Tobacco or Sustainable Development

বাংলাদেশে তামাক কোম্পানিদের হস্তক্ষেপ ও কূটকৌশল

Tobacco Industry Interference and Strategy in Bangladesh
Tobacco or Sustainable Development

Tobacco Industry Interference and Strategy in Bangladesh

Edited by
ABM Zubair

Published by
PROGGA Knowledge for Progress
We wish to extend our thanks to Vandana Shah and Sean Rudolph with Campaign For Tobacco-Free Kids and Anti Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA) for their support and advice.
Tobacco causes death and impedes development; and tobacco companies are the key culprits. Governments as well cannot avoid the responsibility. Core functions of a government include, among others, protecting public health and ensuring growth by removing the obstacles. Accordingly, different countries have joined the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to protect people from tobacco related damages, and have signed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for ensuring both growth and public health. Now, FCTC is a part of the SDGs. Realization about difficulty in achieving sustainable development without tobacco control or FCTC implementation has played a great role to include FCTC into SDGs. Implementation of FCTC is a precondition for a country like Bangladesh to reach the SDGs. The effective implementation of FCTC is mainly important for two reasons. First, the third goal of SDGs, ‘Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,’ seems impossible to be achieved without implementation of FCTC. And second, tobacco is an obstruction on reaching the other SDGs, which could be removed by FCTC implementation.

Though Bangladesh has achieved notable success on formulating tobacco control law based on FCTC, it is still lagging behind implementation of the same. Exploiting the opportunities, tobacco companies have been widely violating the law. Consequently, people are not getting the true benefits from the law. Besides, some other important policies, for instance, tobacco farming control policy, tobacco tax policy and national tobacco control policy, have not been implemented yet. Hence, tobacco companies are expanding business by taking advantages of the loopholes and are desperate to restrict launching of the policies and laws.

The government of Bangladesh is committed to achieve the SDGs by 2030. To achieve so, a satisfactory implementation of FCTC is a prerequisite. It is assumed that tobacco companies would desire that the implementation of FCTC never becomes a priority of the government; thus, it is expected that the companies would try to manipulate the government officials by showing the unrealistic profits from tobacco industry. Now, it is the government to decide either tobacco or sustainable development.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tobacco control for reaching Sustainable Development Goals</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>১ম অধ্যায় টোব্যাকো নির্যাতনকারী গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ব্যবস্থা অর্জনে টাব্যাকো নিয়ন্ত্রণ</td>
<td>০৭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Md. Hasan Shahriar and Md. Shahedul Alam</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tobacco Company Interference</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>২য় অধ্যায় টোব্যাকো কোম্পানির হস্তক্ষেপ</td>
<td>১৭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Monowar Hossein and Imtiaj Rasul</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tobacco company interference on GHW implementation: Bangladesh perspective</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Md. Shahedul Alam and Monowar Hossein</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tobacco Company Ill tactics in Bangladesh</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>৩য় অধ্যায় বাংলাদেশে টাব্যাকো কোম্পানির হস্তক্ষেপ</td>
<td>২৭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Monowar Hossein and Md. Shahedul Alam</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Child labor in Bidi Industry: an investigation</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Monowar Hossein and Md. Shahedul Alam</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tobacco company death marketing strategy and law violation</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Md. Hasan Shahriar and Monowar Hossein</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tobacco company aggression and ill tactics in tobacco farming in Bangladesh</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Monowar Hossein and Imtiaj Rasul</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bangladeshi Mass Media to Unveil and Combat Tobacco Company Ill Tactics</strong></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Md. Shahedul Alam and Md. Hasan Shahriar</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References

তথ্যসূত্র
PROGGA started journey with the idea of ‘Knowledge for Progress’. To us ‘Progga’ is the blend of knowledge and experience. As a non-profit advocacy and research organization, PROGGA started journey in January 2008. Being a young organization in terms of experience, the innovative capacity and endless motivation for work of a group of young activists continues to enrich PROGGA. The core activities of PROGGA are advocacy, research, and different capacity building trainings. PROGGA believes that there is no alternative to advocacy for successful application of research-based knowledge and attracting attention of the policymakers. Of course, the advocacy has to be realistic, timely, and above all, innovative. PROGGA has always prioritized mass media of Bangladesh on the issue. We believe that mass media can be one of the best vehicles to protect public interest. ‘Media for Tobacco Control’ is such an initiative of PROGGA. The initiative, with support from the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, aims at strengthening the role of mass media in creating public awareness to protect Bangladeshi citizens from the damages of tobacco and inviting attention of the policymakers to do the needful. In 2010, PROGGA and the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) jointly started tobacco control training workshops for journalists. Based on recommendations from workshop participants, Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA) was formed as a media network. Basically, the participant journalists of ‘Media for Tobacco Control in Bangladesh’ are the members of the network. Besides, people involved in journalism or have significant contributions on the sector may get membership of the network. ATMA primarily aims at ensuring effective role of media in building a tobacco-free Bangladesh. There are around 400 ATMA members in different chapters like Rajshahi, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Barisal and Rangpur in line with the central ATMA in Dhaka. PROGGA has been working as the secretariat of ATMA.
Chapter 1

Tobacco control for reaching Sustainable Development Goals
Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the largest tobacco consuming countries. According to Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2009, 43% of adults in Bangladesh (4.13 crores people) consume cigarettes, bidi and smokeless tobacco. Around 58% males and 29% females use tobacco products including smokeless tobacco. Though the smoking rate is low among women, the rate of using smokeless tobacco is more than that among men. Around 28% women (1.34 crores) and 26% men (1.25 crores) use smokeless tobacco. In Bangladesh, 23% or 2.19 crores adult people use tobacco by smoking and among them 2.12 crores are men and 700,000 of them are women. However, women become victims of passive smoking hugely due to men’s smoking. In Bangladesh, 30% women are exposed to passive smoking at workplaces and 21% of them are exposed at public places. It refers that around 10 million women of Bangladesh become victim of passive smoking without having a puff on cigarette/bidi. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GYTS) 2013 data reveals, 6.9% of the school-going Bangladeshi children aged between 13-15 consume tobacco (boys 9.2% and girls 2.8%) which is really alarming. The extent of tobacco related damages in Bangladesh is also horrific. Annually 95,000 people die of tobacco-related diseases. In Bangladesh, smoking is responsible for 30% of heart disease related death, 38% of cancer caused death, 35% of lung TB caused death and 24% of other respiratory
The smoke emitted from bidi and cigarette tobacco contains over 4000 toxic chemicals and among them, 43 can directly cause cancer. Besides, the financial cost for tobacco use is also wide. The government is to spend twice the amount it receives as revenue from tobacco for treatment of the tobacco-related patients. Studies have revealed that the financial damages caused for tobacco use was over 3% of the GDP in 2004.

In Bangladesh, bidi, cigarette, zarda, gul, sada pata etc. are commonly used as tobacco products. The tobacco companies are earning profits worth thousands of crores by selling these toxics as products. It is threatening the public health and simultaneously the nation is getting entrapped by a long-term economic loss. Tobacco, despite being a great threat, is unable to attract attention of the policymakers. Consequently, the tobacco companies are easily expanding their business and just leading the country to a tobacco epidemic.

The government of Bangladesh has signed on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2003, and consequently has formulated the Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act in 2005. Subsequently, the tobacco control law got amendment in 2013 and the Rules for implementing the law has also been enacted in 2015. Though the amended law is improved, it is not strong enough and many of the important FCTC directives have not been reflected in the law, such as some of the non-price measures have been included in the law to control tobacco demands. Strong price measure like taxation has not been included in the law, and by the same time, to control tobacco supply (discouraging tobacco farming) any implementable steps have not been taken yet. Moreover, the implementation status of the existing law is also poor. The most important achievement of the amended law is about the implementation of the pictorial health warning which has not been implementing properly and also there are no significant progresses over the execution of other parts of the TC law. As a result, legal incompleteness and the partial and ineffective implementation of the law have been lagging Bangladesh to achieve the FCTC objectives. It is now a questionable issue that why Bangladesh is lagging in FCTC implementation despites it has achieved significant successes in many other contemporary agendas like MDGs. In this case, it is important to evaluate the government viewpoints and promises over the issues. The government has always
considered FCTC as the document of World Health Organization (WHO) and has never integrated the issue with its mainstream development agendas. To prevent the huge risk for public health and economy, the government has involved the Health Ministry alone whereas it was supposed to involve all the relevant ministries to work together. It is true that the Health Ministry has tried implementing the issue considering it as an additional responsibility instead of prioritization. Conversely, the government has used the entire state machinery to achieve the MDGs. However, the same results have been observed in other countries as well. In fact, many of the FCTC signatory countries have failed to consider tobacco control in line with their key development initiative. In a larger extent, the implementation process and advancement of various disjointed development initiatives taken so far by the UN, its wings and other donor agencies for global development has made the global leaders to think differently. The MDGs’ success has built the base of SDGs and inspired them to adopt it for further development. The global leaders want to make all the development initiatives united and they are also on the view to analyze those initiatives based on the overall development philosophy and mainstream development process. They argued that since a specific development endeavor can hamper or benefit the other development initiatives, thus it is important that all the development plans should be brought under an overall development map. SDGs are the complete development roadmap considering the ground in the current global context because SDGs have accumulated all the other development plans and instructed to evaluate them on economic, social and environmental perspectives.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the new guidelines for global development. The SDGs have been formulated based on the recently ended Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to protect the earth and the humans. Recently, at the 70th UN General Assembly, the global leaders have pledged to reach 17 goals with 169 promises by 2030 and the implementation of the FCTC is a notable one among the other goals. This is a great achievement indeed for the anti-tobacco platforms. The implementation of the FCTC is not a minor issue now, in fact, it is connected with the mainstream development as well. The government has to implement the FCTC if it wants to achieve the SDGs within the budgeted time.
security and sustainable agriculture (Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture). Education is a basic need for all. Unless everyone gets a standard education, sustainable development is impossible. However, in Bangladesh half of the bidi factory workers are child and experiencing hardcore poverty. A notable portion is also related with tobacco farming and tobacco selling who are deprived of their basic education (Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning for all). Almost half of the population of Bangladesh is women. Sustainable development is not possible by discriminating with this huge population. Global Adult Tobacco Survey - GATS 2009 has found that over 10 million women become victimized by passive smoking. They are receiving unwanted health damage without participation in tobacco use. The FCTC has suggested making all the public places and public transports smoke free and by implementing the directives such discriminations (Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) could be removed. A sound and healthy working environment helps to increase productivity and accelerates a stable economic growth simultaneously (Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all). Around 63 percent working people are affected with different level of passive smoking at their respective workplaces. Besides, a large number of people die a premature death and turn cripple which hampers the sustainable economic progress of the country. Sustainable development is impossible until the global
and domestic discriminations are reduced (Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries). Following the WHO, tobacco related deaths will cross 80 lakh by 2030 and the third world countries like Bangladesh will bear about 80 percent of the entire death toll17. On the other side, in the rural areas, the rate of smokeless tobacco users is 6 percent more compared to the cities18. By implementing the FCTC, the discrimination could be reduced. Further, 46.6 percent people living in the cities of Bangladesh are exposed to passive smoking at the public places (GATS, 2009) and the rate is more comparing to the rural areas as smoking is the key cause of air pollution in the covered areas of the cities19. Thereby, the losses could be reduced and lives could be saved only by making the smoking free public places following the FCTC guidelines which will help building a sustainable city and keep its citizens safe (Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable). Climate change is an important issue in the current days and the third world countries are under higher risks of it for several reasons. Deforestation is one of the key causes of climate change. Tobacco farming is responsible for 2-4 percent of the entire deforestation process in the world20. In Bangladesh, around 29 lakh 32 thousand trees are burnt to process tobacco leaves21. Therefore, by reducing tobacco farming and its use, it will be easier to battle the climate change and its impacts (Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts). Unless the marine resources are preserved, the environmental balance will be impossible. The International Coastal Clean UP 2013 has collected wastes from seas belonging to 92 countries where cigarette filters were on the first position in the list of waste materials22. Cigarette filters take about 12 years to rot and get mixed, and thus it keeps polluting sea water for a longer time which hampers the sustainable sea, ocean and marine resource (Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development) protection. On the other side, sustainable development is impossible without protecting the land resources like wildlife, combating desertification and land prevention of the degradation (Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss). Tobacco farming has negative impacts here as well. Tobacco farming damages the soil and the farming requires more fertilizers (about three times more than the food crops) and other insecticides than paddy farming. But the amount of land for growing tobacco is increasing in Bangladesh. The tobacco
farming lands have increased three times in the current days comparing to 2011. Further, about 30 percent deforestation occurs for baking tobacco leaves\textsuperscript{23}. So, if we estimate the overall damages caused for tobacco production marketing and tobacco use, we will see that all of them are blocking the ways to reach every sustainable development goal. If we fail to implement FCTC effectively, tobacco will weaken the country’s economy, social and environmental pillars and consequently the achievement of sustainable development goals will be hampered to its greatest extent.

