

TERM

Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement

Online Marketing of Tobacco Products: India

November 2020

Background:

Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship promotes tobacco consumption and discourages cessation. The World Health Organization's MPOWER technical package on tobacco control and the international treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, recommend banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. In India, Section 5 of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act prohibits all direct and indirect advertisement of tobacco products, including activity that promotes the use of tobacco products or their trademark or brand name.

Despite this, tobacco marketing continues to be widespread globally and in India, particularly in online forums that are less regulated.^{i,ii,iii} Vital Strategies launched the Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement (TERM) in June 2019 to monitor tobacco marketing activities.¹ This situation report is part of a monthly series that summarizes observed examples of online tobacco marketing in India. It covers the period **Oct. 16 to Nov. 15, 2020**.

Highlights of the Month

- **Tobacco marketing by volume:** There were 1,043 cases of tobacco marketing online this month. Of these, 73% were surrogate advertising, 23% were events, promotions and sponsorships and 4% were direct marketing of tobacco products. Of the total observed tobacco marketing, 52% was for smoking products and 48% was for smokeless products. No marketing for e-cigarettes was recorded during this period.
- **Tobacco marketing by state:** Overall, 47% of the observed marketing originated in West Bengal, followed by Uttar Pradesh (27%), Rajasthan (20%), Maharashtra (3%) and Karnataka (3%). Marketing of smoking tobacco products most often originated in West Bengal (89%), Karnataka (6%) and Maharashtra (5%). Marketing of smokeless tobacco products originated in Uttar Pradesh (56%) and Rajasthan (43%).
- **Tobacco marketing by channel:** Of the total observed tobacco marketing, 53% was on Facebook, 33% on Instagram and 11% on Twitter. Smoking tobacco products were marketed through Facebook (61%), Instagram (27%) and Twitter (7%). Smokeless tobacco products were marketed through Facebook (44%), Instagram (40%) and Twitter (15%).

¹ For the avoidance of any doubt, while this Report notes instances of tobacco product marketing, it does not attempt to identify violations, nor does it allege violations, of the aforementioned regulation.

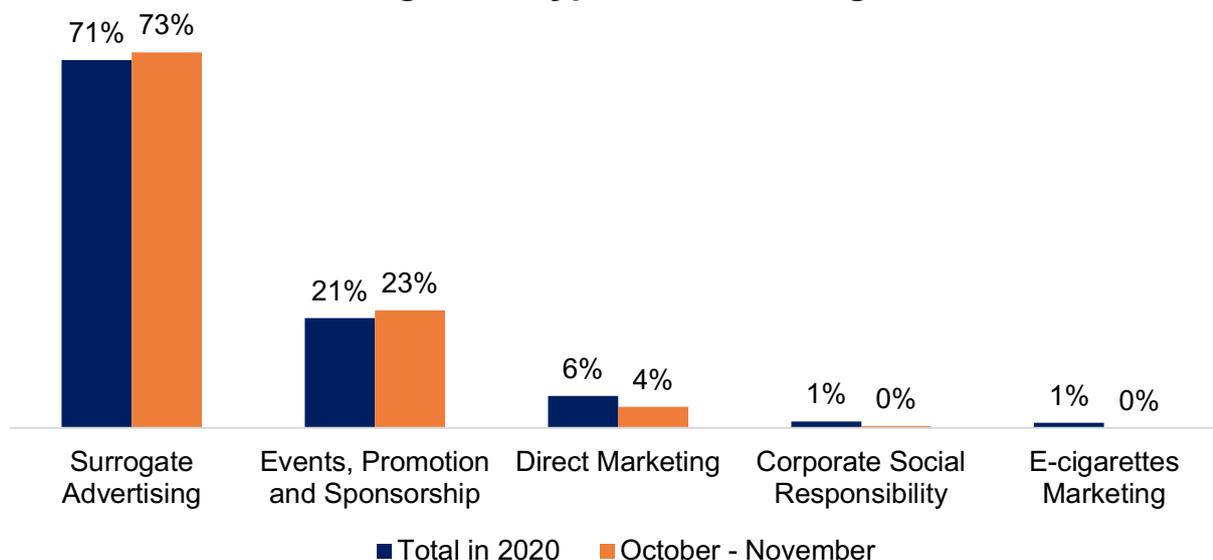
- **Message framing:** Of the total observed tobacco marketing, 18% had messages related to recreation² and 65% to community celebration.³ Other prominent messages focused on the health (2%) and conservation (2%). Smoking tobacco products were marketed using messages focused on recreation and community celebration. Smokeless tobacco products were marketed using messages focused on community celebration, recreation and remembrance days.

Detailed Insights

Volume of Tobacco Marketing

- A total of 1,043 tobacco marketing activities were recorded between Oct. 16 and Nov. 15, 2020. The main types of marketing included surrogate marketing, events, promotions and sponsorships and direct marketing. Of the total marketing activities observed, 73% were surrogate marketing, 23% were events, promotions, and sponsorships and 4% were direct marketing.
- Of the total marketing activities observed this month, 52% were for smoking tobacco products and 48% for smokeless tobacco products.

