

# TAMAK BIRODHI NARI JOTE

## Women's Alliance in Tobacco Control, Bangladesh



**TABINAJ**

According to Global Adult Tobacco Survey (2009) and updates by Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (April, 2014) women are among the 43.3% of adults (41.3 million) of the current tobacco users of Bangladesh. Smoking among women is low (1.5%) but much higher in use of smokeless tobacco products (27.9%). About 30.4% women are exposed to tobacco smoke in workplaces and 20.8% in public places.

Bangladesh passed amendments in 2013 to its national tobacco control law, "Smoking and Using of Tobacco Products (Control) Act, 2005". Smokeless tobacco products were brought under the ambit of the law, with prohibition of advertising of smokeless tobacco products (SLT) and smokeless tobacco packaging must display large, graphic health warnings. With coverage of smokeless tobacco products, roughly 21 million women, previously overlooked by the law will now be warned about the deadly effects of the tobacco use.

Tabinaj is a network of women's organizations and individuals and has become part of Tobacco Control group in Bangladesh bringing in new dimension of women's role as advocates. It is the first and only women's alliance around the country in 52 out of 68 districts of the country against tobacco use and cultivation. It was formally launched on 6th March, 2011 on the occasion of International Women's Day (8th March).

Tabinaj is affiliated with UBINIG (Policy Research for Development Alternative), a research organization engaged in conducting intensive research on tobacco cultivation and its impact on food production since 2006 with support from International Development and Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. Tabinaj activities are supported by Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), USA. It is working on various aspects of tobacco consumption, cultivation, production and particularly on use of smokeless tobacco products.

- Tabinaj participates in different programmes organised by TC groups at national and local levels
- Tabinaj is linking its work with Women's Directorate under the Ministry of Women's Affairs at the district level and with local government bodies
- Tabinaj is working with the Members of Parliament and involving them in policy advocacy
- Tabinaj members actively involve local administration in actions against Tobacco



In an investigation by Tabinaj 130 brands of jarda (chewing tobacco) and 12 brands of gul (powdered tobacco) are found to be produced in 35 districts.

Jarda and sadapata are two major SLTs used with betel leaf. Women are consuming these as a socially acceptable practice. Use of Gul is quite high but khoinee is not much prevalent.

The inclusion of SLTs in the definition of tobacco products in the amended law has been one of the primary works of Tabinaj advocacy. Tabinaj works with women in tobacco cultivation and women as workers in bidi factories.

## JOIN AND SUPPORT

# TABINAJ

### PRIORITY AREAS OF WORK AT PRESENT

- Implementation of TC Law in the context of
  - (a) women as users and victims of smoking
  - (b) women as users of Smokeless Tobacco products
  - (c) children used in tobacco product sales and tobacco cultivation
- Tabinaj works on control of tobacco of all forms but focuses particularly on the smokeless tobacco products as these are less recognized as “problem”. Consumption of SLT is one of the commonly ‘accepted’ cultural practices among men and women but very little information is known about its harmful effects.
- Breaking the barriers of implementation by awareness raising on the amended law at the grass root level and working for implementation of the rules

### POLICY ADVOCACY

- Resisting aggressive tobacco cultivation in the food growing areas
- Tobacco cultivation and formulation of policies to discourage tobacco cultivation: It is becoming more and more important as tobacco cultivation is expanding from one area to the other.
- Use of women and child labour in tobacco production

### SECRETARIAT

Narigrantha Prabartana, a women’s resource centre and first feminist publishing house in Bangladesh is acting as the secretariat of TABINAJ. Narigrantha Prabartana (NGP) has a good networking with women-led organizations all over the country. NGP publishes books written by and for women and also provides active support in the existing women’s movement.

### TABINAJ GROUP

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### TABINAJ MEMBERS

Tabinaj membership is by organizations and individuals. There are 90 active member organizations and individuals in 52 districts. Fifteen organizations are taking leading role in carrying out Tabinaj activities in close collaboration with the secretariat.

### CONTACT

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