### Financing in FCTC implementation and Prioritization

Financing on the FCTC implementation is consistent and relevant question now. Financing to implement a development initiative is a great challenge for a developing economy especially for Bangladesh. But the scenario is just the opposite for implementing the FCTC as the government has the potential to earn a large sum of revenue. By implementing the FCTC provided taxation system, the government could gather the extra revenue. The issue is also important considering the tobacco control because if it is implemented, the use of tobacco will also be reduced to a great extent. Currently, the Bangladesh government receives over Tk 14 thousand crores as tobacco tax and also receives over Tk 200 crores as health development surcharge\textsuperscript{24}. By implementing an effective tobacco taxation policy, the government could increase the amount several times more which will also be helpful in reducing tobacco use. In South Africa, between 1993 and 2009, total taxes on cigarettes were increased from 32 percent to 52 percent of the retail price. This contributed to having tobacco consumption from about four cigarettes per adult per day to two cigarettes per day over a decade, and generated a nine-fold increase in government tobacco tax revenue\textsuperscript{25}. On the other side, analysis of tobacco taxation data in Bangladesh shows that the real price of tobacco products has not been increased due to the lack of effective tobacco taxation rather the prices of tobacco has been cheaper here comparing to the other neighboring countries. As a direct result the rate of tobacco users has increased from 37 percent to 43 percent (increased by 6 percent) by the difference of four years, from 2005 to 2009\textsuperscript{26}. Currently the number of tobacco users is over 4 crores and studies have found that if the real price of tobacco increases by 10 percent, it helps to cut smoking by 8 percent among the lower and middle income people which is considered as an adorable public health indicator\textsuperscript{27}. Besides, the higher
prices also discourage youths from starting to tobacco. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and philanthropist said, “Among the revenue proposal I have examined, tobacco taxation are especially attractive because they encourage smoker to quit and discourage people from starting to smoke, as well as generate significant revenue. It’s a win-win for global health.”28 Recently, the UN’s conference in Addis Ababa titled ‘Financing for Development’ has also endorsed tobacco taxation as an effective and potential revenue source for financing development activities29. Thereby, the Bangladesh Government could earn huge revenue and could show the successful implementation of FCTC directives or could show the success of SDGs by imposing effective and increased taxes on all tobacco products. But prioritizing of the issues is a must in this case. It should be set first whether the revenue from tobacco taxation should be used for implementing the FCTC/ tobacco control or battling the non-communicable diseases. In that case, we have to evaluate the existing status of our tobacco control or FCTC implementation. Bangladesh have failed to legalize many of the FCTC directives including tobacco farming control and taxation policies, pictorial health warning (gradually plain packaging) implementation, banning retail cigarette sale, discarding the smoking zones, formulating policies over controlling tobacco company interference and illicit tobacco trade etc. As a result, the implementation of the FCTC is not possible with the existing law. It is evident that tobacco companies’ aggressions turn stronger when the law is weaker and in that case the law could not bring the desired outcome. So, if we want to implement the FCTC, a comprehensive law in line with the FCTC should be formulated. Therefore, initially the earned revenue from the tobacco taxation should be spent to formulate and implement an FCTC based tobacco control laws and regulations. When the implementation of the FCTC is on a desired level, the revenue from the tobacco tax could be used for preventing non-communicable diseases and other development initiatives.
The government is committed to reach the SDGs by 2030 and therefore the goals should be implemented based on national priority. It should be kept in mind that tobacco companies will always remain active so that the FCTC implementation should not be placed on Government’s priority list. The anti-tobacco platforms should continuously work to bring the FCTC implementation issue on the national priority list and formulate a perspective national tobacco control programme which should aim at reducing the damages caused for tobacco use by 2030 to a desired level. Consequently, following the FCTC, to implement the existing law and filling up the loopholes of the law, annual targets should be set and their gradual implementation should be ensured.

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate
Chapter 2
Tobacco Company Interference
Tobacco company interference is the bunch of actions that the tobacco industry takes in order to obstruct the design and implementation of a health policy or promote policies or positions that uphold it commercial interests\(^3\). As part of the interference activities, the tobacco companies globally always try to drain the tobacco control initiatives both in covert and overt manner and spend required funds to implement the conspiracies.

It should be remembered that tobacco companies always aim at increasing profit by any means, and try to obstruct tobacco control policies in order to continue and expand their business smoothly. On the other side, the government is responsible to design and implement a stout tobacco control law that should protect the public health. Hence, the goals of the government and tobacco industry from public health point of view are conflicting; and thus the tobacco companies should never be considered as a stakeholder of any tobacco control policy, programme or initiative\(^3\).

Tobacco is the only legal product that kills people. Tobacco companies across the globe are stronger in terms of economy and politics because a vast quarter of the world populations are tobacco consumers. Using the economic and political powers, the tobacco companies interfere and run their business internationally using various tactics including legal
Although tobacco companies are the death merchants, they enjoy a 'positive corporate image' worldwide for their so-called social responsibilities or CSR activities. Using the CSR label, tobacco companies continue their interference activities that is also proven by different internal documents of the tobacco companies that already have been made public. Anti-tobacco bodies across the world are pressing the governments to eliminate tobacco company interference using the revealed documents. At the same time, they encourage the tobacco control advocates to expose the false images of social responsibilities of the tobacco companies.

As multinational companies, they repeat the same strategy internationally to impede planning and implementation of the tobacco control initiatives in order for upholding their business interest. The following section represents the notable interference initiatives of the tobacco companies in different parts of the world (based on different information sources and practical experiences from Bangladesh):
Gather civil society members and scholars

Arrange seminars and meetings with civil society members and scholars to observe the opposition and prevailing society trends

Plan future actions to fight challenges ahead

Lobbying

Interfere on policy making process

Promote pro-tobacco policies

Place law amendment proposals

Encourage formulation of ineffective law

Create Political pressure

Fund electoral campaigns

Use international treaties and documents as tools to challenge tobacco control policies

Sponsor government activities to derive help from government officials

Prioritize voluntary agreement with government in place of effective tobacco control law

Fund research and hire scientific consultants

Fund creation of pro-tobacco facts (sponsor researchers, organizations or universities)

Publicize biased research findings

Twist data on detrimental effects of tobacco on health and economy

Distort information

Challenge the government steps on tobacco control

Discourage government’s initiatives on tobacco control by filtered information and defending Tobacco industry in public

Create and utilize Front groups

Use people of different sectors including restaurant workers, retailers, advertising agencies, smokers’ rights associations, tobacco farmers and other such groups as front groups

Utilize these groups as spokespersons to oppose tobacco control measures like tobacco control law formulation and taxation

Lawsuit

Lodging court cases in order to weaken tobacco control initiatives
Threatening

**Assault and threat tobacco control community and policymaking leaders in person to undermine their activities and create false impression about their work**

**Social services and CSR**

**Assists in arts, culture and social services and involve policymakers in those activities only to be trustworthy**

**Provide funds on different welfare projects to create a ‘socially responsible’ image**

**Extensively promote CSR projects in mass media**

**Public relation and using mass media**

**Distort public opinion**

**Offering perks (such as pleasure trips for the gatekeepers, editors, media award etc.) to media people for creating pro-tobacco environment**

**Airing/ publishing misleading ideas to undermine health policies (such as altering the meaning of ‘public place’ with ‘open space’, saying that most of the sections of tobacco control law are not implementable etc.)**

**Smuggling**

**Undertake programs to weaken policies on taxation policies**

**Law violation, exploiting loopholes**

**Undertake programs to utilize the loopholes of tobacco control law for obstructing its implementation process**

**Falsify articles of tobacco control law for continuing tobacco promotion**

**Source:** http://sdhammika.blogspot.com/2012/01/wolves-in-sheeps-clothing.html
The article 5.3 was included in the FCTC to combat tobacco company interference on tobacco control law and other tobacco control initiatives. The section orders the signatory parties to protect the tobacco control policies and measures from the business and other interest of the tobacco companies but many of the governments become unable to prevent the ill tactics of tobacco companies for their negligence. Notably, the article 5.3 of FCTC is one of the greatest tools to battle tobacco company interference but the government of Bangladesh is yet to formulate any policy based on this guideline which is frustrating indeed.

**BATB attempts manipulating High Court verdict on tax evasion by British High Commissioner in Bangladesh**

**FCTC Article 5.3 to combat tobacco company interference**

The article 5.3 was included in the FCTC to combat tobacco company interference on tobacco control law and other tobacco control initiatives. The section orders the signatory parties to protect the tobacco control policies and measures from the business and other interest of the tobacco companies but many of the governments become unable to prevent the ill tactics of tobacco companies for their negligence. Notably, the article 5.3 of FCTC is one of the greatest tools to battle tobacco company interference but the government of Bangladesh is yet to formulate any policy based on this guideline which is frustrating indeed.

**Some Recommendation of Article 5.3 of FCTC**

- No partnerships, non-binding or non-enforceable agreements between tobacco industry and governments
- No contributions by tobacco industry to governments
- No tobacco industry-drafted legislation or policy, or voluntary codes as substitutes for legally enforceable measures
- No investments by governments or public officials in tobacco industry
- No tobacco industry representation on government tobacco control bodies or FCTC delegations
The tobacco control law and its rules (2015) made it mandatory to print the GHW covering upper 50% space of all the tobacco packets from March 19, 2016. But ignoring the provision, the Ministry for Law has opined printing the GHW with health warning on lower 50% of the tobacco packets. The minister for law went in a foreign trip after signing the document over the issue on March 13, 2016 and the trip was planned to avoid consequences and commenting on GHW permission issue37. But before the approval from Law Minister, some posters were found across the country with the GHW and health warning on lower 50% space of the tobacco packets and the posters were printed by Bangladesh Cigarette Manufacturers’ Association (BCMA) and British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB)38 which questions all the activities of the Law Ministry. Besides, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) – the government body for revenue collection, also was biased to the tobacco companies during the entire period.

Intimacy among the Law Ministry, NBR and tobacco company is not surprising at all. It is important to mention that the Law Ministry took over two years to finalize the Rules for Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act 2005 (Amended 2013) by showing different excuses with the recommendations of tobacco companies39. After submission of the draft Rules on Health Ministry website on October 31, 201340, the BCMA delegates had a meeting with the health Secretary and also expressed concerns on some clauses of the rules and provided their proposal to the Health Secretary by issuing a letter on November 12 of the same year41. On the proposal, the BCMA demanded to allow 18 months to implement the GHW on tobacco packets
The Health Ministry extended time to implement the GHW on tobacco packs to nine months which was six months before and had sent the Rules to the Law Ministry for vetting. Later, the legislative secretary of the Law Ministry, on March 12, 2014, had arranged for a meeting over the issue with the participation of Health Ministry, National Tobacco Control Cell and tobacco company representatives. In the meeting, tobacco company representatives again argued on extending time to 18 months with some excuses and according to the meeting decision, the tobacco companies urged to send the excuses in written to the legislative secretary of the Law Ministry. Accordingly, the BCMA submitted a letter to the legislative secretary on March 25, 2014. The Law Ministry had sent the draft to the Health Ministry without vetting and recommending the GHW implementation time by 18 months. But the Health Ministry, without responding on the proposal, sent the draft Rules for vetting to the Law Ministry again in June, 2014 after nine months. In fact, the Law Ministry started wasting time after this event. A delegation of BATB met the Health Minister on July 23, 2014. Actually, the representatives wanted to delay the GHW implementation through the meeting. Later, both the Health and Law ministries exchanged documents but failed to reach any mutual agreement. After a certain stage, the Law Ministry sent back the draft to the Health Ministry with further recommendations. Consequently, an uncertain situation was created on passing the Rules. To resolve the situation, the Health Ministry issued letter to Legislative Secretary on GHW when the Rules of Tobacco Control Act was underway.
Ministry had a meeting with the tobacco company representatives. In the meeting, tobacco company representatives again demanded 18 months to implement the GHW on tobacco packets. With the pressure from Law Ministry and tobacco company, the Health ministry sent the draft again to Law Ministry recommending to implement the GHW by 12 months. Finally, the Law Ministry set the law implementation deadline to 12 months for the tobacco companies. At last, after two years of the law amendment, the Rules were published in Gazette on March 19, 2015. Now the tobacco companies got time to implement GHW by March 19, 2016. But before six months of the law implementation deadline, the tobacco companies started following ill tactics to extend the GHW implementation date. The BCMA issued a letter to the Health Ministry, on September 13, 2015, that it has come to know about the image finalization process on newspaper (The Financial Express on September 6, 2015) but they did not get the electronic copy of the images to be published. So, again they should be allowed 12 months from the date they will get the images. By the same time, they demanded for printing the GHW.
kompomanganik poyackete niyore 50 shatang jayagadha sashita sakti mokkriye muntra anumoti pradhana juna yashtha mokkralore kahce dahi jahnay. joraalora o ahyehto chapa sushito lokam taar yashtha mokkralore ehe wirxe arano 4ti chitiprashan kore. 

