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# Almost half of B'lureans are passive smokers, says survey

DHNS

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The number of passive smokers and their health problems in India have risen by almost 50%, says a survey conducted by the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS).

In Bengaluru, almost half of the people are passive smokers.

Passive smoking is more dangerous than active smoking, according to Dr Triveni B S, a public health specialist. In order to know more about the effects of the problem, she explained the case of Nalini, a long-time victim of passive smoking.

Nalini lost her voice to vocal chord cancer about six years ago.

Nalini's husband was a regular smoker, which eventually took his life. But that was not the end of it. Since she lived under the same roof, she was a constant passive smoker and eventually suffered from vocal cord cancer. Although constant medical treatment cured her of cancer, she did not get her voice back. Now, she is fighting against passive smoking and is creating awareness about its ill effects.

According to Triveni, passive smoking is worse than active smoking since here the smoke goes through the mouth and not through the nose which destroys the vocal cord.

Although smoking is banned in public places, about 20 million people in Karnataka are found to consume tobacco. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has tied up with Bloomberg Philanthropies and Vital Strategies to make the IT Capital one of the 52 smoke-free cities in the world in the next couple of years.

A task force has been formed under Bengaluru Development and Town Planning Minister K J George, BBMP Commissioner N Manjunath Prasad, Police Commissioner T Sunil Kumar and Dr Triveni, who is associated with Bloomberg Philanthropies and Vital Strategies.

George said: "Although the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) prohibits smoking in public places, it has not been effectively enforced. Hookah and allied products will be banned soon."

The task force will ensure effective enforcement of the law by sensitising police officers, health and education officers besides creating awareness among the public.

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