



**Smoke Signal:**  
Understanding  
the Drivers of Suki  
Consumption in Fiji



# ABSTRACT

Tobacco use is becoming a significant public health concern in Fiji, despite the country's commendable efforts to curb this issue. Fiji's ratification of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the enactment of the Tobacco Control Act (2010) demonstrate a clear commitment to public health. The Act covers essential areas such as bans on tobacco advertising and promotion, health warning requirements on cigarette packaging, and restrictions on the sale of tobacco products to minors. However, this report delves deeper into the current landscape of tobacco control in Fiji, with a particular focus on a distinct challenge – Suki, a tobacco product traditionally consumed in the country.

The Tobacco Control Act (2010) notably, lacks clarity regarding the regulations applicable to Suki. Whether Suki falls under the Act's advertising bans, labelling requirements, and health warning provisions remains unclear. This ambiguity creates a loophole that hinders efforts to regulate Suki and raise awareness about its potential health risks.

The Act further mandates regulations for tar and nicotine content in tobacco products. However, Suki, often sold unpackaged in traditional settings, falls outside this regulatory scope. The lack of regulations for nicotine content in Suki makes it difficult to inform consumers about the potential for addiction and the associated health risks.

Suki presents a unique challenge for tobacco control efforts in Fiji. A survey conducted for this report included 428 Suki consumers across Fiji. The survey demographics revealed that 70% of respondents were male, with a significant portion (59%) residing in rural areas. The survey also found that a substantial number of respondents (60%) began using Suki between the ages of 18 and 34, highlighting the need for targeted interventions aimed at young adults.

The survey conducted for this report provides valuable insights into Suki consumption patterns and user demographics. Here are some key findings:

- **Accessibility and Affordability:** A staggering 83% of respondents reported that Suki is very easy to obtain, and 89% considered it affordable. This widespread availability and affordability contribute to the prevalence of Suki use.
- **Transition from Cigarettes:** Nearly all respondents (98%) had previously or currently smoked cigarettes. Notably, 71% of those who switched to Suki did so due to its lower cost compared to cigarettes. This highlights the economic factors influencing tobacco use patterns in Fiji.

# ABSTRACT (CONTINUED)

- **Health Awareness and Concerns:** While 55% of respondents were aware of the health risks associated with Suki use, a significant portion (28%) believed Suki has lower health risks compared to cigarettes. This lack of complete awareness necessitates targeted public health campaigns to educate users about the potential health consequences of Suki consumption.

Fiji can achieve significant progress towards a tobacco-free future by implementing a comprehensive set of recommendations. Strengthening the legal framework is a critical first step. Amending the Tobacco Control Act to explicitly include Suki within its regulatory scope would ensure that Suki adheres to the same advertising bans, labeling requirements, and health warning regulations as commercially manufactured cigarettes. Additionally, mandating standardized packaging for Suki would facilitate the inclusion of health warnings and information about nicotine content, empowering consumers to make informed choices. Enhancing enforcement mechanisms coupled with targeted public health campaigns are essential for raising awareness about the health risks associated with Suki use. Collaboration with various stakeholders is key to success. Building strong partnerships with civil society organizations dedicated to tobacco control can leverage their expertise in advocacy and community mobilization. Collaborating with regional and international public health agencies like the WHO would facilitate knowledge sharing, access to technical assistance, and potential funding opportunities for research and program implementation.

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# INTRODUCTION

Suki, air-dried tobacco leaves traditionally consumed in Fiji, occupies a unique space within the nation's social fabric. While some view it as a harmless cultural practice, others express concern about its health implications and unregulated market it occupies. This in-depth national report, commissioned by the Consumer Council of Fiji (CCoF), delves into the multifaceted ecosphere of Suki consumption. It aims to shed light on user patterns, motivations, potential public health concerns, and the complex interplay between culture, economics, and health behaviours.

Suki's origins intertwine with Fiji's colonial history. Its introduction in the 19th century can be traced back to Indian indentured labourers who brought tobacco plants and their consumption methods (Chandra, S., & Glover, M. 2019). Over time, Suki became integrated into Fijian social gatherings, particularly among men, for its perceived relaxing and socializing effects. However, the extent to which Suki carries genuine cultural significance or simply reflects adopted habits requires further investigation. This research will explore the potential reasons for Suki usage among Fijians, examining how cultural norms and traditions might influence consumption patterns.

Understanding the reasons behind Suki use is crucial for developing effective public health interventions. This research explores various factors that might influence Fijians to turn to Suki, including:

- **Cost:** Suki's affordability compared to commercially manufactured cigarettes is a significant driver, particularly for low-income demographics (Chandra, S., & Glover, M. 2019). The economic disparity between urban and rural communities in Fiji can further exacerbate this issue, making Suki a more accessible option for those in rural areas.
- **Accessibility:** The unregulated nature of the Suki market, with vendors often operating outside formal channels, might influence ease of access (Ford, C. S. 2019). This lack of regulation raises concerns about the quality and consistency of Suki products.
- **Social Pressures:** Peer pressure or a desire to conform to social norms within certain groups could be contributing factors, especially among younger generations. Social gatherings and cultural events might involve Suki use, creating a sense of pressure to participate.
- **Health Concerns:** Despite potential awareness of health risks associated with tobacco use, some consumers might underestimate the dangers of Suki compared to cigarettes (Ford, C. S. 2019). Misconceptions about Suki being a "natural" product or less harmful than commercially produced tobacco could contribute to this perception.