Figure 1. Types of Marketing



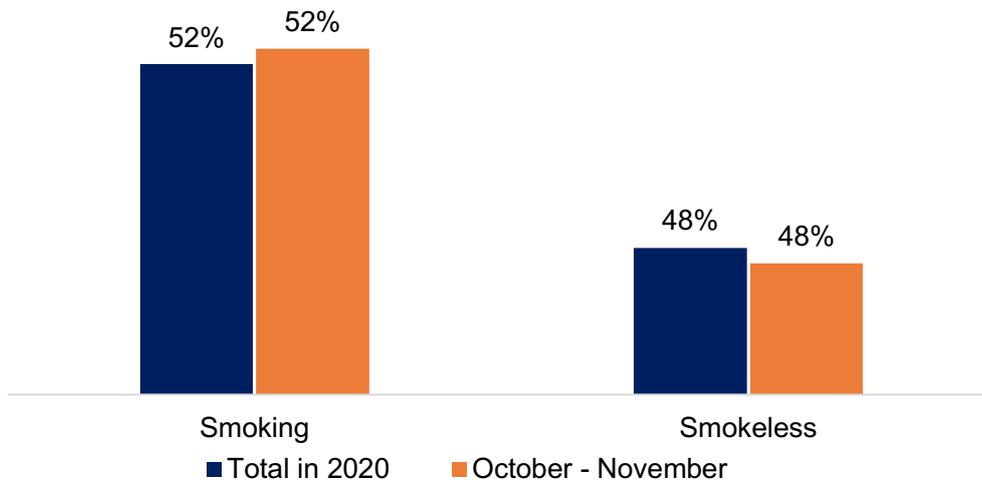
Total in 2020 (August 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020) (n = 2399)

October 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

² Recreation: Messages that involve making people's leisure time more interesting or enjoyable. Examples include: cooking, family time, playing outdoors, movies etc.

³ Community celebration: Messages that involve activities that people do in their place of worship or with groups. Examples: Religious festivals, community events, sporting events, birthdays etc.

