper, Taifur emphasised more focus on anti-tobacco activities in both print and electronic media.

He said effective awareness building drive against tobacco through utilising media could bring better results in making the efforts successful.

He said illegal advertisements for tobacco still continue violating Tobacco Control Act as 32 percent of people noticed advertisements of tobacco products outside stores.

Of the non-smokers, over 93 percent are exposed to second-hand smoking (passive smoking), he said, adding that this also causes health hazards to a great extent.

The study shows, among adults, 45 percent were exposed to second-hand smoking in public places while 27.6 percent in restaurants, 26.3 percent in most common places.

Among all indoor workers, 75.7 percent or 51 lakh people are exposed to second-hand smoking, it added.

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## Call for effective steps to curb tobacco consumption

Speakers at a workshop Tuesday underscored the need for effective measures to control the use of smoking and non-smoking tobacco in order to save a large amount of people's funds and protect users from health hazards, reports UNB.

They said that imposition of higher taxes and duties on tobacco products could be a popular decision as 81 per cent people consider it an effective measure in reducing tobacco use without affecting government's revenue collection.

The workshop titled "Effective Utilisation of GATS Date for Tobacco Control Advocacy in Bangladesh" organised by Progga in cooperation with Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

Md Raisul Alam Mandol, Deputy Secretary of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, inaugurated the workshop. Dr Mostafa Zaman, National Professional Officer of World Health Organisation (WHO), spoke on the occasion.

Chairman of Progga Taifur Rahman presided over the workshop. Executive Director of Progga Syed Badrul Karim Ratan was also present. Representatives from different organisations participated in the workshop. Two papers were presented at the workshop.

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## Speakers for effective steps to curb tobacco use

Speakers at a workshop on Tuesday underscored the need for effective measures to control the use of smoking and non-smoking tobacco in order to save huge amount of people's funds and protect users from health hazards, reports BSS.

They said imposition of higher taxes and duties on tobacco products could be a popular decision as 81 percent people consider it as an effective measure in reducing tobacco uses without affecting government's revenue collection.

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Dr Mostafa Zaman presented the report on Global Adults Tobacco Survey 2009 in the workshop.

According to the report, 44 percent males and 1.5 percent females use smoking tobacco across the country, while non-smoking tobacco is used by 26.4 percent males and 27.2 percent females in both urban and rural areas.

He said although the Tobacco Control Act covers smoking tobaccos, but non-smoking tobaccos like jarda, sada pata, gul are still out of the purview of the act.

"Both smoking and non-smoking tobaccos have similar impacts on health and both incur financial losses, so non-smoking tobaccos like jarda, sada pata, gul should be brought under the coverage of the act," he added.

The use of tobacco is higher in lower education and poor families than higher education and rich households, according to the report.

The use of cigarettes per day is five sticks on an average while that of bidis is seven, the report said adding that the price gaps between cigarettes and bidis should be reduced to discourage smoking tobacco among lower income groups and youths in rural areas.

The survey shows that 47.3 percent smoking tobacco users attempted to quit tobacco during the last year while 28.5 percent non-smoking tobacco users attempted to quit, he said.

## Call for effective steps to curb tobacco use

BSS, Dhaka

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