Tobacco companies were driven to change their strategies for the stringent anti-tobacco roles of mass media and anti-tobacco activists. They started highlighting the revenue collection problem with the GHW on upper 50% of tobacco packs. The NBR also demanded to the Health Ministry to allow tobacco companies to print the GHW on lower 50% spaces. To create a strong and continuous pressure on the Health Ministry, they also submitted four more letters. Besides, the NBR arranged for a meeting with the representatives of tobacco company and Health Ministry on November 15, 2015. At the meeting, the NBR provided biased opinion with the demand from tobacco company. To make the demands further stronger, the tobacco companies appointed a reputed lawyer, on December 23, 2015, to issue a letter to Health Secretary to solve the issue by admitting the opinions from the Law Ministry as the tobacco companies are aware that the Law Ministry opinion will favor them. Anti-tobacco platforms continued their reactions and monitored the entire events.

Besides, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) chairman and influential MP, Saber Hossain Chowdhury sent a letter to the Health Minister informing his concern over interference of tobacco company on the GHW implementation and solutions of the problem (attaching stamps and band rolls on the packet sides). The Health Ministry also recommended to use the stamps/ band rolls on the side of the packets and sent the draft to law Ministry for its opinion. But ignoring the Health Ministry recommendation, Law Ministry opined the same opinion underscoring the lame excuses of tobacco company – to implement the GHW on the lower 50% space of tobacco packets. Tobacco companies apply all their powers to hamper the GHW formulation and implementation passage in Bangladesh but for the brave attempts of mass media and immediate steps taken by the anti-tobacco organizations, they were compelled to print the GHW on tobacco packets though there were some alterations of the law.
Chapter 3

Tobacco Company Ill tactics in Bangladesh
Child labour in bidi industry has legally been banned in Bangladesh. Following the Section 32 of the UN Charter on Child Rights, 'States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.' Based on the Charter, the Government of Bangladesh has introduced a list of 38 hazardous jobs and banned children engagement with those tasks. Working at bidi and cigarette factory is on the fourth of the list. Besides, Bangladesh has ratified International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no 182 in 2001 that deals with the hazardous child labour. Since the rules and policies regarding child rights are not enforced properly, bidi factory owners are deploying children in different stages of hazardous tobacco processing and bidi production.

According to a study, there are 117 bidi factories in Bangladesh and about 65,000 workers are employed. They produce monthly and annually 405 and 4,865 crore sticks, respectively. The research of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) shows that there are 195 bidi factories in the country and 75,000 workers are engaged with the factories, although the factory owners have long been publicizing fabricated information with their deployed lobbyists, researchers and front groups that there are around...
2.5 million workers currently working in bidi factories. The so-called researchers and lobbyists disagree to publish the exact number of child workers in the factories. But research, media reports and investigations by Tobacco Industry Watch Team at bidi factories have found shocking scenarios. It has been found that most of the children are aged from 4 – 12 years old and are engaged in different stages of bidi production process. After discussions with Haragaach bidi labour leaders and bidi factory workers it has been uncovered that there are 35 bidi factories in the district, which represents 30% of the total bidi factories in Bangladesh and the number of bidi workers in the factories are about 40,000. Among them, half are children (50%). Among the rest, 12,000 are females (30%) and 8,000 are males (20%). Among the children, 15,000 regularly or irregularly attend school and the rest do not attend at all. The children are unaware about the health hazards or about their uncertain future for working with the bidi factories. According to the locals, the boys and girls who work in the bidi factories cannot cross the primary education boundary and majority of them drop out when they are at the fifth grade. Similarly, discussions with bidi labourers and the journalists of Lalmonirhat reveal that there are nine bidi factories in the district, which is 7.7% of the national total; there are around 21,000 labourers engaged with the factories, and 70% (14,700) of them are children aging from 4 – 14 years. The information has been validated through direct observations in some of the bidi factories of the region. Investigations have also found that 60-70%
of the labours are children in the factories, and the scenario is more alarming at domestic level where around 90% of the children are engaged with bidi shells or sticks preparation.

Investigations have also found that usually children are engaged in the four stages of bidi production – (1) preparing empty bidi shells, (2) inserting chopped tobacco into the shells, (3) closing the shell tops, and (4) preparing bidi packets. Among the tasks, bidi shell preparation is done at household level and the remaining are in the factories. Usually children work in factories from 9am to 12am and make bidi shells from 4pm to 9pm at their residences. The bidi shells prepared at homes are taken to the factories for inserting processed tobacco and packaging. Although the adults are responsible to prepare the packets, children are also found participating in the process. Payment for the children to prepare bidi shells is very poor. A child, if works at a factory from 4pm to 9pm, can make in average around 4,500 shells and they are paid only Tk 7.50 per thousand shells. By the same way, a child from 8am to 12am can close on average around 5,000 shell tops and the wage is same, Tk 7.50 per thousand that means a child earns Tk 35 a day on average. Following the locals, in most of the factories there are 12 working days in a month, and accordingly a child can earn only Tk 420 in a month on average, i.e. Tk 14 a day.

The local people have informed that children cannot get out the bidi processing trap once they are involved and most of the children turn into tobacco users. Children also suffer from malnutrition as they work in the unhealthy environment for years, use tobacco and do not get balanced meals. They face different diseases in the very beginning of their lives. Discussion with the child workers unveils that they suffered from frequent fevers and coughs, and were very common. They also suffer from headaches, abdominal problems, diarrhea and muscle pain. Besides, chronic bronchitis and asthma affected children are becoming the worst sufferers for the unhealthy environment inside the bidi factories. A medical officer of Haragaach Government Hospital has acknowledged the issue and said that half of the patients who come to the medical suffer from cold, coughs, fever and malnutrition. The medical officer has also informed that most of the asthma patients work in the bidi factories and 80% of the patients are females, while 10% is children and remaining 10% is adult male. The guardians of the children said that they used the local pharmacies to get medication for their children
The earning of households where children are the main sources of income is horrific, since selling labour is the only source of income and most of the households do not own any cultivable lands, livestock and even a small piece of homestead lands. Majority of the household members are engaged in bidi industry, and some of them are engaged as agriculture labourer, transport worker or petty traders. The households where child labourers for bidi factories live earn around TK 3000 on average a month. Meeting the costs of a household for a month with such scanty amount is almost similar to execute something impossible. Following the household income and expenditure survey (HIES 2010), a landless household earned Tk 11479 on average in 2010. The same was Tk 7203, 5842 and 4366 in the year of 2005, 2000 and 1995/96, respectively. So, it is evident that earning of a landless household around one and a half decades ago are higher than what the bidi labourers are earning at present.

During the past few years, wage of all types of day laborers have increased significantly, but the wages of the bidi laborers have not been increased and it might have reduced a bit in terms of real wages. Therefore, to cope with income disparity, households are deploying their children to work at bidi factories. Survey of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) ‘Wage Rate of Working Poor in Bangladesh, 2009-10’ shows that the wages of bidi
and zarda industry workers are the lowest compared with any other sector in economy. Scenario of current wages of child labourer in the bidi factories is more terrible as they get only Tk 35° on average. The inhumane face of scanty wages to the children becomes clearer when the daily income distribution is calculated from the monthly average wage. According to calculation it is only TK 14 a day. Is this enough for a child to meet his/her daily needs? Tobacco companies are exploiting the poor and unaware people and children, and are entrapping the innocent kids with the death-traps.

**Case 1: Dollar caught in deathtrap**

Dollar is a boy of about 14. The poor kid is entrapped by the bidi industry’s deathtrap. The malnourished boy lives with the other five family members at a small room beside Gafur Bidi factory in Haragaach. He studied in the first grade and could not continue like the other bidi factory child labours. To support his family, he started working at Aziz Bidi Factory at the age of seven. In the factory he is responsible for inserting tobacco in bidi shells, closing the shell tops and packaging bidi. He works from 8am to 4pm. Besides, he helps his mother and other family members in his house to prepare empty bidi shells. It is to be noted that the children who

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily Average Wage Rate of the Day Labourer in Bangladesh (Tk)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bidi Factory (child labor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with bidi laborers at Haragach (Rangpur) and Khuniagach (Lalmonirhat).
of them were children (two to three thousand are boys
Tk 1128 in 2000 and Tk 830 in 1995 – 96 8. The
average a week and Tk 1236 a month. Household
show that the monthly average (per capita) income
Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES 2010) data
average a week and Tk 1236 a month. Household
of a person was Tk 2553 in 2010, Tk 1485 in 2005,
birds and brother). Thereby, he earns Tk 309 on
making bidi shells by his family members (sister,
Tk 143 for preparing 6000 sticks of bidi from the
factory. His share is Tk 103 and the rest Tk 40 is for
prepare shells are usually the younger ones aged from five
to nine years. Dollar said that once he
was an associate of his father at the bidi
factory and gradually turned into a bidi worker.
But his father is no longer continuing
the work. Majority of
the children in Haragaach start helping their
family members in bidi processing as a part of
helping parents. Consequently, they enter the
unhealthy bidi factories. Dollar has been working at
the bidi factory for seven years. He works thrice a
week and prepares 6000 bidi shells a day. He earns
Tk 143 for preparing 6000 sticks of bidi from the
factory. His share is Tk 103 and the rest Tk 40 is for
making bidi shells by his family members (sister, mother and brother). Thereby, he earns Tk 309 on
average a week and Tk 1236 a month. Household
Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES 2010) data
shows that the monthly average (per capita) income
of a person was Tk 2553 in 2010, Tk 1485 in 2005,
Tk 1128 in 2000 and Tk 830 in 1995 – 96. The
current earning of Dollar is less than the average per
capita income of the year 2005 and slightly higher
than that of the year 2000.

Rough and pre-matured facing Dollar has skinny
limbs. His complexion turns fade with no mildness.
He frequently falls sick, suffers from fever, muscle
pain and diarrhea. Coughs and colds are his regular
companion. In such cases, he does not go to doctor
rather takes medications from the local drug stores.
Even his family members are not worried about his
sickness. They have coped up with the situation. In
fact, the family needs money more than anything to
fill their hunger. So, they barely have any time to
look over him. The premature body is being used as
an earning source for his family. His father alone
cannot bear all the expenses since he does not own
any croplands to grow food crops. His father said
that the family is being maintained with the
additional earnings of his son. Dollar has a plan to
leave bidi factory, if he gets a job elsewhere. He
dreams to start working at another place someday to
earn enough money to improve his family condition.

Dollar opined that there were around 14000 – 15000
workers at Aziz bidi factory and around 7000 – 8000
of them were children (two to three thousand are boys
and five to six thousand are girls). But the locals said that 60 – 65 percent of the workers of the factory were children. Research argues that 75,000 workers are engaged in 195 bidi factories across the country, and if half of the workers are children then there are 42,500 child workers who are leading inhumane and hazardous lives like Dollar. Child labour is prohibited in the bidi factories. Since there is no application of the policies, a significant portion of the future cohort of the country is being destroyed by the death selling traps of the tobacco companies.

Case 2: Bidi making chains Mukta

Mukta is a nine years old girl living at Saheb Para of Haragaach. Her father is a truck helper who earns Tk 2500 – 3000 a month. The earning is barely enough to maintain the five-member household expenses. So, Mukta has to make bidi with her elder sister and mother. She started bidi making when she was seven and started to go to the bidi factory in every Saturday and Monday with her mother. She works from 8am to 11am and locks around 5000 bidi shell tops. She gets Tk 7 per thousand. She is an assistant of her mother. Her mother receives an order of preparing 18,000 bidi a week and she produces 9000 bidis each Wednesday and Saturday. Her mother and sister makes 18,000 bidi shells in four days and fills tobacco in the shells, locks the tops and packaging is done when Mukta...
goes into the factory with her mother. Her mother receives Tk 330 for 18,000 bidi altogether and Mukta gets Tk 70 for her participation. She earns Tk 280 on average a month. Although she is in her second grade, she is irregular to school. Moreover, she has been becoming thin gradually and suffering from fever and coughs. At times she cannot attend school or the bidi factory for her sickness. When she was asked about how she felt in this job, she remained tight lipped. Might be the question was irrelevant to her or she was too familiar with the question that it is unnecessary for her to answer it. Whatever the fact is, such children are never unchained.

