E-Cigarettes: Myth and an aggressive marketing strategy in Bangladesh

**Md. Bazlur Rahman 1,2; Farhana Zaman4; H Patwary5; Syed Mahbubul Alam; Abdul Latif3**

**Background:** [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) is the [eighth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population) country with largest youngest population and tobacco industry target youth as their potential long term market. The objectives of the study were to identify the myth that used for promoting and create positive mindset among the youth; and to detect the marketing strategy for expansion the business. The percentage of e-cigarettes user is look like low 0.2 % (GATS 2017) but the current scenario is different because the e-cigarettes shops was only in posh area of Dhaka city in 2016 but now industry expand their business in whole country. According to Daily Newspaper Bangladesh Post 78% e-cigarettes shop established between 2017 to 2022. The study has conducted to measure what tactics used tobacco industry to expand their business and myth & reality?

**Methodology:** Newspaper articles, journals and websites have analyzed; online searching used to identify the shop location and observational methods have been used for crossmatching the location. In-depth interviews have conducted among randomly selected e-cigarettes users to recognize the myth of tobacco industry that used to insist youth to become smokers.

**Results:** The key outcomes of the research-

* 85% respondents express that they are influenced by the shop keepers and selective paid physicians.
* Globally recognized that E-Cigarettes are very addictive, but importers and tobacco industry try to create a positive mindset among the teenagers that it is a less harmful compared to other tobacco products.
* 78% users express that it becomes aristocratic fillings because tobacco industry organizes events including vaping festival in five-star hotels & resorts and invites youths to join with free of cost.
* 80% of vaping shops use both the online platforms and social networking sites to expand their e-cigarette businesses, while 94% of shops use social networking sites for reaching customers.

**Conclusion and Recommendations:** Aggressive marketing tactics especially direct and indirect promotional activities on social media insist youth to be the user even it create curiosity among youth. Tobacco Industry use paid models as a part of partial sexual appeal while organized events in five-star hotels & resorts and offer free trial e-cigarettes that causes drastically increasing the use of e-cigarettes. For protecting youth, the country should ban any kinds of emerging tobacco production, import and sales in Bangladesh.

1. *Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, Dhaka International University*
2. *Project Director, Tobacco Control and Research Cell, Dhaka International University*
3. *Project Officer, Tobacco Control and Research Cell, Dhaka International University*
4. *Program Manager, Tobacco Control and Research Cell, Dhaka International University*
5. *President, Tobacco Control and Research Cell, Dhaka International University*

*Correspondence to Md Bazlur Rahman, E-Mail:* *soheltarafdardiu@gmail.com*

**Summary:** [Bangladesh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladesh) is the [eighth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population) largest youngest population country that causes the aggressive marketing strategy use. The social, economic and cultural context are different from the western world that’s why the marketing tactics are different. The study has conducted to show how tobacco industry expand their business- myth and reality?

Short-Bio of Presenter

Md Bazlur Rahman working as an Associate Professor, Department of Business Administration, and Project Director of Tobacco Control Project, Dhaka International University. The project funded by Bloomberg initiatives and technical assistance by The Union. Mr. Rahman engages himself in research and teaching and actively contributed in more than 20 publications. He also engaged in tobacco control activity science 2011. He actively participated as resource person in many national and international seminars, workshops & conferences in China, Japan, Malaysia, India, USA, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, Philippines, UAE and Egypt. Mr. Rahman is the general member of The Union.