Figure 2. Type of Product Marketed

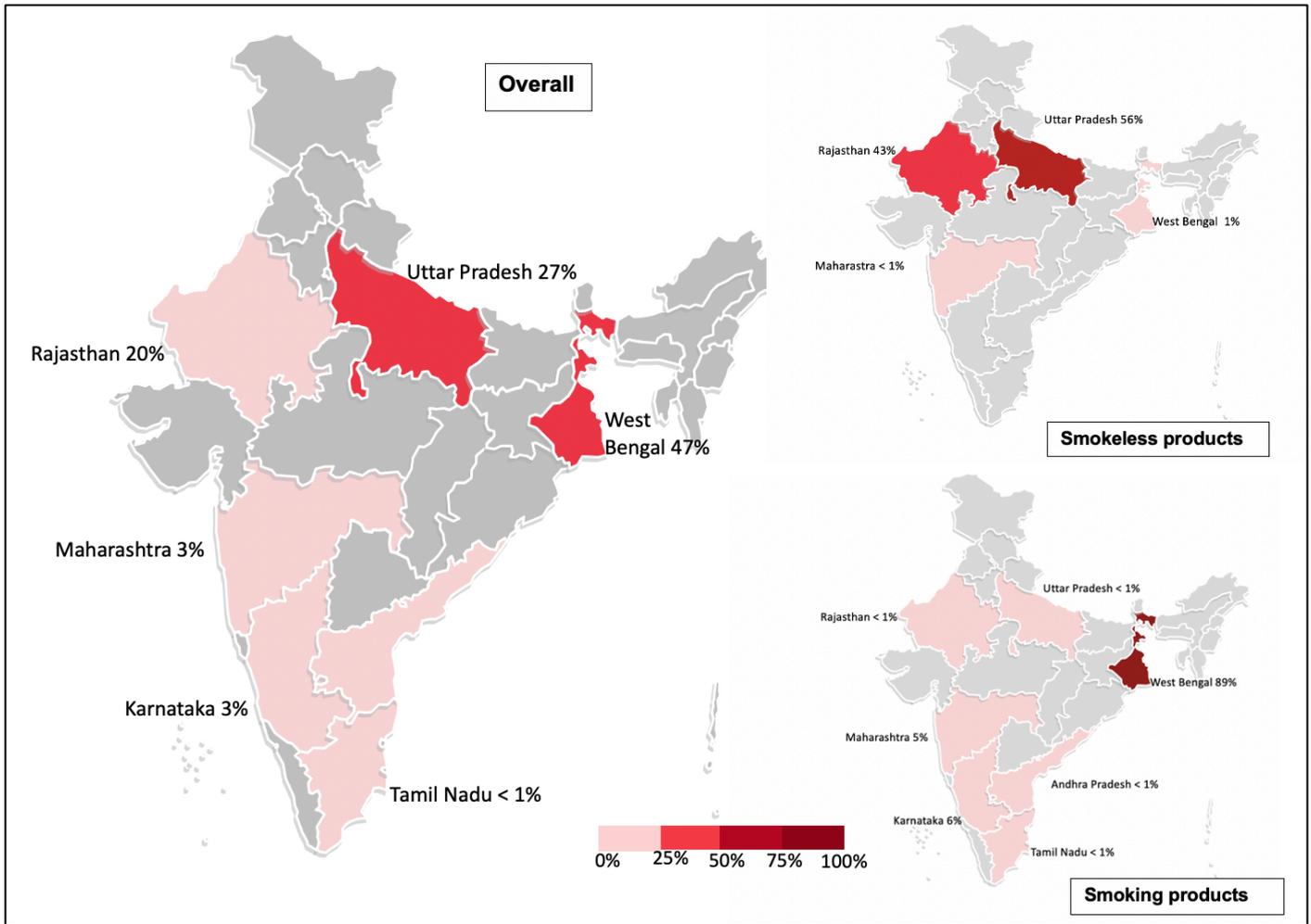


Total in 2020(August 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020) (n = 2399)
October 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Tobacco Marketing by State

- The majority of tobacco marketing observed this month originated in West Bengal (47%), followed by Uttar Pradesh (27%), Rajasthan (20%), Maharashtra (3%) and Karnataka (3%).
- Marketing of smoking tobacco products most often originated in West Bengal (89%) followed by Karnataka (6%) and Maharashtra (5%). Smokeless tobacco products were most often marketed in Uttar Pradesh (56%) and Rajasthan (43%).

Map 1: Origin of Tobacco Marketing by State

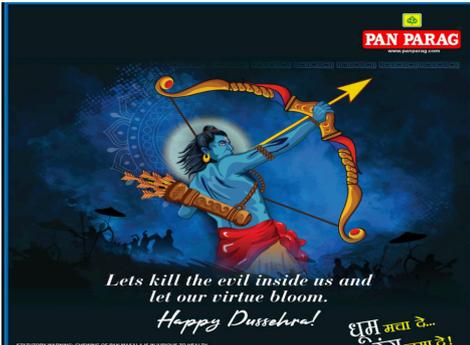


October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Marketing Instances Recorded Oct. 16 to Nov. 15, 2020

Most of the tobacco marketing observed this month were instances of indirect marketing, followed by direct marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, as noted below.

Table 1: Type of Marketing Activities

Marketing Tactics	Summary
<p>Direct Marketing</p>	<p>There were 42 instances of direct advertising recorded during this period. In many cases, cigars were directly marketed on social media; primarily via Facebook. Ads depicted the qualities of a well-made cigar and offered aspirational messaging on cigar smoking. Many posts provided details on where to order products.</p>
	
<p>Indirect Marketing (Surrogate marketing and Events, promotions, and sponsorships)</p>	<p>There were 997 instances of indirect advertising observed. Messaging highlighted tobacco features including flavors, appetite and packaging. Event, promotion and sponsorship activities were timed with religious festivals and major sporting events including Dussehra and Indian Premier League. During those periods there was increased surrogate advertising of tobacco products. Indirect advertising of surrogate tobacco products occurred across online platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.</p>
	
	

Corporate Social Responsibility Activities

There were **4** observed instances of corporate social responsibility activities conducted by tobacco companies; the majority of which were by ITC Limited. Messaging was primarily focused on social initiatives and corporate governance.

Top 100 companies in India for CSR in 2020

By Kasmin Fernandes and Hency Thacker - November 3, 2020

SHARE



Top companies for CSR in 2020

4. ITC Ltd.

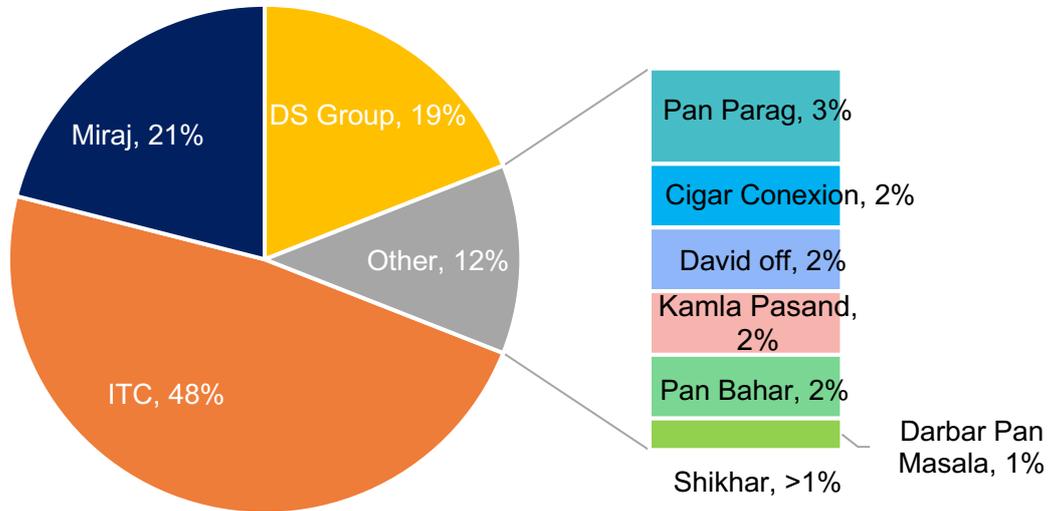
This is a conglomerate contributing to rural development in a big way. ITC Choupal is a long-running flagship CSR programme by the company that has become the gold standard on community development in international circles. Not only has ITC Choupal impacted lakhs of farmers over the years through digital literacy and economic empowerment, it has also been replicated by scores of other corporates for social welfare in their own communities.

