

New Tobacco use trends among youth

- New and emerging trends to promote tobacco products, particularly to recruit replacement customers in the form of adolescents and youth.
- In India, two such products are at the forefront - Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) or Electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and e-hookah, often promoted healthy alternatives to tobacco smoking.
- Lack of knowledge about the health effects of ENDS among youth as well as community - led to popularisation and increased use.
- To understand these trends a study was conducted by HRIDAY, supported by WHO Country Office for India. The two key objectives of the study were to:
 - To gauge perceptions of multiple stakeholders (school and college students, parents and teachers) on ENDS, A qualitative study
 - To conduct a Youth-led monitoring activity to record sale, advertising, promotion and marketing of ENDS at Points of Sale (PoS) and online sites— An observational study



Methodology

- **11 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with **102 key stakeholders** (school students, college students, parents and teachers) on e-cigarettes.
- **Youth-led monitoring** by students from **5 schools and 5 colleges** of Delhi-NCR.

KEY FINDINGS

Perceptions about ENDS

Knowledge and awareness about e-cigarettes and e-hookah: college students (most aware and updated), followed by school students, teachers and parents (least aware).

- *No, they (e-cigarette vendors) will not demonstrate (how to use e-cigarettes) to us but they will definitely do that for children who are their potential customers. (teacher)*

Gross misinformation and myths about e-cigarettes and e-hookahs being safe.

- *There is a lot of confusion in the minds of adolescents about the contents and harmful effects of e-cigarettes, they (those who use e-cigarettes) generally think they are just for fun and are safe. (school student)*

Rampant exposure to promotional campaigns, particularly on online portals and e-commerce sites.

- *There are a lot of advertisements (of e-cigarettes and e-hookah) on social media. People are shown releasing rings of vape smoke. They put their videos on social media. That is how I got to know about vaping. I got to know about this from Facebook. (college student)*

Direct promotional campaigns to popularize use of e-cigarettes in schools.

- Sometime back, there were e-mails that we (school teacher) received from e-cigarette companies that said, please raise awareness in your school on e-cigarettes as safer alternative to regular cigarettes and fo

Teachers reported to students using e-cigarettes in schools.

- There has been one instance at one of the school's picnic, a student (class 10) was carrying this device (e-cigarette) and it was not until she was about to use it that the teacher realised it was not a pen but something different and on further probing the student herself told the teacher what it (e-cigarette) was. Since the teachers themselves have

E-cigarettes and e-hookah are easily available at locations other than kiosks/shops selling tobacco products.

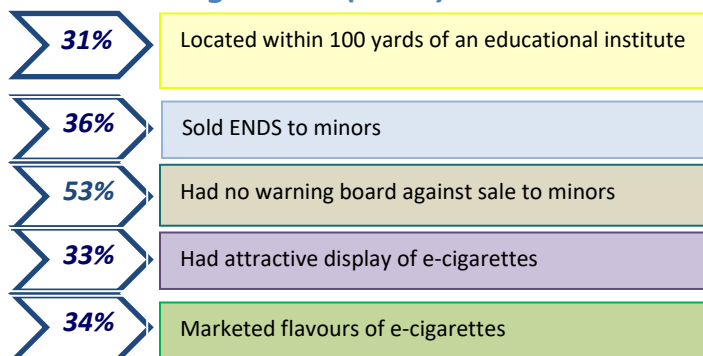
- Chemists, pharmacists, departmental stores, like Twenty Four Seven and In & Out, also sell e-cigarettes and e-hookahs and vapes. (college student)



An E-Cigarette brand "Verge", available at the convenience store "Twenty Four Seven" offering a "Gift of Passion", a "Book My Show" gift voucher worth Rs. 500.

Youth-led monitoring to gauge sale, advertising and promotion of ENDS

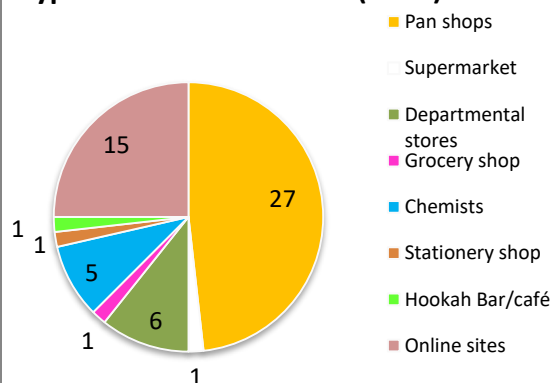
Monitoring at PoS (n=42)



Monitoring at online sites (n=15)

Social media is the biggest promotor	The online sites have social media handles on Instagram and Facebook
Free home delivery services	Attractive discounts
Offer complementary flavours	Only 1 of 15 sites asked for a self-declaration of age

Types of Sites Monitored (n=57)



States and UTs must immediately issue directives in compliance with MoHFW GoI's advisory related to ENDS not being sold (including online sale), manufactured, distributed, traded, imported or advertised in their jurisdictions.

Immediate ENDS related challenges that need policy response

1. Rampant advertising and misinformation: Prohibit PoS and online advertising, promotion and sponsorship of ENDS.
2. Easy Access at PoS and online: Prohibit online sale, sale in stationery shops, discounts, home deliveries, sale around educational institutes and prohibit vaping parlours.
3. Update Tobacco Free School guidelines to include policy recommendations that build the strength of teachers to identify these devices and take appropriate actions.
4. Future surveillance exercises to include questions on ENDS to understand perceptions and issues like access, availability etc.
5. Need urgent public awareness campaign to counter misinformation created by manufacturers.