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Punjab smokes out E commerce sites for E cigarette sale: A case report from Punjab

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Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) popularly known as e-cigarettes are highly addictive and potentially lethal products. It is mostly being used by children and youth because these are glamorized by the tobacco industry. Though not generally available in stores, they are widely promoted and sold through E commerce sites with discount offers. Sales are increasing sharply all over the world. Punjab was the first state in India to declare Electronic Nicotine Delivery System (ENDS) as unapproved under Drugs and Cosmetics Act in 2013. A circular was issued by Government of Punjab regarding declaration of manufacture and sale of ENDS as illegal. To counter the sale on the ecommerce site, Punjab Government had issued a demi-official letter to cyber-crime cell regarding the sale of E-cigarettes in 2016. Awareness notices were sent to various E commerce sites regarding the sale of E cigarette. District level Task Force effectively implements the ban through conducting raids at suspected point of sale, which is being monitored monthly by Deputy Commissioners of all Districts. Cyber Crime Cell identified the 26 E commerce sites that were selling the E cigarettes. Letter was sent to these sites regarding the blocking/banning the sale of e cigarettes. After that No E commerce sites are selling E cigarettes in Punjab. The declaration by the Government of Punjab opens the way for other states to follow suit and prevent ENDS becoming an additional marketing strategy for tobacco companies.

Biography

Rakesh K Gupta is the Deputy Director, Non-Communicable Diseases, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Punjab. He has expertise in managing National Non-Communicable diseases Programs especially Blindness Control/Tobacco Control Programs and has professional experience of 33 years in service. He has represented MOHFW in WHO ENDS Consultation in Panama 2016 and WHO consultation on Plain packaging in Geneva 2017.

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