ITC spent Rs. 326.49 crores on CSR initiatives in 2019-20, surpassing its spend for previous years. The conglomerate has active social projects in education, environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, healthcare, digital literacy, sports and culture. Chairman Sanjiv Puri leads the social initiatives with a mix of humility and ambition.

Marketing by Tobacco Companies

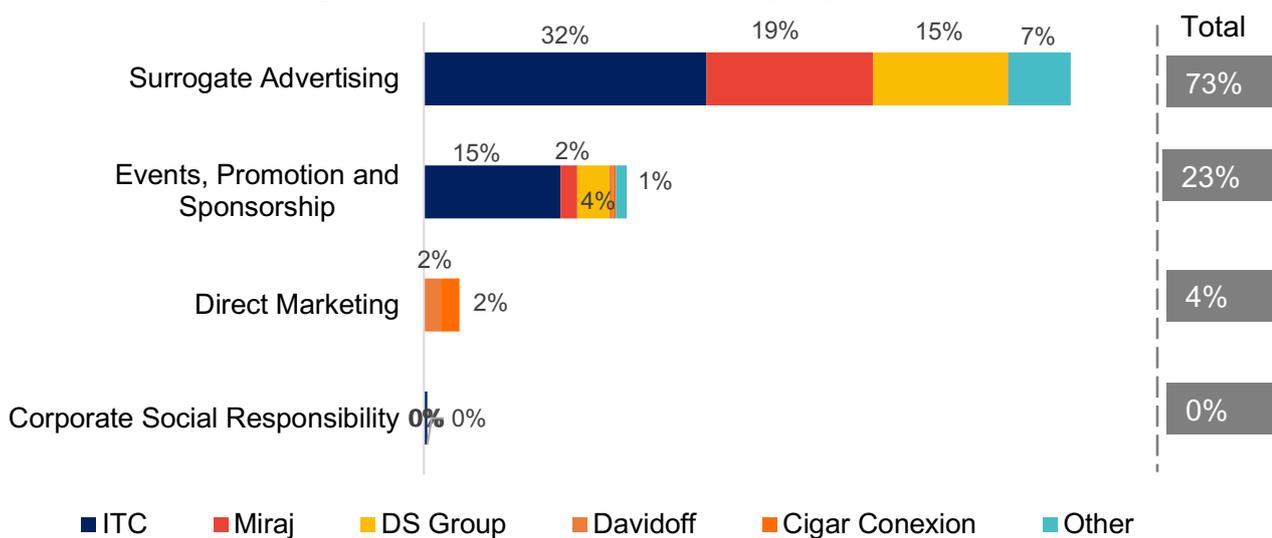
- The majority of marketing observed this month was sponsored by ITC Limited (48%). Other chief sponsors of tobacco marketing were: Davidoff (2%), Miraj (21%), Dharampal Satyapal Group (19%), Pan Parag (3%).
- Most of the surrogate advertising observed this month was sponsored by ITC Limited (48%), while 21% was sponsored by Miraj.

Figure 3a. Total Marketing by Company



October 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Figure 3b. Type of Marketing by Company



October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Public Engagement Activities

The public engagements, including corporate social responsibility activities, observed this month are described below.

Table 2. Examples of observed public engagement activities by the tobacco industry.

Examples	
	<h3 style="margin: 0;">Our Association With ITC's E-Choupal Will Help Engage Rural Customers: Srinivasu Allaphan, JK Tyre</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">by EVENTFAQS Bureau Marketing October 30, 2020 News</p> <p style="margin: 0;">JK TYRE ITC ITC'S E-CHOUPAL</p> <p style="margin: 0;"> Tweet Like 1 Share Share </p> <p style="margin: 0;">JK Tyre & Industries Ltd has announced its collaboration with ITC e-Choupal to engage with rural communities. The brand will utilise ITC's Choupal Saagars network in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">This partnership aims at expanding presence in the rural markets through ground-level 360 degrees engagement. JK Tyre will engage in phased participation in the ChoupalSaagars - ITC's integrated rural services hubs across the three States.</p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">The Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Association (MFPA) share a special message on Global Handwashing Day</h3> <p style="margin: 0;">"The artists at MFPA are incredibly talented and this collaboration strengthens Savlon Swasth India's mission to educate, encourage and inspire behavioural change towards washing hands. Be it creating the globally recognized healthy hands chalk sticks to encourage a habit of washing hands in children or introducing the first-ever Braille enabled packs to ensure ease of access, Savlon Swasth India is committed to building an equitable world. #NoHandUnwashed continues this inclusive and supportive journey to make hand hygiene a priority for all," added Sameer Satpathy, Divisional Chief Executive, Personal Care Products Business, ITC Limited.</p>	

