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For tobacco-free schools, colleges

Stress on saying 'no' to tobacco

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STAFF REPORTER

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Peer pressure and easy availability of tobacco products near educational institutions have resulted in large number of youngsters falling prey to tobacco addiction. Experts also attribute the growing tendency seen among children to their inability to refuse such products offered by others.

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Tobacco-Free Kerala, a coalition of like-minded organisations, has set afloat #SayNO2Tobacco, a campaign on social media to create tobacco-free schools and colleges.

Launching the campaign, violinist Balabhaskar stressed the need to evolve creative methods to embolden children to say 'no' to tobacco. "I have never smoked nor have I ever felt the inclination to take up the habit. Sadly, tobacco products have been found to have a deep impact on youngsters, both mentally and physically. I appeal to students, parents, teachers, doctors, and those in other walks of life to take the campaign forward for the welfare of mankind," he said.

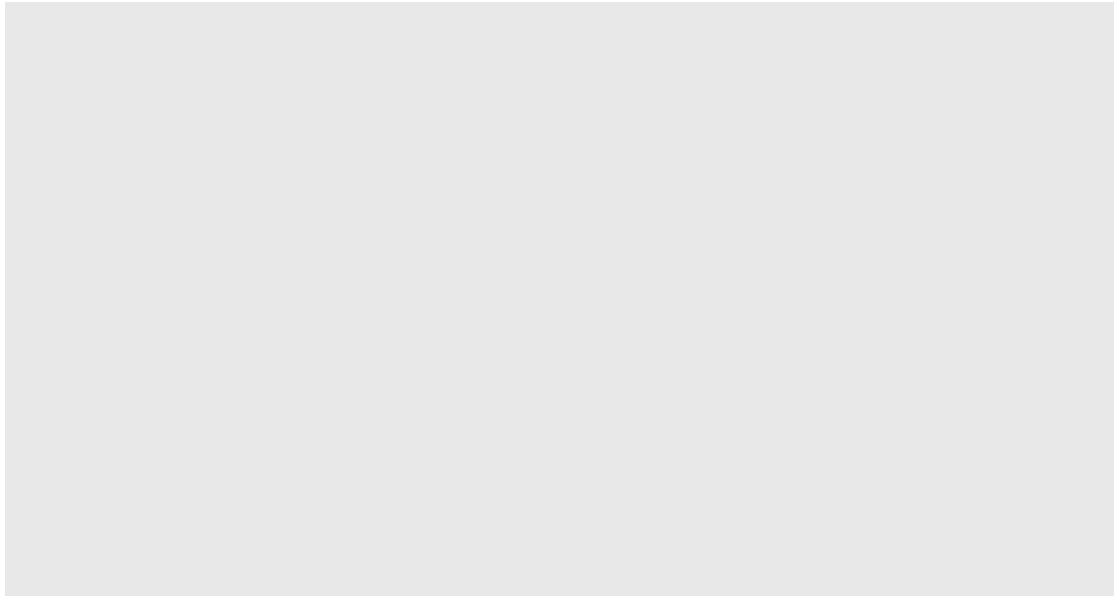
Many deaths

Tobacco-Free Kerala advisor and senior research officer at the Achutha Menon Centre for Health Science Studies A.S. Pradeep Kumar said while less than 1,000 deaths were reported in Kerala every year due to communicable diseases, tobacco use causes many more deaths in the State. Youngsters constitute a significant number among them," he said.


He said added focus should be given to discouraging youngsters from taking up the habit. He also called for remaining guarded against indirect advertisements of tobacco products.

Tobacco-Free Kerala State coordinator S. Jayaraj stressed the role of parents and teachers in remaining strong deterrents against the use of tobacco products.

A jingle composed by Mr. Balabhaskar as part of the campaign was also launched on the occasion.



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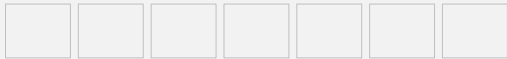
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