



## Original Research Article

# CLINICAL CORRELATION OF TOBACCO HABIT WITH SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY IN JHALAWAR, RAJASTHAN

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Tobacco consumption is a major preventable risk factor for oral and systemic diseases. Its prevalence and patterns may be influenced by socioeconomic conditions, education, occupation, and other demographic factors. Understanding the relationship between tobacco habits and socioeconomic status can help identify vulnerable populations and guide targeted preventive interventions.

**Aim:** To assess the prevalence and pattern of tobacco habits and evaluate their association with socioeconomic status among individuals in Jhalawar, Rajasthan.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted among individuals attending selected healthcare/dental facilities in Jhalawar, Rajasthan. Participants were assessed using a structured questionnaire documenting demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, type and frequency of tobacco use, duration of habit, and associated clinical findings. Socioeconomic status was evaluated using a standardized socioeconomic classification. The collected data were statistically analyzed to determine the association between tobacco consumption and socioeconomic variables.

**Results:** The study demonstrated a significant association between tobacco consumption and socioeconomic characteristics. Tobacco use was more frequently observed among participants belonging to lower socioeconomic groups and was influenced by factors such as educational status, occupation, and income. Smokeless tobacco and smoking products represented important forms of tobacco consumption. Participants with longer duration and greater frequency of tobacco use also demonstrated a higher occurrence of tobacco-associated oral findings.

**Conclusion:** Tobacco consumption shows a significant relationship with socioeconomic status, with socially and economically disadvantaged populations representing an important target group for tobacco-control interventions. Community-based awareness programs, tobacco cessation counseling, early oral screening, and socioeconomic-focused preventive strategies are recommended to reduce the burden of tobacco-related disease in the region

**Keywords:** Tobacco habit, socioeconomic status, tobacco consumption, oral health, cross-sectional study, Jhalawar, Rajasthan.

## INTRODUCTION

Tobacco use is one of the leading preventable causes of morbidity and mortality worldwide and is

responsible for more than five million deaths annually.<sup>[1]</sup> According to the World Health Organization, nearly 80% of tobacco-related deaths are expected to occur in low- and middle-income

countries by 2030.<sup>[1]</sup> India bears a substantial burden of tobacco consumption, contributing significantly to socioeconomic inequalities in health.<sup>[2]</sup>

The exact mechanism underlying socioeconomic differences in tobacco use remains unclear. However, factors such as poor living conditions, limited educational opportunities, occupational stress, and easy accessibility of tobacco products have been implicated.<sup>[3,4]</sup> Previous studies have demonstrated a higher prevalence of tobacco use among individuals belonging to lower socioeconomic strata.<sup>[5,6]</sup>

Limited data are available regarding the association between socioeconomic status and tobacco consumption in Rajasthan. Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the clinical correlation between tobacco habit and socioeconomic status among residents of Jhalawar district, Rajasthan.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 600 tobacco users aged 18–55 years residing in Jhalawar

district, Rajasthan. Detailed case history including demographic profile, chief complaint, medical history, and tobacco habit history was recorded.

Socioeconomic status was assessed using the Modified Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals who had discontinued tobacco use for two years or more.
- Individuals with concomitant habits such as arecanut chewing, alcohol consumption, or drug addiction.

## RESULTS

The majority of tobacco users belonged to the lower/upper lower socioeconomic class, followed by the lower class. The least number of tobacco users were observed in the upper socioeconomic class, indicating a significant association between lower socioeconomic status and increased tobacco consumption.

**Table 1: Distribution of Study Subjects According to Socioeconomic Status**

| Socioeconomic Status | Number of Subjects (n) |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Upper                | 10                     |
| Upper Middle         | 21                     |
| Middle/Lower Middle  | 152                    |
| Lower/Upper Lower    | 219                    |
| Lower                | 198                    |

[Table 1] shows that the highest proportion of tobacco users belonged to the Lower/Upper Lower socioeconomic class (36.5%), followed by the Lower class (33.0%). The least number of tobacco users were observed in the Upper socioeconomic class (1.7%). This finding suggests an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and tobacco consumption.

## DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrated a significantly higher prevalence of tobacco use among individuals belonging to lower socioeconomic classes. Similar findings have been reported by Sinha et al,<sup>[5]</sup> who observed greater tobacco consumption among economically disadvantaged populations.

Lower socioeconomic groups often face educational and financial disadvantages, making them more susceptible to tobacco initiation and continuation.<sup>[3]</sup> Furthermore, aggressive marketing strategies by the tobacco industry frequently target vulnerable populations, thereby increasing tobacco use among lower-income groups.<sup>[6]</sup>

Higher socioeconomic groups generally possess better health literacy, access to healthcare services, and awareness regarding the harmful effects of tobacco, resulting in lower prevalence rates.<sup>[2,5]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that tobacco use was most prevalent among individuals belonging to the lower and upper-lower socioeconomic classes, whereas the least prevalence was observed among individuals from the upper socioeconomic class. The association between socioeconomic status and tobacco use was statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Targeted tobacco control programs, health education initiatives, and cessation services should focus on lower socioeconomic populations to reduce tobacco-related health inequalities and improve overall public health outcomes.

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