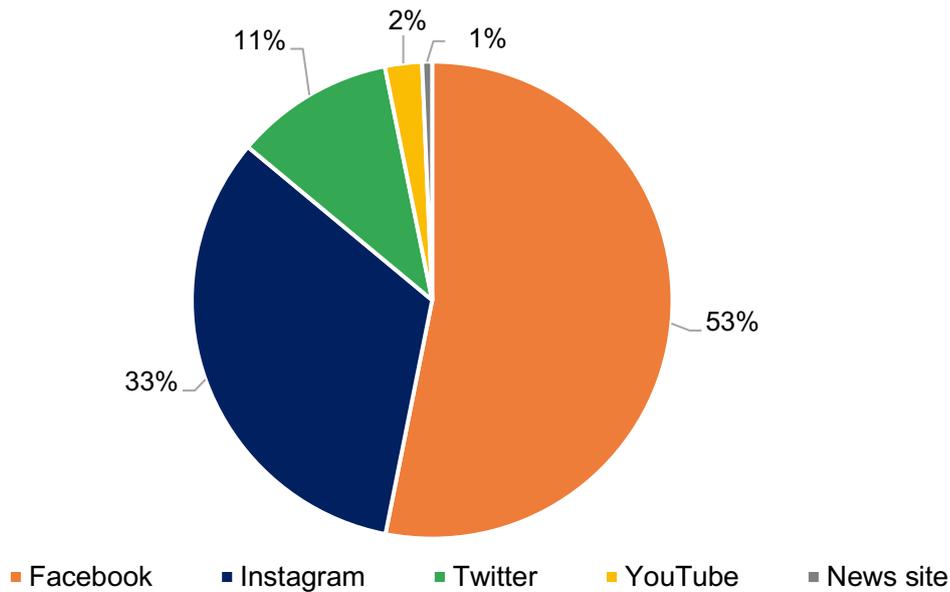
Tobacco Marketing Activity by Channel

- Almost all observed tobacco marketing (direct and indirect) during this period was conducted on social media channels (97%), including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Surrogate marketing of tobacco products was conducted through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The news

media provided the primary channels for reports on tobacco industry-sponsored corporate social responsibility initiatives.

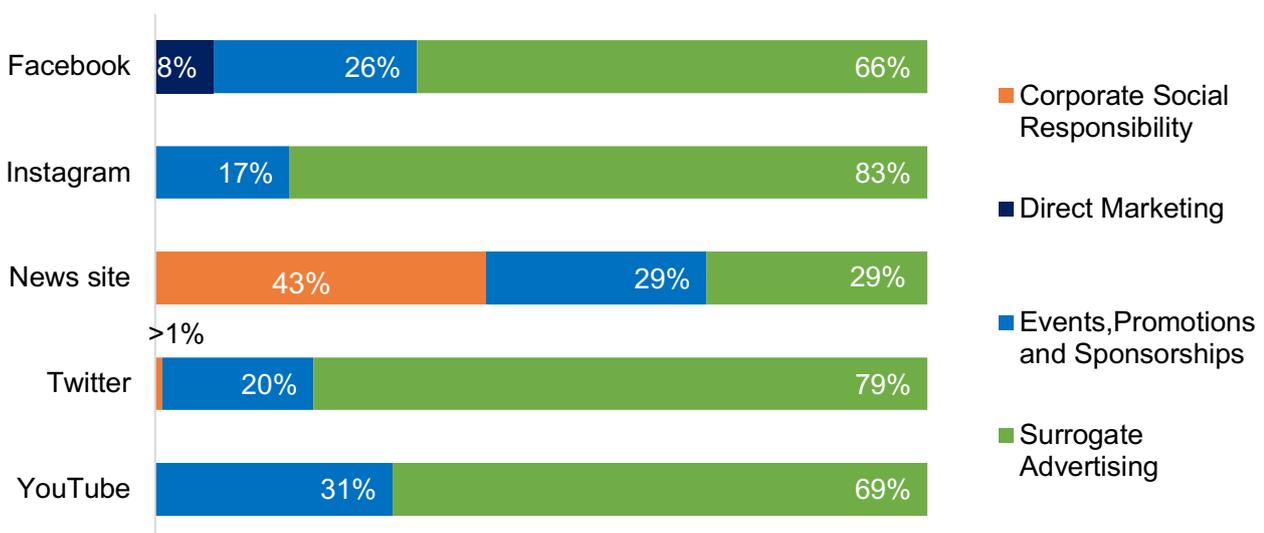
- Smoking tobacco products were marketed through Facebook (61%), Instagram (27%) and Twitter (7%). Smokeless tobacco products were marketed through Facebook (44%), Instagram (40%), and Twitter (15%).