Case 3: Family shouldered on childhood!

Eight years old Rokhsana is a child labour from Kalmatir para under Lalmonirhat district. She is engaged with bidi shell preparation with her mother since the age of five. Currently she works five or six days in a week. Her mother gets order to prepare 10,000 bidi a week. She prepares 4,000 and the rest is done by her mother. Rokhsana earns Tk 32 a week on average and hence, Tk 128 a month. Her mother is a non-card holder of bidi factory. She works on sub-contract from the card-holding workers. It is the rule of the locality that the workers who do not possess cards will prepare bidi shells sitting at their residences under sub-contract arranged by the card-holders. Card holders get order to prepare 10,000 – 18,000 bidi a day. But since it is huge within tight timeline, they employ the non-card-holders to make bidi shells on their behalf. The card-holders supply the shell preparing materials and a deadline, and later collect the shells when done.

Rokhsans has learnt bidi shell making from her mother. She is now responsible to help in the household income by her skills. Although a student of class two, she cannot attend school for the work. She even does not have enough time to spend for sports. She has been passing her childhood the same for the last three years. Thousands of children of the poverty-stricken households do not go to school. Isn’t there any end of such situations?
Rokhsana’s father is a day labourer. He does not have work throughout the year. He also does not have any croplands. His scanty income is inadequate to bear all the household expenses. So, he engaged his daughter in bidi making. Rokhsana’s mother, Sheuli Begum, said that most of the locals were engaged with bidi production. Sheuli added that people especially who did not have any croplands, wealth or helpless, were integrated with the hazardous bidi factory.

Eleven years old Shuki attended school till her second grade. Now she is a regular worker of a bidi factory. She lives with her family at Beribandh (embankment) of Baniapara under Lalmonirhat district. Shuki wakes up at 5am to go to the bidi factory with her father and returns at 5pm. She is ordered to prepare 10,000 bidi a day and is paid Tk 240. She gets Tk 24 per thousand bidi preparation. She spends Tk 80 to prepare one thousand of bidi shells by sub-contract and she with her father receives Tk 160 which is their actual income. They work around 20 days a month on average and earn around Tk 3200 of which Tk 800 belongs to her. She goes to bidi factory five days a week and locks around 5,000 tops of bidi shells. She receives Tk 8 per thousand. Her weekly average income is Tk 200 and Tk 800 a month. It is to be noted that her income is more than any other child as she is privileged with five-day working opportunity and her skills to prepare bidi.

She was accompanied with her parents during the interview. Her parents are indifferent to the unhealthy bidi factory environment and her absence at school. Rather, their shining faces expressed satisfaction for the additional income of their daughter. Once they were a solvent family. But they are to live on the Beribandh area after they lost their belongings by river erosion. They also do not have any land or livestock. It was difficult for her father to maintain the five-member family expenses alone. So, her father has engaged her in bidi factory. However, not only she had to stop schooling, her health is also weakening after she has engaged with bidi factory. In line with fever and coughs, she developed eye sight problems. Being poor, she could not consult a doctor. When asked about how long...
she will work in the bidi factory, her father replied that all the earnings of Shuki have been being saved for her marriage in future. When Shuki was asked how she feels working in bidi factories, she remained silent as her parents were sitting next to her. Many of the children of the locality are spending their childhood in the hazardous environment of the bidi factories. The childhood that was supposed to be invested in sports and education, is being spent for maintaining their families.

Acute sharp stench was filled in the air. Hundreds of tender hands were carefully working on the floor of a storehouse like space and they even did not have time to look around for the deadlines of finishing their respective tasks. The air, heavily polluted and filled with tobacco powder and dusts, was flying across the room and it appeared that life span was decreasing with each breath. In such a condition, teams were made consisting of 2-5 members sitting in a circle with bidi making materials. Usually household members were used to form teams. Many children were found sleeping on the floor aged from six months to four years with extreme negligence. The children are bound to stay at the factories for long hours until their mothers complete their tasks. Tobacco dusts were entering into their mouth and nose, which was a serious health threat, but nobody

Case 5: Inside the Factory
seemed worried about the issue. However, the factory authority is also callous and has finished their responsibilities by showing a signboard on the main entrance that describes that entry of children under 14 is restricted in the factory. But they are paying no heed on the issue and believe that all their responsibilities to protect child rights are done by the signboard.

The temperature was around 39° Celsius which was almost similar to a heat wave. Hot weather pouring down through the tinned (CI) roof inside the factory and there was no ceiling or table fan found inside. Most of them were wearing undershirts and even some were working on bare body to adjust with the weather and fill their daily quota. All of a sudden, a comparison between the malnourished, poverty-stricken children in the bidi factory and children living in modern and healthy environment hit the mind. It is the cruel reality of life. The children in the bidi factory were covered with tobacco dusts, their eyes dimmed and small, dried faces, boney bodies and limbs, absence of childish activities prevailed among them. Poverty has made them wasting their childhoods to bear their households for a little longer.

Despite having lots of queries in mind, there was lack of scope to ask the questions to someone inside the bidi factory. Only observation was the way to realize the real condition of living of the children and their families with the meager income in exchange of the hardest labour. However, the authority of the bidi factory (one or two members who were present at the factory then) could not control over the team of seven to eight members including two local journalists. The images attached herein were taken very trickily by the team. Interviews were taken after their permission sitting
by roadside or at their respective residences. In Lalmonirhat, a three-member team of bidi workers from a household, where the mother was the team leader, was asked that if there was only poverty to let people allow their children to work in bidi factories. She precisely replied that poverty was a fact but the bidi factory owners also had some interest if child workers were engaged into their factories. The bidi company prefers thin fingers of the children as they could quickly and perfectly prepare the bidi shells and close the shell tops. Besides, children were available and less demanding than the adult ones. Turning emotional she said that her son, aged 10 years old, had been working for three years and her daughter, aged eight, had been working for one and a half years at the bidi factory. Her daughter suffered from different diseases, particularly coughing. She also said why the factory authority forbade us strongly entering into a particular room because most of the workers of the room were children. She was also asked about the schooling of the children and how that was possible. The question revealed a new face of the factory authority. The factory owner became active to admit the children in schools in the beginning of a year and allows them leave from 9am to 12am for attending classes. But after some days,
Child labour inside the bidi factory is really shocking. After visiting two factories in Haragaach, and one in Khuniagaach under Lalmonirhat district, the six-member Tobacco Industry Watch Bangladesh team has come to an agreeable decision about the use of child labour in the bidi factories of the districts. The team members’ finding shows that over half of the bidi workers (60 – 65%) are children aging from 4 – 14. Observations, discussions with the bidi workers and analyzing the photos, the Tobacco Industry Watch Bangladesh team members have agreed about the ratio of child labour in the bidi factories. Since most of the children are malnourished, their actual age could not be known. But the Tobacco Industry Team evaluation is almost similar with the information gathered from the locals and secondary literatures on child labour. Whatever the statistics is, Tobacco Industry Watch Bangladesh wants the inhumane child labour on bidi factory to be stopped soon.
Although advertisement and promotion of tobacco products are prohibited and sponsorships are strictly controlled by the tobacco control law, there is no such act to control the alluring activities and interferences of tobacco company in the country. As a result, to expand their business, the tobacco companies are adopting and continuing different ill tactics and aggressive activities across the country and also hampering the implementation of tobacco control law. Thereby, the desired outcomes of the tobacco control law are not seen and public health is being damaged. Following the FCTC Article 5.3, the government was supposed to formulate tobacco control policies being free from tobacco company interferences. Unfortunately, there is no such provision in the current law. Remarkably, the government signed on Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in 2003 and to control tobacco production, usages, selling and advertisement, had formulated law in 2005. The law accordingly got amended in 2013 due to some loopholes. Later, the Rules for the amended law was
Following section 5 of Smoking and Tobacco Products Usage (Control) Act 2005 (Amendment, 2013)\(^6\), all types of advertisement and promotion of tobacco products have been prohibited and sponsorship has been strictly controlled. As per the law, all types of advertisement on print/electronic media or by any other means, distributing tobacco products for free; donation, reward or sponsoring events; advertising on cinema halls or on web pages; using scenes of tobacco product consumption on cinema, drama or documentary, production and distribution of any product similar to tobacco product packet or wrappers and their distribution, advertising tobacco products on point of sales, using tobacco company name, sign, trademark, symbol against sponsoring corporate social responsibilities etc. are completely prohibited. However, based on some rules and conditions, tobacco consumption scenarios could be used on the older cinemas with the necessity of plot. The Rules\(^6\) have indicated that anti-smoking warning, “Smoking/tobacco use causes death”, should be used on one fifth space of the entire screen by white font on black background. Regarding the case of telecasting cinemas on television, between the two advertisement break, it means after the first advertisement and beginning of the smoking scene and before the second advertisement which refers that after the ending of the part, an anti-smoking warning, “Smoking/Tobacco Use Causes Death”, should be screened on one fifth space of the entire screen for at least 10 seconds. Similarly, if there are smoking scenes on cinema, the same procedure should be followed before the cinema begins, and before and after the advertisement and at the end of the cinema and the anti-smoking warning, “Smoking/Tobacco Use Causes Death” and it should last for 20 seconds in Bengali language.
to promote tobacco use will be considered as “advertisement of tobacco products”. If someone violates the rule, the penalty will be a simple imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a monetary fine which may extend to Tk 100,000 or both. If the person commits the same offence again, the penalties will be doubled.

To formulate law and Rules on tobacco product advertisement and promotion, only FCTC article 13 has been followed but article 5.3 to control the tobacco industry interference has not been followed. Consequently, tobacco companies are continuing their death business with power exploiting the loopholes.

**Tobacco company ill tactics on violation tobacco control law**

Tobacco companies are continuing their advertisement and promotional activities ignoring the law. Investigations have found that though tobacco advertisement and promotion are prohibited, lacking of complete ban on sponsorship and effective implementation of TAPS related other provisions of the law tobacco companies are becoming aggressive day by day. By applying newer ill tactics and by violating the law, they are expanding their death business and creating new users. Some of the nationwide law violation of tobacco companies are pointed below.

**Tobacco advertisement at point-of-sales**

Since tobacco advertisement is banned after the law on print/ electronic media, tobacco companies are conducting strong advertisements on point-of-sales, and for these advertisement, the tobacco companies are spending thousands of crores of money which is proved on the annual reports of the tobacco companies. Only British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) has spent around TK 330 crores for its branding. Investigations have also found that tobacco companies are running their advertisement with tricky measures. Among the measures, distributing leaflet, handbill etc. to the consumers, decorating the selling points with small posters, hanging small posters before the store, exhibiting large dummy cigarette packs on the stores, exhibiting boards on the stores with new cigarette brands etc. are notable.

Moreover, to attract the youths, advertising tobacco products with decorating colorful tobacco packets on the stores is another common strategy for tobacco
companies and almost all the tobacco companies follow this technique. The law is being violated everywhere including in rural areas, cities and towns, tea stalls to superstores. The shop owners are also being provided with TK 500-600 (depends on locality) to exhibit the decorated boards on the stores and such information has also been found in newspapers. However, the rule of subsection 1 under Section 5 of the tobacco control law, advertising of tobacco products at the point-of-sales by any forms is completely prohibited, and it is also a punishable offence. Yet the tobacco companies conduct such activities as this is an effective way to expand the business. Following Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GAS 2009), around 38.4% population of Bangladesh see the advertisements of tobacco products at the point-of-sales and 32.1% people become influenced by tobacco products advertisements in other places.

Tobacco advertisement by video exhibition

Abul Khair Tobacco has produced music video with advertisement for promoting its brand - Marise cigarette and Abul Bidi. The advertisement of cigarette and bidi has been inserted in popular local and international songs. The representatives of the company show the videos in different public places like hotel, restaurant, point-of-sales and other places using their laptops and DVD sets, and also distribute cigarettes for free to inspire them in consuming the brand. According to the law, tobacco advertisement and promotion are banned and thus tobacco companies are following the innovative ways to advertise for their products which is punishable offence.

