



### **After liquor and gutkha, Bihar government plans to ban 'khaini'**

According to Global Adults Tobacco (GATS-2) Survey, of 25.9 per cent tobacco users in the state, 23.5 per cent is related to smokeless tobacco and of this 20.4 per cent are khaini consumers alone.

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PATNA: After liquor and gutkha ban, the Bihar government is mulling to ban consumption of khaini in the state. Reports say the government is planning to write to the Union health ministry urging it to add 'khaini' as a food product under the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA), 2006.

"According to Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Act, any food product which has presence of tobacco and nicotine in it, has to be banned but khaini is not a food product, as per the food products list of the FSSAI. We are soon going to write to the Centre, urging it to notify khaini as a food product so that it can be banned in the state," principal secretary, health, Sanjay Kumar, had told The Telegraph earlier this week.

Health experts have time and again raised their voices for banning khaini, which is basically processed tobacco because of its ill impact on one's health and society. Health experts have been demanding a ban on khaini even more after the government banned consumption of liquor.

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According to Global Adults Tobacco (GATS-2) Survey, of 25.9 per cent tobacco users in the state, 23.5 per cent is related to smokeless tobacco and of this 20.4 per cent are khaini consumers alone.

The newspaper's Sources said that though there has been an overall dip in tobacco consumption in the state, from 53.5 per cent to 25.9 per cent, in the past seven years, the number of khaini consumers continues to be worrying for health experts.

The Sources added that the health department's move to initiate steps towards banning khaini comes after the non-government organisation Socio Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS), which is working with the state government in its tobacco control programme, gave a letter to the health department to take action for banning khaini in the state as it had taken a toll on people's health in the state.

SEEDS executive director Deepak Mishra said that: "Chewing gum is already notified as a food product as per FSSAI list. Khaini, or processed tobacco, which has worse impact than bubble-gum, too, should be banned. In Bihar, among all types of cancer, 40 per cent cancer cases are linked to tobacco consumption while 80 per cent of cancer cases are oral cases. Bihar has literally become the oral cancer capital of India. Khaini consumption is one of the reasons behind oral cancer cases as many are addicted to it," Mishra said.

He said Bihar government's intention to ban khaini might become a reality soon. "Today, the Union health ministry held the first meeting of its nasha-muktiabhiyan (tobacco control campaign) in which I pitched for

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including khaini in the food list. If this happens, it would be a great achievement," Mishra said.

Just last month, the food safety wing of the health department issued a notification banning manufacture, sale, storage, distribution and display of gutkha and pan masala (with tobacco and nicotine) for one year, effective from May 21.