Figure 5a. Total Marketing by Platform



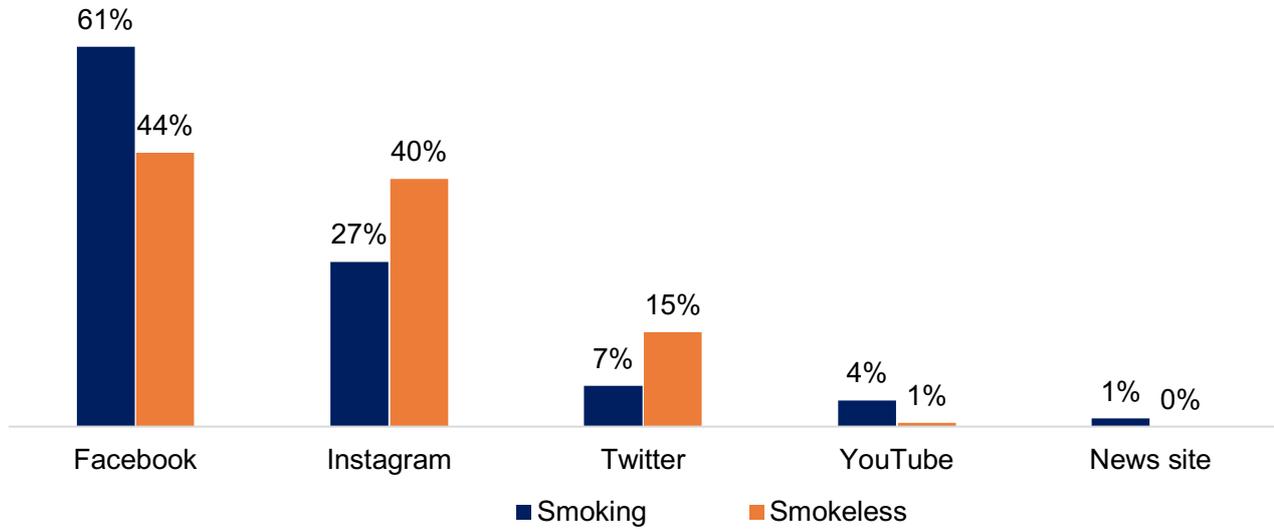
October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Figure 5b. Type of Marketing by Platform



October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Figure 5c. Type of Product Marketed by Platform



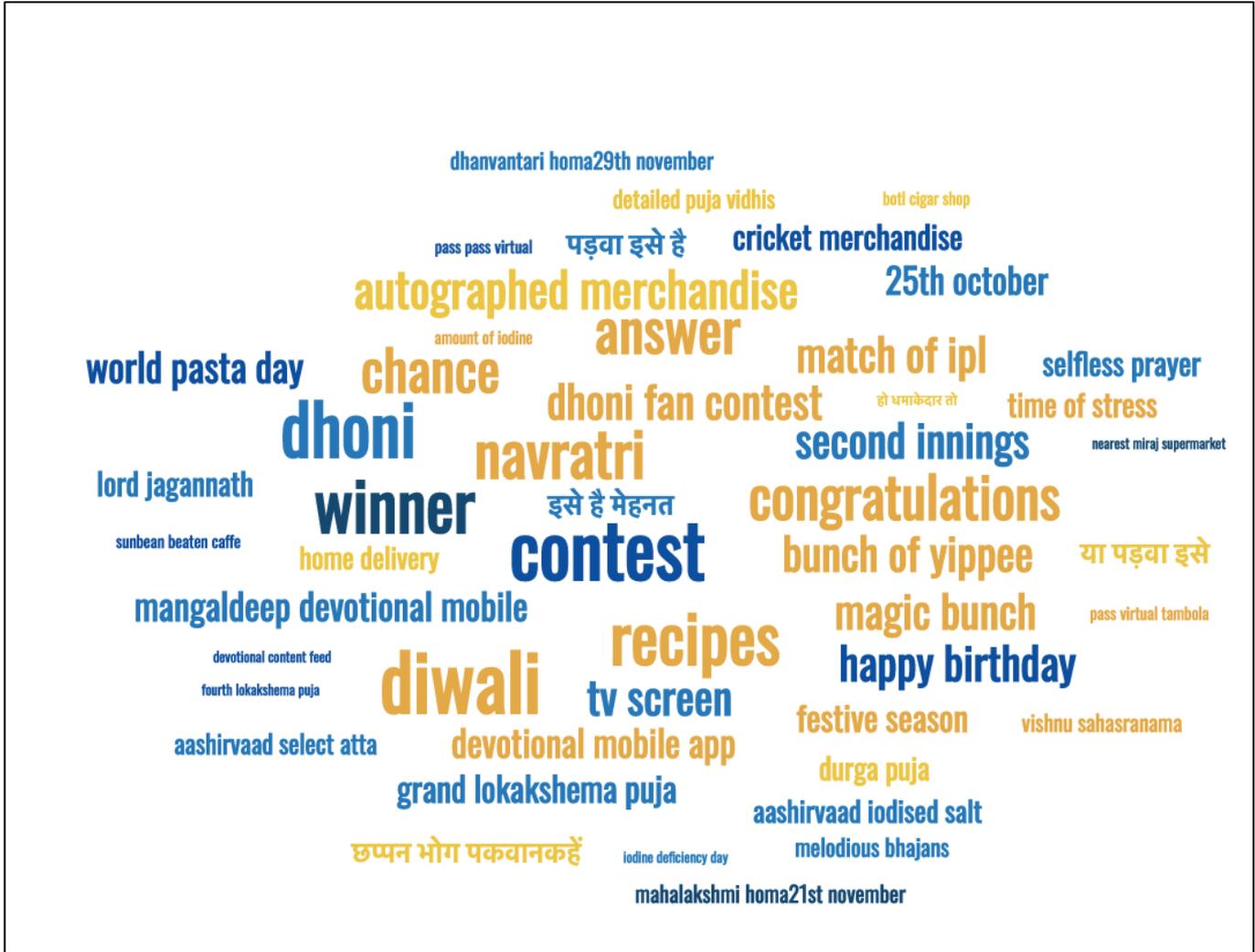
Smoking(n = 545)