Toll-free call center for tobacco promotion

Multinational tobacco company, British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) has initiated a toll-free call center to provide services on inquiry or allegations which is an indirect form of marketing for its products. A toll-free number combined with a Benson & Hedges logo has been pasted in different tobacco selling shops where the consumers can make phone calls for free to know about any issues with Benson & Hedges. The advertisement aims to
TOBACCO OR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Youths trapped in tobacco marketing

Bond Street, a Phillip Morris International (PMI) cigarette brand has added an innovative dimension in its promotional activities. The PMI has engaged youths to market the product wearing attires similar to the cigarette brand packets which aims to reach and publicize the brand to the commoners trickily. This attractive look is attracting teenagers and youths seriously. Though such techniques are legally banned after the law, they are found almost everywhere.
Mini billboard behind bicycles

The advertisement of Java Black, a new brand, is going on by the mini billboards set behind the bicycles of the sales representative. Such advertising is found in different parts of the country including Dhaka. Investigations have found that the sales representatives ride on the bicycles to deliver the cigarettes in the selling stores and tobacco advertisement goes on. Following the tobacco control law, conducting any commercial activities aiming to promote tobacco use both in direct and indirect form is completely banned and a punishable offence.

Distributing Briton cigarette among students for free

With huge enthusiasm, by inviting school-going students from different regions in the country, the benefits of smoking were shown using projectors and in exchange of viewing, a packet of cigarettes and a foods pack covered with the tobacco company levels were distributed among them. Dhaka Tobacco company used this advertisement in the southern districts of the country to promote their brand - Briton. During the advertisement, who had liked their facebook page were awarded with two packets of cigarettes for free. The kids who attended the programme were seen smoking in their way back to home. Following the tobacco control law Section 5 Sub-section 1 (b) and (d), distributing of tobacco product for free and advertising of tobacco products on web pages is completely prohibited and punishable offence.

Producing and selling electronic gadgets resembling cigarette packs

Using of computer speakers, radio, music players and other devices resembling tobacco packets have been found in several parts of Dhaka city and other remote areas of the country. The gadgets look like cigarette packets from a distant view. Since tobacco product advertisement is banned after the law, the tobacco companies are trickily advertising for their products. Based on the Section 5, Sub-
section 1 (f), production, sale or distribution of products similar to tobacco product packets or containers is completely banned and punishable offence.

Attractive prize against empty packs

Some posters are found in remote rural areas in the present days with the slogan, “Submit empty packs and get rewards”. The posters contain details of the prize- how many packets will be needed to be

rewarded (like how many empty packets will be needed to have mug, bucket, umbrella or mobile phone etc.). Recently, a poster on Briton, a Dhaka Tobacco brand, is found across the markets. Following the tobacco control law, Section 5, sub-section 1 (c), rewarding to promote tobacco use is completely banned and punishable offence.

Colorful shop resembling cigarette pack

Some of the stores have been decorated like the color of a specific cigarette in different parts of Dhaka city which is known as color branding. A distant view of the stores helps to identify that the store is resembled to any specific cigarette brand. It is known that the stores are decorated in exchange of filling up any specific sales target for the stores. By this way, advertisement for tobacco products go on with this color branding whereas all sorts of commercial activities for increasing tobacco use is completely banned and punishable offence.

Attractive prizes for sellers

Tobacco companies provide some attractive prizes to the sellers if they can reach the specific selling targets. The prizes contain wrist watch labelled with cigarette packet, wall clock, mobile phone, radio, desk calendar, lighter, T-shirt and many other attractive prizes. The prizes are awarded based on filling up the targets set by the tobacco company
 Distributing cigarette selling boxes

Tobacco companies are distributing cigarette selling boxes resembling the cigarette packets. Investigations have found that such boxes or trays have been distributed across the country including Dhaka. The sellers informed that the boxes are provided by the tobacco companies. They supply the boxes with the condition to sell only their respective brands and compel them to sell the specific brands alone. By this colorful boxes, the tobacco companies are advertising for their products which is completely illegal.

Smoking scene on drama, cinema, documentary

Drama, cinema and documentaries on electronic media frequently show the smoking scenes which is inspiring the youths of the country to smoke. An actor is playing his role on a television drama wearing a jacket titled Marlboro which is an advertisement for the brand. A study on smoking scenes on television shows that 10 of 76 dramas, aired in a week (17-23 July, 2015) has shown smoking scenes on leading six private television channels based on Television Rating Point (TRP). The 10 dramas have 52 scenes with smoking and among them, only a single drama shown such scene for 30 times. After the Section 5, Sub-section 1 (e) of the tobacco control law, exhibition of the scenes of using tobacco products on drama, cinema or documentary on television, radio, internet, or stage, either produced or made in Bangladesh or abroad is banned and punishable offence.
Company advertisement in guise of CSR

Basically tobacco companies promote their name and sign in the name of corporate social responsibility activities (CSR). The notable activities are solar plan project, pure water plant, tree plantation, eco-friendly oven, medial facilities etc. The key aim of the activities is to create a positive image on the society and influence the policymakers. Based on BATB’s annual report, in 2013 it had spent over TK 31.69 crores for CSR activities. In the previous year, it had spent more which is worth around Tk 39.86 crores. Based on the Section 5, Sub-section 3 of the law, tobacco companies cannot use their organizational name, sign, trademark and symbol to run its social responsibility activities.

Cigarette ads in guise of job fair

To attract the youths in smoking, basically advertisement of tobacco products has been done in some reputed private universities in the name of ‘job fair’, where they installed decorative help desk and booths. Multinational tobacco company, Phillip Morris International (PMI) applied this ill trick to market its new brand Marlboro Gold in Bangladesh. Private universities like United International University (UIU), University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), East West University (EWU) and American International University (AIU) were used for this promotion. Investigations have found that they have planned for the job fair in almost all the other universities which is completely illegal.
Tobacco company ad on hospital website

Tobacco companies are also conducting their advertisements on hospital websites and the allegation was proved as the evidence was found on the website of Ayesha Memorial Specialized Hospital, in Mokhali, Dhaka. This private hospital used the logo of BATB which was published on mass media and social networking sites68. Experiencing negative remarks, the hospital authority finally removed the advertisement from its website.

Tobacco ads masked with concert and cultural events

Advertising tobacco products among the university youths through concerts is a popular technique of tobacco industry. Such concerts have been organized for Fine Cut, a new brand for Benson & Hedges and Marlboro Gold- a PMI brand. BATB organized the show at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center and PMI organized Live-2 Rock City Concert at Ramna Engineers’ Institute69,70. The organizing authorities had to defer both the concerts after the criticisms on newspapers and social networking sites. On the other side, Akij Group took initiative to popularize its tobacco products among the youths in several districts. But when the issue of tobacco products’ advertisement was exposed, the local authority annulled the event and fined them71. The section 5, Sub-section 1 (c) of the law has declared any events or sponsoring events to advertise or promote tobacco and its usages is completely illegal and punishable offence.

Tobacco ads by Battle of Mind

BATB organized the grand finale of ‘Battle of Mind 2015’72 at hotel Radisson with the participation of students from top 18 universities in Dhaka. To inspire on registering with the campaign, BATB has arranged for Roadshows in different university campuses. Though the anti-tobacco activists issued letter demanding the closure of this event to protect the youths, those attempts were in vain. The death-marketing competition is annually held to
Tobacco companies are adopting various ill tactics to advertise their products. Recently Abul Khair tobacco company has started its aggressive marketing to promote Marise cigarette using an umbrella that resembles the Marise brand. Sales representatives are selling the brand with different gift items to the consumers in markets and other public places. To inspire the consumers, they provide gifts against empty packets and other illegal activities. However, for such offences, the existing law orders a penalty for term of simple imprisonment not exceeding three months or a monetary fine which may extend to Tk 100,000 or both and the penalties will be doubled if the crimes are committed again.

Tobacco ads disguised in public awareness

There is a strict law to ban tobacco advertisement and promotion but on the other side, the tobacco companies are adopting different tricky measures to promote their products. A strong publicity is going on in the name of public awareness. Sales representatives of Akij Bidi, advertise for their bidi to win prizes and by the same time they hang some banners for public awareness like ‘Send your kids to school, plant trees and save environment etc. with the courtesy of Akij King, Akij Bidi Factory Ltd.’ They opine that they do not want to publicize the bidi rather want to create public awareness. Tobacco companies are advertising their products by such manners which are punishable offence after the tobacco control law.
প্রকাশিত আকারে হলেও সারাদেশে সংঘাতিত তামাক নিয়ন্ত্রণ আইনের বাতাস নষ্ট হয়েছে, যা অত্যন্ত অশান্ত হয়। বিজ্ঞান-প্রচারণা বদলি ছড়িয়ে দেশের বিভিন্ন কর্পোরের উদ্যোগে মোবাইল কোর্ট পরিচালিত হতে দেখা যাচ্ছে। অন্য বাতাসরোপী কর্পোরের (মাজিহানচক্র অনন্যা চক্র অথবা রাষ্ট্রপতির ওপর) দেশবাসী অর্থে তামাকের বিজ্ঞান অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়। কেন্দ্র ও প্রদেশ তামাকের বিজ্ঞান অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়। কারণ সরকারি তামাক যোগদানের সূত্রতায় কর্পোরের বাতাস হয়। একই সময় সরকারি তামাক যোগদানের সূত্রতায় কর্পোরের বাতাস হয়।

তবে দেশের বিপুল জনগোষ্ঠীর মাঝে আইনটির বাতাস নির্দিষ্ট করা সহজ দায়ের নয়। সংঘাতিত তামাক ও বিশ্বাসঘটনার ঘোষণাগুলো বিশেষ তামাকক্ষার দ্বারের বিজ্ঞান-প্রচারণা নিশ্চিত ও পীরস্পর্শন নিয়ন্ত্রণ অন্তর্ভুক্ত বিধানরূপে এখনও জনগণের মধ্যে কেন্দ্র সংরক্ষিত হয়ে ওঠছে। আইনের অন্যান্য বিধান যেমন: মাজিহান চক্রের মূল উদ্দেশ্যের নিয়মাবলী, তামাকক্ষার পোস্টারের পার্সেলের গুলি, শিক্ষার সংক্ষিপ্ত বিষয়বস্তু চূড়ান্ত, “পর্যবেক্ষক প্রচারণা” ও “পার্থিক পরিবহন” মূল্যায়নের পরিবেশ নিষ্ঠ কর্পোরের দায়িত্বগুলো, মূল্যায়নের জন্য নির্দিষ্ট কথা বা ‘যোগ্য প্রোপার’ রাখার কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা কর্পোরের অসাধারণ প্রধান শরীরের কর্পোরের চূড়ান্ত হয়। একই সাথে তামাকক্ষা যোগদানের সূত্রতায় শরীরী অসাধারণ এবং যোগদানের সূত্রতায় শরীরী অসাধারণ এবং যোগদানের সূত্রতায় শরীরী অসাধারণ কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা কর্পোরের অর্থ পালনের জন্য নিষ্ঠা।

নির্দিষ্ট কর্পোরের কর্মকর্তা বা পার্থিক পরিবহনের প্রথম পর্যন্ত প্রধান বিস্তার্য ও দ্বিতীয় পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা প্রথম পর্যায়ের কর্মকর্তা।

The implementation of the amended tobacco control law has been started in the country to a small extent at least which is hopeful. Mobile courts are on to stop tobacco advertisements in Dhaka and other parts of the country and the law enforcing authorities (magistrate and other authorized officials) are removing the nationwide tobacco advertisements, coating the advertisements with inks and fining the individuals or organizations who are violating the law. Being aware of the issues, many of them are removing the tobacco adverts. But some of the organizations are so reckless (particularly the supermarkets) that they have been fined twice for violating the law. Besides, the district and sub district level meeting of taskforce committees are being held regularly and different attempts and campaigns are being taken to implement the tobacco control law and raise awareness on detrimental use of tobacco. But this is difficult to impellent the law among the huge population of the country. Some of the sections of the amended law regarding prohibition of advertisement and promotion of tobacco products and control of sponsorship have not been popularized among the people. Some other provisions like anti-smoking warning for older cinemas, initiating pictorial warning on tobacco packets, responsibilities of authority in ensuring smoking-free environment in public place and public transports, the responsibilities of authority on keeping designated smoking zone, the authorized officials for implementing the law and their responsibilities, penalties for law violation etc. have remained in black and white only. Besides, there are no notable advancements on popularizing the important sections like anti-smoking signage – Abstain from smoking, it is a punishable offence, selling of tobacco products to or by minors (age under 18) etc.
The current law is strong enough to stop tobacco products’ advertisement and promotion and control sponsorship. If the law is implemented effectively, such ill activities of tobacco industry will be reduced gradually. However, the tobacco industries will also innovate new tactics to sustain their business which might not be controlled by the existing law. In such case, two recommendations could be placed, firstly: the effective implementation of the existing law to stop nationwide illegal advertisement and promotion of tobacco products, and secondly: respective state machinery will formulate and implement policies as per the FCTC article 5.3 guideline to control commercial interest of tobacco company.