This research also explores potential changes in Suki consumption patterns across generations. While Suki use might have been more prevalent among older Fijian men traditionally, there are indications of a shift. Are younger generations, particularly women, adopting Suki use? If so, what are the motivations behind this trend? Understanding these generational differences is



crucial for designing targeted public health messaging and interventions.

Suki consumption carries health risks similar to cigarettes, including addiction, respiratory problems, and even oral cancer (Ford, C. S. 2019). However, the specific health effects of Suki in the Fijian context remain understudied. Limited research exists on the potential presence of additives or contaminants in unregulated Suki, making it difficult to assess the full spectrum of health risks. This research aims to contribute to a more complete understanding of the health consequences of Suki use by analysing data on user demographics, consumption patterns, and self-reported health experiences.

The prevalence of Suki use raises questions about its potential link to cigarette smoking. This research investigates whether some Fijians transition from cigarettes to Suki, and if so, the reasons behind this shift. Factors like cost, perceived health risks of cigarettes, and social pressures might play a role. Understanding these motivations can inform strategies to encourage Fijians towards a tobacco-free lifestyle altogether. Does transitioning to Suki represent a conscious effort to reduce harm, or is it simply a more accessible alternative?

Public awareness campaigns play a vital role in promoting informed decision-making regarding Suki use. This research will assess the current level of public knowledge about the health risks associated with Suki consumption in Fiji. Are Fijians aware of the potential health consequences, or are there misconceptions that need to be addressed?

Based on the research findings, relevant stakeholders can develop targeted educational campaigns that:

- Utilize culturally appropriate messaging to resonate with different Fijian communities;
- Emphasize the specific health risks associated with Suki use, drawing parallels to the dangers of cigarettes; and
- Promote smoke-free alternatives and healthy lifestyle choices.

This national report on Suki consumption patterns in Fiji sheds light on a complex issue with social, economic, and public health dimensions. By understanding the motivations behind Suki use, the health risks involved, and the unregulated market dynamics, the Consumer Council of Fiji is well-positioned to develop effective interventions.

This research is a vital first step towards promoting informed decision-making, empowering Fijians to make healthy choices, and ultimately creating a tobacco-free future for the nation. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term health effects of Suki use specific to the Fijian population and to monitor the effectiveness of any implemented interventions.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Tobacco use is increasingly becoming a stubborn public health concern in Fiji. It continues to cast a long shadow over the well-being of our citizens, impacting their health and productivity. This not only affects the lives of individuals and families but also places a significant burden on our healthcare system, diverting resources that could be used for other critical needs.

This report, examines the current landscape of tobacco control and the distinct challenge posed by Suki, contributes towards creating a tobacco-free future for Fiji. It is a call to action for all of us – government, healthcare professionals, civil society organizations, and every Fijian citizen.

The findings within this report paint a clear picture. While Fiji has made commendable strides through the ratification of the FCTC and the enactment of the Tobacco Control Act (2010), gaps remain. The ambiguity regarding regulations for Suki, limited enforcement capacity, and the lack of targeted public health campaigns specifically addressing Suki users hinder our progress.

This report outlines a comprehensive set of recommendations that, if implemented, will empower us to effectively address these challenges. Here's what we need to do:

- **Strengthen the Legal Framework:** We need to ensure the law clearly encompasses Suki, subjecting it to similar regulations as commercially manufactured cigarettes. This includes bans on advertising and promotion, mandatory health warnings, and potentially, regulations on nicotine content.
- **Bolster Enforcement Mechanisms:** Limited resources currently hinder enforcement efforts. We need to allocate additional resources to our enforcement agencies to ensure robust monitoring and inspection programs, ensuring compliance with the regulations.
- **Develop Impactful Public Health Campaigns:** Targeted public health campaigns specifically addressing Suki users are crucial. These campaigns should be culturally appropriate, utilize various media channels, and address the specific concerns and realities of Suki users. They should raise awareness about the health risks associated with Suki use and promote smoke-free alternatives.
- **Invest in Research:** Understanding the full spectrum of health consequences associated with Suki use is critical. Increased investment in research will provide valuable scientific evidence to inform policy decisions and public health interventions.

I am confident that by working together, we can create a tobacco-free Fiji. This report serves as a powerful tool, guiding our collective action towards a healthier future for all Fijians. Let us embrace this call to action and build a future where Fijians can breathe freely, live longer, healthier lives, and contribute to a more productive Fijian economy.

Sincerely,

**Seema Shandil**  
Chief Executive Officer



# MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER CAMPAIGNS INFORMATION AND MEDIA AND AFF PROJECT MANAGER



The Consumer Council of Fiji is deeply committed to raising awareness about the unique public health challenge Suki poses in Fiji. This report represents the culmination of dedicated research, data analysis, and collaboration with stakeholders.