Smokess (n = 498)

October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Frequently Used Messages

A "word cloud" is a visual representation of the most frequently used terms across online platforms. The larger the word in the visual, the more commonly it was used in tobacco marketing messages. This month, words related to **community celebrations and contests and offers** appear the most in marketing messages.

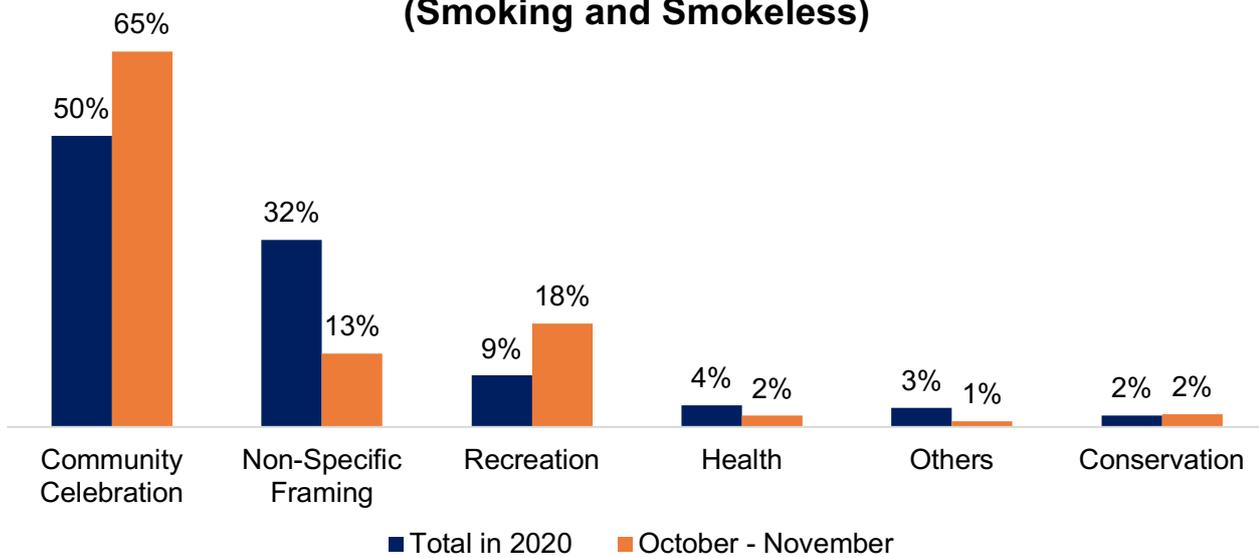


October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Framing of Marketing Messages

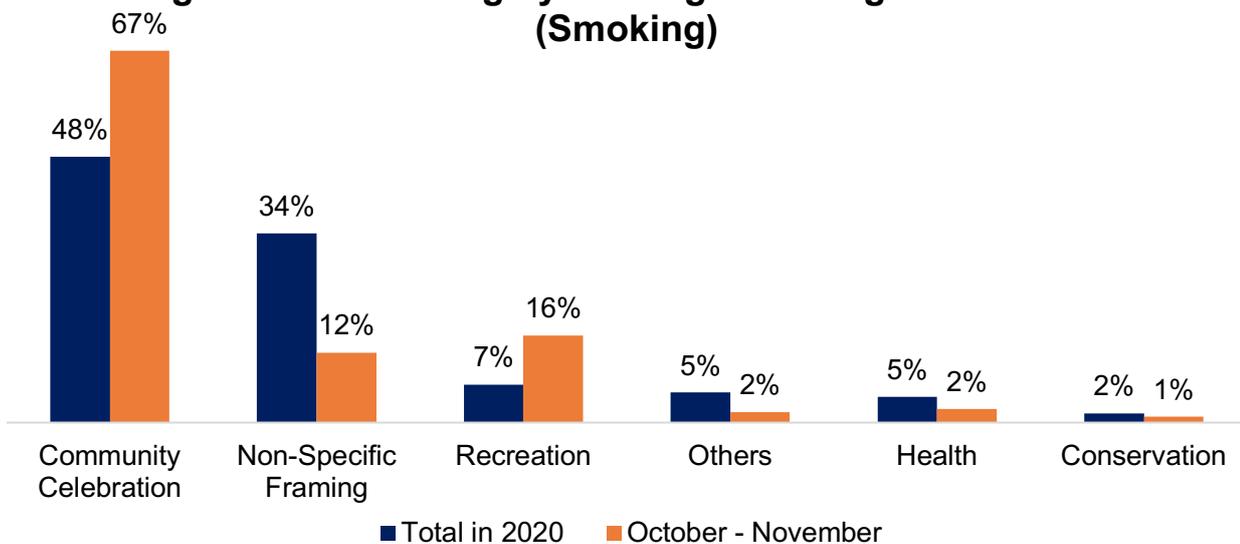
- Many tobacco marketing messages were framed with a celebratory tone linked to community celebration (65%) and recreation (18%).
- Both smoking tobacco products and smokeless tobacco products were marketed using messages about recreation and community celebration. For smoking products, 67% of messages focused on community celebration and 16% on recreation. For smokeless tobacco products, 62% focused on community celebration and 20% on recreation.