Besides, if the government considers the following recommendations, it would turn beneficial to stop tobacco advertisement and promotion and would useful to control commercial activities of tobacco industry to promote tobacco use:

The health ministry could attempt to popularize the sections of the amended tobacco control law banning tobacco advertisements and promotions. Simultaneously, it could train up the relevant person with the law implementation or authorized officials to implement the law which will accelerate the law implementation.

The Health Ministry can hold inter-Ministry meeting like meeting with the Home, Information, Law and LGRD Ministries may prove effective in speeding up the implementation of the existing law.

Ministry for Social welfare, Finance, Commerce and Industry can provide instructions to the relevant organizations to monitor the CSR activities by the tobacco company.

Public health is on top and the government has to move ahead to control the tobacco use realizing the importance. The attempts should be continued to prevent the future generation from the clutch of tobacco. Besides, the responsibility to reduce the losses and death prevention is not alone for the government, private organizations, civil society, mass media and relevant others should paly active roles here.
Having no policy to regulate tobacco cultivation in Bangladesh, the minor office orders such as decision to stop loan facilities in tobacco farming by Bangladesh Bank, ban on using subsidized fertiliser in tobacco farming by the Agricultural Ministry and some other disjointed initiatives by the Department of Agriculture Expansion (DAE) etc. are almost of no use. Weak monitoring system and strong interferences by the tobacco companies is increasing tobacco farming shockingly in Bangladesh. On the other side, the anti-tobacco advocates and mass media have long been demanding overall policies discouraging tobacco farming by pointing out the damages caused by it. However, the respective authority appears to turn deaf ear to the claims. Although a section has been added on the amended tobacco control law that was passed in April 2013 to discourage tobacco farming, the Section cannot be implied for the want of necessary guidelines. It is notable that the Section 12 of the amended tobacco control law says, “The government shall make necessary guidelines to promote for discouragement of producing and using tobacco products, and
discouragement to set up industry of tobacco and tobacco related products, discouragement of producing tobacco related produces and farming”.

Since there is no tobacco cultivation regulating guidelines available, the tobacco companies have expanded tobacco plantations aggressively. The DAE has also been inactive with the stance that they have nothing to do in this case. Consequently, farming of the lethal crop has shockingly been expanded across the country. The entire economy, especially food security, public health, forest resources, ecology, environment, land fertility etc. is rapidly deteriorating.

Recent Trends of Tobacco Cultivation

Although the history of household level tobacco cultivation in Bangladesh is very old, but commercial tobacco farming with the inspiration of the tobacco companies is a recent phenomenon. Commercial production of tobacco products began gradually with the mechanizations of the tobacco industry. Basically tobacco expansion started from the 60s with direct and indirect motivations of the tobacco companies. It reaches to the current level due to the continuous aggression of the companies during the last couple of decades.

Following the DAE, in the current season (2014) tobacco has been grown on 108,000 hectares of lands, whereas it was 70,000 hectares in the last season (2013)74. It indicates that extra 38,000 hectares of lands have been used in the current
tobacco farming season. However, the statistics is incomplete and been formed after the lands only used in the hotspots (Kushtia 40,000 hectares, Bandarban 26,000 hectares, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat 30,000 hectares and 10,000 hectares in Rangpur district)85. Moreover, there are some doubts about the amount of lands used in tobacco farming as the land quantity has been falsified in most of the places. On the other hand, Manikganj, Tangail, Faridpur, Natore (Chalanbil), Narail, Jessore and some parts of the Hill Tracts have also been used for tobacco farming but are excluded in the list. So, it appears that if all the tobacco farming lands across the country are accumulated, undoubtedly it will exceed 108,000 hectares. As there is no exact public or private statistics on tobacco farming, it is almost impossible to illustrate any clear picture about the exact figure and increment rate of tobacco cultivation. The available media reports update that always there are initiatives to show the least lands used for tobacco cultivation as the tobacco companies have some ‘understanding’ with the local DAE officials. But despite the hide and seek, it is proved according to the existing information that tobacco farming is increasing indiscriminately. As per Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) information, in the year 2006 -07, 30,699.45 hectares of lands were used for tobacco cultivation and the produced stood 39,180 metric ton, and in 2010-11 that stood to 48,867.41 hectares and 79,234 metric ton respectively86. The statistics clearly indicates that tobacco producing lands and production both has doubled in four years. Comparing the year 2010-11 (48,867.41 hectares, BBS) to 2014 (108,000 hectare, DAE) it is seen that by the difference of three years, tobacco farming has been doubled as well. Besides, the export tendency of tobacco products also confirms the countrywide expansion of tobacco farming. Following the Export Promotion Bureau, tobacco export earned $7 million as revenue in 2005-06 fiscal. However, the revenue has increased eight times more to $5.86 crores in seven months of 2013-14 fiscal87. Only the export statistics is solely enough to indicate the alarming rate of tobacco farming of the country!
How Tobacco Cultivation Increases

Domestic and multinational tobacco companies are continuing their aggression and evil tactics to spread out tobacco farming in the country increasingly. However, the nature of aggression and tactics are not similar across the country. The tobacco companies believe in ‘Comparative Advantage Theory’. Having kindling facility in the Hill tracts, they are doing aggression by cutting trees to fuel tobacco furnaces in this area. At the same time, they are mockingly planting trees and grabbing awards to prove their patriotism. On the other side, as there is no forest in the Northern parts of the country, they dry tobacco leaves under sun and store the dried leaves. But environment pollution is still found although they do not burn woods. The tobacco companies use hay and other locally available materials as fuel to dry the leaves in locally produced furnaces. They are mainly attracted to the fertile arable lands in these districts and tactfully channeling all the benefits from the DAE (like subsidized irrigation, fertiliser and electricity) to farmers for growing more tobacco and wish to turn the food croplands of Northern part into tobacco field. Regarding location selection, they usually prefer poverty stricken areas. They issue few cards to some rich and solvent farmers who are influential and have more arable lands in the areas. Then the companies buy the produced at higher price and also offer them (rich farmers) different incentives to allure the poor farmers to start tobacco farming. The marginal farmers use the facilities of the government (irrigation and fertiliser), but the tobacco companies finally reap the benefits from them. Locals of the Northern parts said that the tobacco companies gain huge profit every year by exporting the sun-dried leaves.

To expand tobacco cultivation, the companies have adopted different initiatives like providing hard cash support to the farmers, agro-inputs (such as fertiliser, seeds, insecticides) providing, assurance to buy tobacco leaves, field level monitoring to control leaf quality, assistance on having government agri-loan, higher level training through IPM club to the farmers, arranging government facilities like subsidized irrigation in association with the DAE, providing different facilities under CSR projects to the contracted and listed farmers only etc. Since there is no comprehensive countrywide research or data found on the ill activities of the tobacco companies to expand cultivation, the ill tactics of the companies’ are
briefly described here based on the information collected from media, private organizations and small scale observations of PROGGA’s Tobacco Industry Watch BD Team.

**Hard Cash and Inputs as Loan**

Tobacco companies induce farmers across the country by offering them different inputs like fertilizer, seeds, insecticides, and hard cash as loans\(^78\). They also provide polythene and other materials to protect the tobacco seeds and seedbeds\(^79\). It has been found that in the name of loan, tobacco companies have entrapped farmers into long-term debts. Therefore, knowing that tobacco farming is unprofitable, the farmers cannot get out of the loan traps. In some of the areas, they have assisted farmers to get loans from the scheduled Banks illegally.

**Marketing Assurance and Quality Control through Field Level Monitoring**

Tobacco company agents monitor fields to control tobacco leaves quality and also provide different advices to the farmers. Usually, in the beginning of a year, the companies assure the farmers to buy a certain amount of tobacco leaves from them. After harvesting, the farmers send the leaves to the company storehouse by the pre-fixed price. Deducting the loan and price of the other materials, the company pays the remaining part of the price to the farmers. It has been alleged that that the companies exploit farmers in the name of grading (pricing higher grade leaves as lower grade) and in some areas, the companies did not buy the assured amount of leaves from the farmers that caused loss for them.\(^80\)
Training on Improved Tobacco Cultivation through Tobacco Farmers IPM Club Higher

Tobacco Companies are providing training to the farmers on improved tobacco cultivation by setting “Tobacco Farmers Integrated Pest Management Club” across the country. A newspaper report reads that around 200,000 trained farmers are engaged into tobacco farming. Such clubs are run by giant tobacco companies in the country. To control over the tobacco farmers, they execute different inspirational activities as well through the clubs. Besides, the farmers listed with the clubs also promote the tobacco companies in different ways.

Manipulating Local DAE to Expand Tobacco Farming

To expand and inspire tobacco farming in districts, tobacco companies use the district level agricultural officials. According to the newspaper reports, the DAE officials are reluctant to provide any advice against tobacco farming. At times they are found participating at tobacco company events also. They also inspire the farmers by describing the usefulness of tobacco cultivation.

Tobacco Farming Expansion through CSR

Tobacco companies provide different facilities to the listed farmers in different districts like solar energy or drinking water supply. These activities aim only to allure them into tobacco farming. Different newspaper reports have disclosed that British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) has provided solar power to 576 tobacco farmers of four villages in Bandarban and Khagrachhari district under its ‘Dipto’ project. Besides, they also try to influence the local administration and other quarters by installing drinking water facility.
Subsidized Fertilizer and Irrigation for Tobacco Cultivation

In different areas, subsidized fertilizers and irrigation is being used for tobacco cultivation. Mass media reports unveil that tobacco is being cultivated with the water from deep tube-well of Varendra Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) that was supposed to be used for paddy cultivation\(^5\). A few of the tobacco producing companies are helping the farmers to get the facility. The government distributes fertilizers for tobacco cultivation in different parts of the country through dealers. Use of those fertilizers is banned in tobacco cultivation. Violating the government ban, the fertilizers are being used in tobacco cultivation in Northern and other regions\(^6\).

How Tobacco Cultivation Damages

Tobacco farming has different types of negative impacts including socio-economical, environmental, climatic, health, educational etc. Some of the damages are instantly identified and some need times. Currently, Bangladesh is experiencing fertility lose of lands, food insecurity, deforestation, health hazards, child labour, educational breaks etc. The damages are described in brief.

Deforestation as Woods Fuel Tobacco Ovens

Thousands of mounds of woods are being used each year to bake tobacco leaves in tobacco furnaces.
Countrywide deforestation is being occurred to serve the furnaces. A study says that tobacco cultivation is 30% responsible behind the entire deforestation\(^7\). Over 6,000 tobacco furnaces have been built in Bandarban district in the current season, after the daily Jugantor report (April 12, 2014)\(^8\).

**Food Security**

Gradually, the food croplands in the country are turning to tobacco lands. Tobacco production raised two and a half times more in the past six years from 40,240 tons to 1,03,650 tons which is a great threat for the country\(^9\).

**Losing Lands Fertility**

Tobacco farming cause damages of the lands more than the food crops as it needs three times more Urea and insecticides. A land cannot be used more than twice or thrice for tobacco cultivation. Then the land neither produces a fine quality tobacco nor grows food crops in plenty. Productivity and fertility of the land reduces for using more and more fertilizers and insecticides.

**Health Hazards**

As payment in tobacco processing is better, tobacco growers engage their family members including their wives and children. Consequently, thousands of such workers are under serious health hazards.
Smoke emerged from burning of raw tobacco leaves to rectify is highly harmful for farmers’ health. For their longer involvement with tobacco farming and processing they are affected with cancer, abdominal problems, chest and neck pain, reproductive problems and other health hazards. Besides, the children are also affected with Green Tobacco Syndrome for their involvement in tobacco processing.

Child Labour and Educational Problems

Children in tobacco farming areas are engaged into different tasks like seed collection, seedbed nurturing, weeding, planting, insecticides spraying, leaves baking or drying and even marketing of the leaves. Therefore, they cannot go to school and the guardians are to employ their kids as they cannot buy external labours.

