

# CONSUMPTION OF GUTKA BY FEMALES AND ITS HEALTH IMPACTS: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT HYDERABAD

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**ABSTRACT:** *The current study aims to examine the causes of use of gutka by females in district Hyderabad and explore the level of awareness of gutka users regarding hazardous impacts of gutka on their health. Worldwide, more than 50 percent of the world adult population use tobacco in various forms and half of that population die prematurely. All respondents of this study are females. To achieve the objectives of study 150 households were selected from Hyderabad through snowball method. Results highlighted females of various ages from young to old aged women consume gutka and families are mostly poor. Serious implications of use of gutka on health have been identified by current research and the majority of women respond that they are using gutka due to the influence of family and for controlling hunger. Majority of female gutka users do not know about health hazards of the use of gutka.*

**Keywords:** Gutka, female consumers, health effects, awareness

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Worldwide consumption of tobacco by women and girls is increasing at an alarming rate. Gutka is a form of smokeless tobacco. Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam are among top ten fastest growing tobacco markets in Asia pacific region. Tobacco consumption threatens female's mental and physical health and adversely affects their social and economic development. Tobacco epidemic is considered a great threat to world health today. Prevalence of oral use of smokeless tobacco products like gutka, manpuri and pan massala is very high in Asian countries and is posing greater danger to human health than traditional smokeless tobacco products. Gutka is 50 percent more hazardous than tobacco smoking [17, 20, 2, 2].

Pakistan is one of the fifteen countries of the world where two-thirds of the population is of tobacco users. People of Pakistan are victims of this injurious substance being illegally and uninterruptedly sold at thousands of shops in cities, small towns and even in remote villages. More than 75 percent oral cancer patients accepted that they have been using gutka, pan, manpuri and chhalia (17, 2, 7, 5, 18, 19, 8]. Research studies [4, 14, 9, 11, 3, 22, 12] reveal a positive relationship between use of gutka and various diseases especially cardiovascular diseases and infertility in male and female. Highly toxic ingredients of gutka are the main cause of these diseases. High incidence of cancer prevalence is partly attributed to areca nut which is the main ingredient of gutka. Literature [17, 16, 1, 9, 11, 12] revealed that in Pakistan people using gutka and paan with and without tobacco 9.9 percent and 8.4 percent respectively were likely to develop oral cancer. Currently in Pakistan 23 million (19.1 percent) adults are using smokeless tobacco, including gutka, among them 31.8 percent are men and 5.8 percent are women who use tobacco products daily basis. Prevalence of gutka use amongst women is highly dangerous for society because females are responsible to rise the next generations and they are thought to have great influence on the habits of their children [10, 17, 2, 13].

Women and youth are particularly edict of gutka. More than 16.3 percent young Pakistani adolescent women use tobacco products including gutka and rapid increase are witnessed in

use of gutka and mainpuri [10,15]. In Sindh use of gutka addiction is very high in youth and females particularly in poor and low income communities in of Karachi, Thatta Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan and Badin districts. More than 122 gutka brands are available in different in markets of these cities of Sindh. More than 7 percent of the child population of only Hyderabad city use gutka. Smokeless tobacco is used in various forms [17, 16, 1]. In developing countries literature on various issues of females is very limited, therefore there isa huge gap on information regarding the issues faced by females and solutions of those issues. Gutka addiction has become a great threat to women health in Sindh and no study is available on factors determining the use of gutka by females and their level of awareness regarding hazardous impacts of gutka therefore there is a lack of information on this issue particularly in squatter settlements. This study will contribute in filling the gap of that information.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the causes and impacts of the use of gutka in district Hyderabad
2. To explore the level of awareness of gutka users regarding hazardous impacts of gutka on their health

## 3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted to examine the factors determine the use of gutka by females in district Hyderabad and their level of awareness regarding hazardous impacts of gutka. All respondents of this study are females and for current study a sample of 150 households was selected from three purposefully selected union councils (Tando Hyder, Tandojam, Husri) of district Hyderabad of Sindh. From each union council 50 households were selected purposefully by a snowball sampling method in order to access the females who use gutka.