Figure 6a. Marketing by Message Framing and Product (Smoking and Smokeless)



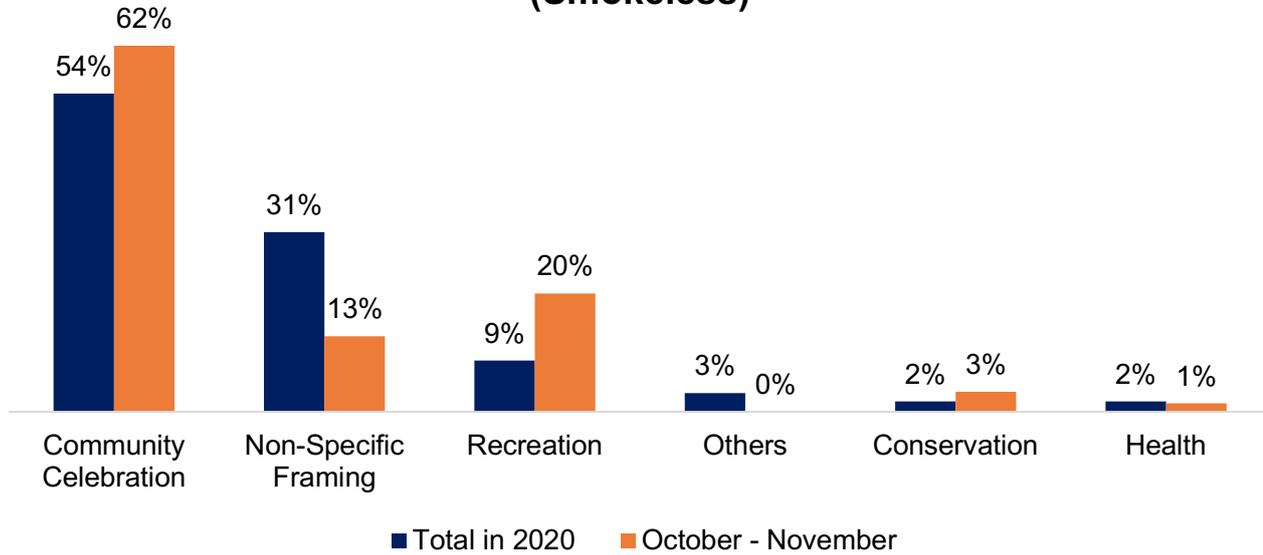
Total in 2020(August 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020) (n = 2096)
October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 1043)

Figure 6b. Marketing by Message Framing and Product (Smoking)



Total in 2020(August 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020) (n = 1249)
October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2021 (n = 545)

Figure 6c. Marketing by Message Framing and Product (Smokeless)



Total in 2020(August 16, 2020 to November 15, 2020) (n = 1153)

October 16, 2021 to November 15, 2020 (n = 498)

*Non-specific framing refers to marketing that does not fall under a specific category.

Methods: This report summarizes information gathered through specific keyword searches from all publicly available online news sites, including the online websites of leading media houses such as Times of India and Hindustan Times, among others. Information was also gathered from social and digital platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and forums. The information was then machine coded and systematically human-checked to determine direct and indirect marketing by source. The analysis is currently restricted to content in English and Hindi. Full detailed methodology, including coding, is available upon request.

For more information:

Vital Strategies website: <https://www.vitalstrategies.org/>

Tobacco Enforcement and Reporting Movement Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/termindia/>

Vital Strategies Media Beacon: <https://www.mediabeacon.org/#language>

Vital Strategies Social Media: <https://www.facebook.com/vitalstrategies/> ; <https://twitter.com/VitalStrat>

ⁱhttps://www.who.int/docs/default-source/searo/india/health-topic-pdf/tobacco/tobaccocontrol-tobacco-imagery-in-on-demand-ott-india-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=46395209_2

ⁱⁱ Ulucanlar S, Fooks GJ, Gilmore AB (2016) The Policy Dystopia Model: An Interpretive Analysis of Tobacco Industry Political Activity. PLOS Medicine 13(9): e1002125. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1002125>

ⁱⁱⁱ Hillman A.J., Keim, D., Schuler, D. (2004) Corporate political activity: A review and research agenda. Journal of Management, 30(6), pp.837-857. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jm.2004.06.003>