Other damages and impacts

Tobacco aggression is being continued in some of the river banks and fallow lands as well. A report on March 1, 2014 on the Daily Banik Barta reads that at 50 kilometers of the banks of Bankkhali, Matamuhuri, Gorjoi and Duchharhi – the four rivers in Cox’s Bazar district have been used for tobacco cultivation. Earlier, the farmers grew vegetables on the banks. Locals alleged that the number and varieties of fishes from the rivers is declining gradually. Besides, tobacco is also being farmed in the adjacent lands of schools in the area. A photo feature on March 2, 2014 on the Daily Prothom Alo shows that tobacco is being cultivated in a land next to a school in Dighinala under Khagrachhari district. During insecticide spray, the student rarely can sit inside the school and the teachers and students are being affected with different respiratory problems. Even some of the students cannot attend
Tobacco is being cultivated in a land next to a school in Dighinala under Khagrachhari district. Source: The Daily Prothom Alo


Moreover, tobacco furnaces have been built near to schools in different parts of the country. A report on the Daily Prothom Alo on April 7, 2014 says that 9 tobacco furnaces have been built from 5-15 feet distance of 2 educational institutions which is hampering the educational activities and posing health hazard for the students too.
Currently there is no exact statistics available over the quantity of lands being used for or turning into tobacco lands in the country. Simultaneously, there has been no standard researches conducted over the negative impacts of tobacco cultivation on food security, public health, forest resources, environment and ecology, land fertility and overall how it could have long and short-term negative impacts on the entire economy. Using the loopholes, the tobacco companies try to distract the policymakers in making policies against tobacco cultivation. They try to prove that tobacco production is essential for the economy by engaging some of their appointed researchers. Besides, they are also manipulating the DAE to hide the exact land units used for tobacco cultivation.

Although there is no solid information over tobacco cultivation and its damages, reports on newspapers and other media has made three issues clearer: 1. Tobacco farming is gradually increasing in the country, 2. Tobacco farming is damaging different areas with diverse scale and 3. Tobacco companies’ aggression and evil methods are prevailing in both of the cases.
To illustrate the overall situation of tobacco farming in Lalmonirhat district, PROGGA’s Tobacco Industry Watch BD team analysed the existing information and conducted a qualitative field investigation. Accordingly, the quantity of total arable lands in the district is 98,875 hectares. In the last season (2013) around 25,000 hectares of lands have been used solely for tobacco cultivation which is 32% of all the tobacco farming lands of the country. The mass media reports say that the lands have been increased in the current season (2014) following the DAE. As per the current season about half of the arable lands have been used for tobacco cultivation which is double (25,000 hectares) comparing to the last season (2013) and 13 times more comparing to 2002 that produced tobacco on only 4,000 hectares of lands.

It is clear from the government source that how aggressive the tobacco farming is in the district. But the scenario is more dreadful according to private sources. Finally, whatever the data or secondary information is, field observation is a must to comprehend the alarming expansion of tobacco cultivation.

Usually, March is tobacco harvesting period. Sharp smell from tobacco leaves hit the nose after stepping at any village. People start feeling intoxicated. Tobacco leaves are found everywhere including bedrooms, wall partitions, religious institutions and places where the leaves could be stored. Tobacco wraps the villagers. Even donations are also allowed using tobacco leaves. The local retailers also accept
The way tobacco farming is increasing in Lalmonirhat

It’s a trap not debt

The ruling strategies of the multinational tobacco companies are almost similar to the strategies of the Roman General Ceaser or the French emperor Napoleon’s “divide and rule/ conquer strategy”, latter the policy of the British during the colonial period. The tobacco companies provide cards or business gain to several influential farmers in the rural areas of Lalmonirhat who work for them as agents. They use the agents to grow necessary quantity of tobacco through the non-card holders. The Company’s strategy is to create discriminations among the local farmers by ‘providing cards to the fewer’ (rich farmers), and not providing cards to the larger’ (general poor farmers). They create documents that they buy tobacco leaves only from the card holding farmers to continue their aggression. They get their work done by hiding
The tobacco companies buy the sole production of the card holding farmers and get the productions of the non-card holding farmers using the agent or card holding farmers. Observations have found that tobacco company officials provide assurance of agro-inputs only to the card holding farmers. But most of the leading farmers said that they are less interested in having such facilities as they are capable to buy those inputs. The locals said that the rich farmers are interested in tobacco trading, not farming. They buy tobacco leaves from the poor farmers and sell those to the companies at a higher rate. So, getting a card of the tobacco company is the apple of discord among the poor farmers. They try to attract the tobacco company officials and even engage into different sorts of lobbying with them including bribing. If they get a card, they will get all the advantages offered by tobacco companies like assurance of marketing facilities, and will make profit as an agent. But in reality, the tobacco companies create a competition among the farmer but they do not increase the card numbers likewise.
Nevertheless, the farmers are not frustrated as tobacco farming is still financially a profitable business for them. They said that the present loss and profit is the key reality for them. So, they do not want to bother about any long run negative impact even any near future perils at all. In the discussions, almost all the farmers told that after farming Virginia tobacco on the lands, paddy cannot grow well. The roots of Virginia tobacco is taller and absorbs lands energy. But being Virginia financially profitable than other crops, they grow it on their lands. Thousands of farmers in villages of Lalmonirhat district are engaged into tobacco farming. It is almost impossible and also expensive to monitor the farming by deploying company’s own staff across the district. So, they are raising skills of the card holding farmers so that they could also train the non-card holding farmers at free of cost. The rural farmers are also happy as they get any kind of advices related to tobacco farming when needed. The card holding agents distribute their knowledge among the poor farmers to increase their profit. They turn free advisor for the tobacco farmers in villages. The motto is to produce more quality tobacco, and make more profit.

According to the local farmers, the tobacco companies have distributed cards among 20% of the farmers and all of them are solvent. Some of them
got cards on their social and political grounds as well. They alleged that the card holding farmers usually commit to farm tobacco on five or 10 acres of lands. But, they do not actually farm tobacco on the agreed lands. They usually grow tobacco on one or two acres of lands. Moreover, they sell the agro-inputs supplied by tobacco companies at a higher rate to the other farmers or use them in growing other crops. After the cultivation finishes, they buy tobacco from the non-card holder farmers to meet their quota and sell at a good price. In the last season, said the non-card holding farmers, they had to sell tobacco by Tk 2500 per mound to the card-holding farmers. However, the card-holding farmers sold that tobacco at a good profit, from Tk 3800 to 4000 per mound. It refers that they have profited Tk 1300-1500 on average per mound. This amount of profit is impossible by cultivating tobacco. On the other side, the tobacco companies are also gaining profit without having any responsibility rather than using some of the card-holding agents. The non-cardholders, the larger section tobacco growers, are using the subsidized facilities like fertilizers, electricity and in some cases they are also applying subsidized irrigation of the government to grow tobacco for Company. Briefly, they take all responsibilities from investment to marketing.

The Local people, journalists, card holder and non-card holder farmers have opined that the tobacco companies do not provide any facilities to majority of the farmers/ non-cardholders (about 80% of the farmers). They do not collect tobacco from those farmers directly. They buy tobacco through the card-holding farmers or agents. According to newspaper reports and information from other sources, the farmers of the Hill tract and some other areas are to sell tobacco leaves on the prices fixed by the tobacco companies. Since there is no specific marketplace for tobacco trading in most areas, the farmers are to supply the produced at tobacco company storehouses. But the scenario is different in case of Lalmonirhat district that shares around 40% produces of all the tobacco leaves of the country. The ill tactics of the tobacco companies is different here. Not only from domestic level, temporary marketplaces are created in the district through influential card-holding farmers and the tobacco companies collect necessary tobacco from there.
Tobacco Leaves Market: Monopoly and Large Trap

From April to June every year around 13 – 16 educational institution premises are used twice a week as marketplace for tobacco leaves in Lalmonirhat district. Card-holding farmers or agents buy tobacco from there for Tobacco Company. Besides, bidi companies are also prominent buyer of the markets to buy low grade tobacco. Although all of the traders are from Lalmonirhat district, buyers belong to different parts of the country including Dhaka, Khulna, Kushtia, and Chittagong. Usually, Motihar, Jati and Virginia tobaccos are found at the markets. Around 350 tobacco farmers/ sellers and about 60 tobacco company agents actively participate in such markets. A farmer sells five – 20 mounds of tobacco in every market day. Locals said that among the all tobacco leaves that arrive in the market, 60% of them belong to Matihar & Jati, and 40% of them belong to Virginia. They also said that about 60% of the Virginia tobacco is bought by British American Tobacco agents or rich farmers and the remaining is bought by Dhaka tobacco and other companies. To be noted that, a part of the Virginia tobacco is bought by the agents from villages. Information from newspapers and local tobacco farmer reveals that the illegal marketplaces are run by some local influential farmers or agents. They are associates of the multinational and domestic tobacco companies and commonly known as agents. Most of them are involved in tobacco

The ground of Saptibari High School in Aditmari upazila under Lalmonirhat district remains virtually off limits to students as unscrupulous people are using it for selling tobacco. The callous act, disturbing classes and posing health hazards for students and teachers, is likely to continue for three months. Source: The Daily Star
farming and are card-holding farmers. The common farmers said that though they are selling tobacco on marketplace, they do not have chances for bargaining with the price. It is a kind of monopoly and a trap for them. They term such marketplace as company Hats (markets of companies’). About eight to nine years ago, the marketplaces held in three or four school premises and now it is gradually increasing in the area and reached current condition. One of the card holding farmer said that if there is market for food crops, there should be also markets for tobacco leaves. The tobacco farmers have nowhere to go to sell their products. Tobacco Industry Watch BD could not satisfy them with answers of such queries. Someday the food crops market will turn tobacco trading hub by this way with association of the tobacco companies.

Government and Farmers (card-less) Bears Cost, Companies Get the Cream

Exploiting the government facilities in Lalmonirhat district like subsidized fertilizers, irrigation, and using the card holding farmers as agents, the tobacco companies are benefitting themselves in different ways. The scenario for using subsidized fertilizers (Urea and TSP) is terrible. According to the district agri-office, around 50,000 hectares of lands have been used for tobacco cultivation in the current season. To grow tobacco, per 33 decimals of lands need 60KG Urea and 100KG TSP on average. On that outline, in the current season, around 598,000,00 KG fertilizers (Urea 22425232 KG and TSP 37375300 KG) have been used for tobacco cultivation in the district. The government is currently subsidizing Tk 24 for per KG Urea and Tk 18 for per KG TSP. The government has subsidized over Tk 121 crore in the current season even if 25% of the subsidy is deducted considering 20% of the...
card-holding farmers use fertilizers provided by company. The huge subsidy provided by the government is being used for tobacco cultivation that is harmful for public health. But this is the scenario for Lalmonirhat district only. The countrywide scenario is more terrible. In the country, 1,08,000 hectares of lands have been used for tobacco cultivation and accordingly 129, 100, 000 KG fertilizers (Urea 48438502 KG and TSP 80730800 KG) have been used. The government has subsidized millions of TK for the fertilizers. Tobacco companies are grabbing their profits every year by these ways. It is leading the country to food shortage. However, the tobacco companies will not take any responsibility for providing capital and other agro-inputs as long they are exploiting such options.

How Tobacco Farming Damages

Prey Everyone, Company Benefitted

Due to tobacco farming, Lalmonirhat district is also experiencing different socio-economic, environmental, climatic, health and educational damages like the other areas. Apart from poisonous emissions of tobacco furnaces, tobacco leaves are found everywhere in the localities of the district and even yards, bedrooms, walls, cowsheds, kitchens, gardens, roads etc. are being used to dry tobacco leaves. There is hardly any place where you can breathe fresh air. Besides, the agents have prepared
special rooms in government lands with the help of tobacco companies. They also use school fields and even the premises of religious establishments. Tobacco farming reduces lands fertility, threat for food security, poses health hazards, inspire child labours, decreases education and more. Some of the damages are described concisely.

Child Labour

The Locals and school teachers of Lalmonirhat district have opined that children are being used in all of the steps of tobacco farming including planting to marketing. Most of the children are to involve into tobacco processing as part of their familial business. Investigations in Saptibari under Aditmari upazilla and Khuniagachh under Lalmonirhat district have found that tobacco farming has taken an expanded shape in the areas. Each and every of the houses are filled with tobacco leaves and even the surrounding places are also loaded with tobacco bunches. Sharp stench hits suddenly after entering into the villages. The stench spreads everywhere after the sun turns hot. In this stinky environment, children are found collecting tobacco leaves, sorting and pinning them on sticks to be dried on sun. Teachers, according to a report on the Daily Star on April 02, 2014, said that those children who work with tobacco processing are different from the common children regarding their health and shape. There is no result in forbidding them for working in tobacco processing\(^9\). The school goers are gradually getting involved with tobacco processing. They sort, bundle and place the leaves for drying under sun. Mostly they are seen working before and after their school and in the non-working days. They get a poor wage
for their work, only Tk 30 – 40 for a day from the local tobacco traders. Tobacco Industry BD Watch Team, during its field investigation, has found that the students of religious institutions are taking tobacco leaves as donations. It indicates that the children are passing their childhood amid higher health and environmental risks. Tobacco aggression prevails from their home to educational institutions. Is there any future for them?