## 4. RESULT DISCUSSION

### Demographic characteristics

In developing countries like Pakistan living standard of women is more awful as compared to men as majority of women remain out of school, have low literacy and lower awareness level regarding various health issues, therefore this

study is undertaken to highlight determinants of use of gutka by females and their awareness level regarding health hazards of using gutka. Results show that gutka consumption was common in female sample respondents aged from 14 to 60 years of age, having education level up to 5 years maximum. Family comprised 2 to 12 members maximum and around 6 members averagely. Mostly respondents belong to poor families because their monthly Income range was falling from rupees 4000 to 35000 maximum and the average

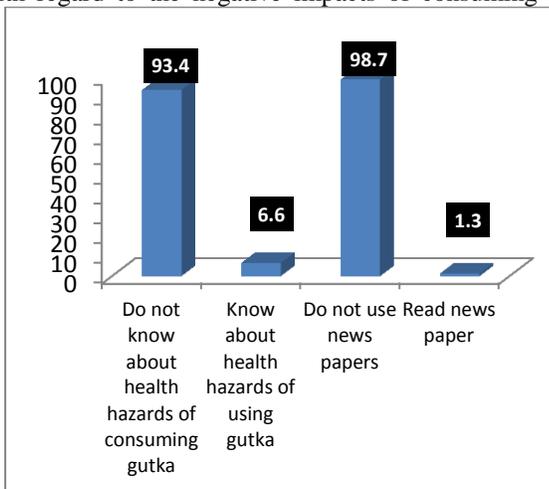
monthly income stood rupees 15794 while their average household monthly expenditure was calculated rupees 15494. Serious implications of use of gutka on health have been identified by earlier research studies. Study results shown in Table 1 disclosed that gutka user women fall ill 1 to 24 times per year and on average 7 times in the year and paid average amount to rupees 163 and some time even paid up to rupees 20,000 for visiting Doctors.

**Table 1 Demographic characteristics of respondent**

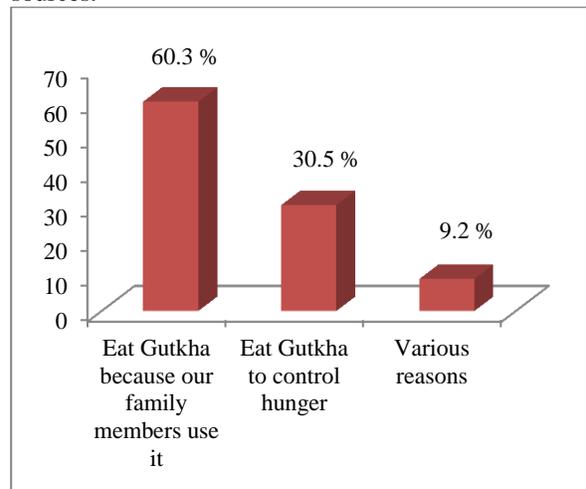
Variables	Min.	Max.	Avg.
Average age of respondents	14	60	35.3
Years of education	0	5	0.9
Family size	2	12	6.34
Earning members in family	1	2	1.2
Income per month	4000	35000	15794
Home expenditure per month	5000	33000	15494
<b>Health hazards</b>			
Suffered illness due eating gutka (number of time per year)	1	24	7
Visited doctor due to illness due to use of gutka (number of time per year)	10	20,000	163
Consumer's response regarding number of peoples in their locality are suffering by cancer and other disease due to use of gutka	1	5	0.96

Results of Figure 1 represent analysis of reasons behind gutka consumption by females, it was observed that a significant majority (60.3 percent) women consume gutka by the influence of their family members (because family members are habitual of eating gutka), while 30 percent respondents informed that as they work in factories therefore food is not available in required amount therefore they use gutka to control hunger, while only 9.2 percent respondents told that they consume gutka for various reasons such as to spend time or to give company to friends etc. Awareness among women with regard to the negative impacts of consuming gutka is

critical due to their broader influence on children. Considering that significance of awareness level in current study awareness level among female gutka users was analyzed and results are shown in Figure 1. Results highlight that 93.4 percent were not aware about the health hazards of Gutka use while remaining 6.6 percent women well aware about such health hazards of Gutka consumption. On the other hand majority (98.7 percent) of female gutka users do not read newspapers and other sources of information so that they can not get information from those sources.



**Figure 1 Awareness regarding health hazards of gutka consumption**



**Figure 2 Reasons of Gutka consumption by females**

**CONCLUSION**

The results highlighted that females of various ages from young to old aged women consume gutka and families are mostly poor. Serious implications of the use of gutka on health have been identified by earlier research studies and this research also supports the same argument that gutka consumption leads to illness. Study results disclosed that gutka user women frequently fall ill and paid a huge amount as payment on treatment of their health. The majority of women responded that they are using gutka due to the influence of family. It was also known that 23.4 percent respondent females were using Gutka for controlling hunger. Awareness among women with regard to negative impacts of consuming tobacco products is critical due to their broader influence on children. More than 93.4 percent female gutka users do not know about the health hazards of use of gutka. On the other hand majority of female gutka users do not read newspapers and other sources of information to get awareness regarding the matter. There is also need to strengthen advocacy and awareness campaigns with regard to enforce restricting smoking and using smokeless tobacco products for that purpose long term intervention programs and sustainable efforts required.

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