

MINUTES OF THE 1st TOBACCO ALLIANCE MEETING ON 12th MARCH 2015, PRESS CLUB, KOLKATA

The first Tobacco Alliance meeting was held on 12th March, 2015 at the Press Club of Kolkata. The meeting was organized by MANT, it was fully supported by **Bloomberg Initiative, USA** and the technical support was given by **International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, South-East Asia Office, New Delhi**. The main vision of the meeting was “**Tobacco-Free West Bengal**”. Dignitaries from different fields of our civil society participated in this meeting.

Remark of the Dignitaries:

PROF. ARUNASHISH GOSWAMI (Prof.WBUAFS, Controller of Examination,Ex-IC WBUSU, EX. Director Directorate of DD of Kalyani University) raised some important issues in this meeting those are as follows-

- What we actually want to make our state “Smoke Free/ Smoking Free/ Tobacco Free” at first we have to decided it and everybody should have clear idea about it.
- In West Bengal nearly 70% of the total population living at the rural areas. Most of the villagers are addicted in **Chewing Tobacco**. So we must think the way how we make our village environment free from chewing tobacco.
- A huge number of people in Murshidabad, Purulia and Bankura maintain their livelihood from Bidi industry. So we must think about an alternative way of their livelihood.
- What is the Social credibility of this type of programme? In the case of village villagers are conducted by Panchayat. So how we handle these local administrative bodies this is the main issue in-front of us.

KRISHNA BASU (Poet) appealed to build an Anti-Tobacco movement and spread it all the section of our city.

PROF. SAMITA MANNA (Former VC SKB University, Prof. Depart of Sociology Kalyani University) set our aim towards the non-smokers not to the smokers.

- According to her we should not change the habit of the smokers but we should create an effective plan to protect the future generation from the ill effects of tobacco.
- Distributing the leaflets is not the only way to generate the awareness; we should think another way to generate the mass awareness.

KRISHNA CHANDRA BAIN (Chief Manager, State Bank of Mysore) also shared his views about this campaign. He point out some important aspects in the alliance meeting, those are as follows---

- We are not aware about our own health so at first we should aware about it.
- If a doctor use tobacco in-front of his/her patients then it is very easy for the patients to grab this ill-habit. So everybody should aware about their own responsibility upon their own health and social duty towards the society.

Bidesh Bose (Former FOOTBALLER)

Mr. Bidesh Bose pointed towards the youth generation, that they should be aware about the ill-effects of using tobacco. “Though the youths think that smoking make them look trendy or stylish, it is not that cool considering the health hazards,” said Mr. Bose. He also recommended that the seniors

should also be more dutiful spreading this message in the society and this program helped him a lot about understanding the problem more accurately.

Dibyendu Barua (Chess Player, Grandmaster) also shared his views about this ill effect of Tobacco.

- According to Mr. Barua this anti tobacco campaign is a continuous process, which should not be stopped in the middle way.
- We are unable to ban the tobacco so we should spread the awareness against the tobacco among the youth.
- We should organize seminars, camps within the campus of schools, colleges, universities. So that we can save our future from it.

Priyankar Deb Sarkar (Lawyer) was sharing the some important legal factors in this meeting those are —

- It is not very easy to ban Tobacco, if we are able to ban it then implementation is not possible.
- Sensitization is a only way to spread the awareness among the common people about tobacco.

Dr. Indranil Chatterjee (Saroj Gupta Cancer Research Center) who was dealing with cancer patients daily shared some important data with us.

- Every day in hospital nearly 40-50 patients are registered them for treatment. Among them 90% detected as cancer patients. Within it 60% of them are coming to the hospital in the last stage of cancer so the doctors are unable to provide any treatment for their betterment. Now remaining 40% is to be divided in 30% and 10%. Among this 30% they will be fit for treatment and the rest of the part also affected from other diseases. So this is the scenario of the cancer patients in West Bengal.
- Now a day's 90% of the cancer patients suffering from Oral Cancer. Chewing Tobacco is the main reason of this Oral cancer.
- Doctor Chatterjee mentioned that 70% patients below the age group of 40 suffering from Oral cancer.
- Tobacco effect in throat, mouth, stomach and other parts of human body.
- In tobacco nearly 4,000 chemicals are found. Nicotine addiction feel good factor in human brain.
- Now a day's Nicotine replacement clinic also formed but due to the lack of the proper publicity people are unable to know about this clinic

Shreevats Goswami (Crickter) raised some major issues in the society. Those are as follows—

- If tobacco easily accessible for everyone then people will not stop smoking.
- Awareness, education is not a way to stop the smoking.
- Indians mainly follow their role model but in the case of the tobacco they never follow their role models.

Kalikaprasad (DOHAR) admitted himself as a smoker and he also admitted that he quitted smoking before recording any song. But at the same time he identified some positive signs in today's society which are —

- In previous time no one can think about the movement of quit tobacco but now a days this movement happen in our city which is really commendable.
- The celebrity persons who present in the alliance if step forward and whenever they got the chance to speak against the tobacco use in their own programmes then may be the smoking habit of smoking among common people may reduce 5%-10%.