**Damaging Lands Fertility and Hampering Food Security**

Indiscriminate use of fertilizers and insecticides on Lalmonirhat lands is reducing fertility. Lands productivity is reducing gradually. Food shortage is a prominent issue now as the paddy growing lands are under tobacco clutch. Besides, tobacco farming needs three times more fertilizers than paddy which frequently creates fertilizer shortage in the district. Local farmers are aware of the negative impacts of tobacco on lands. They opined that paddy cultivation reduces on the lands if that was used for tobacco cultivation. But they also opined that growing Virginia for once a year is sufficient for them. It brings more profit for them than growing crops twice a year. In this way, our innocent farmers have been entrapping by the illusion of temporary profit offered by the tobacco companies. Lands fertility is being degraded.

**Tobacco Oven Smoke Endangers Rural Environment**

Though the tobacco companies do not use woods as fuel, they are making a kind of furnace using hay and other local materials as fuel to bake tobacco leaves. Locals said that smokes are created from the furnaces for around 30/40 minutes to bake tobacco leaves. Women and children of farmers’ families are mostly used for the baking process, said participants.
of the qualitative survey including farmers, local elites and mass media activists. The rural environment is being threatened for the smokes of such furnaces. In different villages of Lalmonirhat district around 200-250 furnaces have been built with the sponsorship of tobacco companies.

Health Hazards

The locals who are engaged with tobacco farming are suffering from different physical disorder. The people are getting affected with asthma, bronchitis, cancer and other fatal diseases for their close interaction with tobacco and tobacco leaves, opined local doctors. The children are the easy prey of such diseases being the most vulnerable part of the society. Besides, there are also numbers of damages for tobacco cultivation happens and needs to be addressed through proper researches. If the damage severity and level is unknown, prevention is not possible.

Recommendations

Tobacco cultivation has been increasing indiscriminately. Any government body, organization, ministry or the ministries altogether cannot get rid of the problem overnight. So, to stop the ill tactics of the tobacco companies, all the sufferers of tobacco farming should work together. Policy formulation and implementation by Health and Law Ministry is barely enough to control tobacco farming. In line with the policies formulated by Health Ministry, some researches should also be conducted for enlisting the other damages caused by tobacco cultivation. Types of aggressions by the tobacco companies and the victims should be identified. Besides, it should also be considered that if the existing law is sufficient to prevent the aggressions and protect the sufferers. Regarding new law and policy formulation, such issues should carefully be considered, listed and implemented. Some recommendations over preventing tobacco aggression, damages of cultivation, potential authority and policies to prevent the aggression etc. are pointed out:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggression/Damages</th>
<th>Authorities</th>
<th>Potential policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deforestation and other related damages</td>
<td>Environment and Forest Ministry, Ministry for Chittagong and Hill Tracts Affairs, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief</td>
<td>Forest Ministry and Ministry for Hill Tracts could formulate law banning tobacco cultivation in Hill Tracts as tobacco farming destroys forest resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest and trees are useful for the coastal areas to prevent natural disasters. So the Ministry for Disaster could pass law banning tobacco cultivation in coastal areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chittagong Hill Tracts is an attractive tourist spot. Identifying tobacco processing as a barrier for the tourist industry, a law could be passed banning tobacco farming in the localities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The Department of Environment and Forest, Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of subsidized agro-inputs (fertilizer, irrigation, electricity) and croplands for tobacco farming, risk of food shortage</td>
<td>Agriculture Ministry, Food Ministry, Finance Ministry, Ministry for Industries and Commerce Ministry.</td>
<td>Gradually banning of tobacco farming in the Northern part, Jessore, Kushtia and other important spots after declaring them as Food Production Zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ministries for Industry and Commerce could ban fertilizer production, import and marketing for tobacco cultivation. BCIC could mark words on each fertilizer sacks like 'Not for Tobacco Farming' etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Electricity connection could be cut if any public or private irrigation facilities used for tobacco farming. The farming could be banned on BADC irrigation projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Export duties for tobacco products should be raised gradually to discourage on production.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of subsidized agro-inputs (fertilizer, irrigation, electricity) and croplands for tobacco farming, risk of food shortage:

- Deforestation and other related damages
- Use of subsidized agro-inputs (fertilizer, irrigation, electricity) and croplands for tobacco farming, risk of food shortage
- Gradually banning of tobacco farming in the Northern part, Jessore, Kushtia and other important spots after declaring them as Food Production Zone.
- Ministries for Industry and Commerce could ban fertilizer production, import and marketing for tobacco cultivation. BCIC could mark words on each fertilizer sacks like 'Not for Tobacco Farming' etc.
- Electricity connection could be cut if any public or private irrigation facilities used for tobacco farming. The farming could be banned on BADC irrigation projects.
- Export duties for tobacco products should be raised gradually to discourage on production.
But, only the government cannot formulate or implement the mentioned rules and policies alone. Anti-tobacco organizations, mass media, civil society, root level private organizations should also come forward to solve the problem. Anti-tobacco attitude should be created among the farmers through research, meetings, evidence based advocacy. They should also be inspired on alternative crop cultivation and marketing of their produces through proper policy formulation and implementation.

**Cautions**

Weak and twisted information cannot be used for
advocacy rather research based information should be used, such as:

Frequently, confusing information is found that tobacco farming causes deforestation. For instance, one (01) metric ton tobacco leaves baking needs ½ metric ton woods. In the current season, 100,000 metric ton tobacco leaves baking destroyed 50,000 metric ton of woods as fuel. Such simple calculation will certainly jeopardize the ongoing advocacies against tobacco farming because half of the produced tobacco in the country does not need any fuel woods to be baked. Those are mostly dried under sun or heat in a special type of room.

Statements like ‘Violence on women has increased for tobacco cultivation’ should carefully be delivered. Barisal, Khulna and Sirajganj is the areas where violence on women take place more than any other district, according to information (2007) of Adhikar, a humanitarian organization. But in these areas, there is almost no tobacco cultivation found.

The gradual extinction of domestic fish species demands a scientific study. If the domestic fish species of non tobacco producing area extinct, there are some other causes behind the happening.

In the short run, tobacco farming is financially profitable and it is unnecessary to create an opposite scenario using the farmers. Rather they should be directed to alternative crop production and marketing, and the respective all including the donor agencies and the government should be convinced on executing the directives.

The level and intensity of damage caused by tobacco cultivation is regionally different. So, advocacy cannot say to adopt the same action plans in general across the country.
Unveiling and combating tobacco industry ill tactics to control tobacco use is a proven tool across the world. Mass media of Bangladesh, especially over 400 members Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA)* have been playing a strong and stringent role here. ATMA has proved in the last half decade that tobacco companies are the key culprits to hamper the tobacco control law formulation and implementation and they are mostly responsible for tobacco-related deaths and damages.

Analysing the ill tactics and interference of tobacco companies in Bangladesh shows that they have influenced to formulate incomplete tobacco control law (2005), delaying the approval of amended tobacco control law (2013), discarding some of the important sections from the final amendment including DSA, halting the Rules (2015) for the amended tobacco control law for 24 months, weakening the graphical health warning implementation, preventing an effective taxation on tobacco products, hampering on the formulation of National Tobacco Control Policy and Tobacco Farming Control Policy and overall hampering the implementation of the existing tobacco control law or undermining the outcomes of the law and still they are continuing such steps. Although the mass media has proved its success to unveil the tobacco company interference, there are less success in combating with these issues. However, for the proactive approach of mass media, two of the most promotional activities

**To increase intense involvement of mass media, journalist training workshops on tobacco control began in 2010. Recommendations from the workshop participants for a coordinated effort for tobacco control resulted in the media network in 2011. It started journey naming – Anti Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA).** Primarily it aims ensuring effective role of mass media to create a tobacco-free Bangladesh.
of two multinational tobacco companies were stopped. This particular success of mass media in Bangladesh is pointed as a caste story below:

**Case story 1:** Promoting tobacco products among the university youths through concert is a common tool of tobacco industry. Multinational tobacco giant, Philip Morris started for a continuous concert competition in April of 2014 and as part of this event, on November 7, 2014 organized for a stunning rock city concert – Road to Rock Nation at a hotel in Dhaka. At the event, a few girls were selling Marlboro cigarettes from a counter that was decorated resembling the red Marlboro cigarette while the buyers were gifted a red-colored lighter logoed with Philip Morris. Both the male and female youths were smoking inside the closed room with songs. In fact, the event aimed at advertising Phillip Morris.

When the anti-tobacco organization, PROGGA (knowledge for progress), sent an alert on its Industry Watch Team FB page on October 09, 2014, the ATMA members and other mass media started publishing continuous reports on this issue in particular which got highlighted massively. The following date to hold the event was on November 14, 2014. However, as the reports were published about the event, which was being organizing by violating the law, the organizers published a note on their Facebook page on November 13, 2014 declaring to postpone the event. Basically, for the strict anti-tobacco approach from the mass media compelled Philip Morris International, one of the largest and strongest tobacco company over the globe, to stop its illegal promotional activities in the country.
Case Story 2: Multinational tobacco company, British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) organized a concert in 2014 for the students of six renowned private University. Some of the designated sales representatives from BATB had discussion with the young cigarette buyers in famous chain shops and restaurants over smoking and filled up a form by the young buyers. Later, based on the university category, invitation SMSs were sent on the mobile number of the selected youths to attend the concert. The key aim to organize the six-day long concert (from September 19 – September 24, 2014) was to introduce and promote Fine Cut, a new brand of BATB. The students from North South University and American International University attended the concerts on September 19 and 20 respectively. The students of BRAC University were invited on September 21, the third day. However, the Industry Watch Team informs the issue to ATMA members and they appeared on the event spot with the other mass media representatives to gather detailed information. They found that the entire concert venue was decorated with the resemblance of the cigarette packets which is completely violation of the tobacco control law. The mass media activists reached the organizers several times and the organizers stopped the entire event without showing any further excuses. The strong anti-tobacco stance of ATMA and other mass media activists have played an important role to stop the ill tactics of a powerful multinational tobacco company like BATB.
References


7 WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. See: www.who.int/fcct.

8 UN Sustainable Development Goals. See: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs


12 Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), 2014.


24 National Board of Revenue (NBR).


30 HEALTH IS NOT NEGOTIABLE. Civil Society against the Tobacco Industry's Strategies in Latin America; FIC Argentina, 2012.


34 HEALTH IS NOT NEGOTIABLE. Civil Society against the Tobacco Industry's Strategies in Latin America; FIC Argentina, 2012.


40 Opinions sought on draft rules of tobacco control act. The New Age, 01 November, 2013.


45 BATB CSR Committee meeting Minutes. Available at: http://www.tobaccoindustrywatchbd.org/contents/uploaded/BATB_Minutes-CSR%20Committee-6th%20Meeting.pdf


52 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. See: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx


54 Bidi in Bangladesh: Myths and Reality; The Bidi Production sector in Bangladesh, Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids (CTFK), 2012.


58 Based on Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KII) with bidi laborers at Haragach (Rangpur) and Khuniagach (Lalmonirhat).


60 WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. See: www.who.int/fctc.

61 Smoking and Usage of Tobacco Products (Control) (Amendment) Act 2013.

62 Tobacco Control Rules 2015.


65 TV dramas showing smoking scenes defying ban: Study. The Financial Express, October 18, 2015. Available at: http://print.thefinancialexpress-bd.com/2015/10/18/112366


94 Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), GOB, 2013. Available at: http://epb.portal.gov.bd/site/files/9efa4995-2501-4c9e-8ca6-8b87208c3a0/Statistic

95 Tutul Rahman. Farmers entrapped with loan, tobacco grabs 60pc farmlands. The daily Bhoror Kagoj, 03 February 2015. Available at: http://www.bhororkagoj.net/print-edition/2015/02/03/17214.php


98 Mian Chowdhury. 1mn IPM members trained by Tk 423cr, The daily Jugantor, 09 June, 2013. Available at: http://www.jugantor.com/old/economics/2013/06/09/3925/print


104 John S, Vaite S. Tobacco and poverty: observations from India and Bangladesh. Efronymson D, editor. Canada: PATH Canada; 2002


94 Subsidy on fertilizer will be continued. The Daily Prothom Alo, 19 April, 2014. Available at: http://www.prothom-alokom/bangladesh/article/196318/সারে-ভর্তুকি-অব্যাহত-থাকবে-শিল্পমন্ত্রী


97 https://www.facebook.com/tobaccoindustrywatch.bd/photos/a.207559006103122.1073741828.203592083166481/321411038051251/?type=3&theater


100 https://www.facebook.com/tobaccoindustrywatch.bd/photos/a.207559006103122.1073741828.203592083166481/322998471225841/?type=3&theater


তামাক না টেকসই উন্নয়ন