The survey conducted for this report provided invaluable insights into Suki consumption patterns and user demographics. The findings highlight the critical need for targeted public health campaigns that address the specific concerns and realities of Suki users. While many users are aware of some health risks, the survey reveals a concerning underestimation of the potential harm caused by Suki consumption. Additionally, the economic factors driving the switch from cigarettes to Suki necessitate innovative solutions that address affordability concerns.

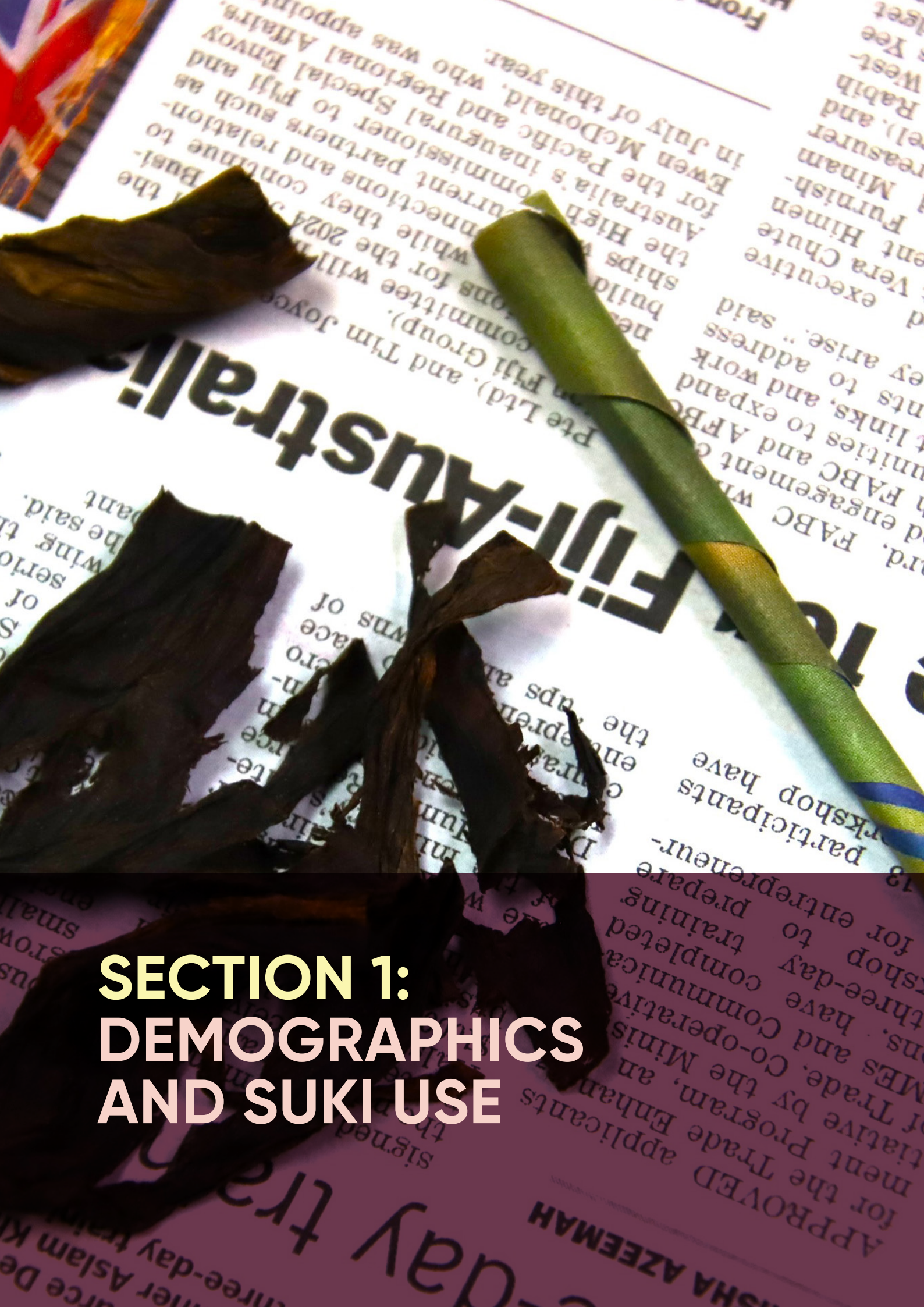
This report emphasizes the importance of culturally appropriate public health messaging. Utilizing various media channels, from radio and television to community outreach programs, is crucial. Partnering with respected community leaders will ensure the widespread dissemination of information about the health risks associated with Suki use. Empowering Fijians with knowledge is a critical first step towards behavior change and a tobacco-free future.

I am confident that the findings and recommendations presented in this report will equip policymakers, public health professionals, and community organizations with the necessary tools to effectively tackle the Suki challenge. Together, we can bridge the knowledge gap and empower Fijians to make informed choices about their health. This will pave the way for a healthier future for all Fijians.

Sincerely,

**Vinash Singh**

Manager Campaigns Information and Media and Project Manager

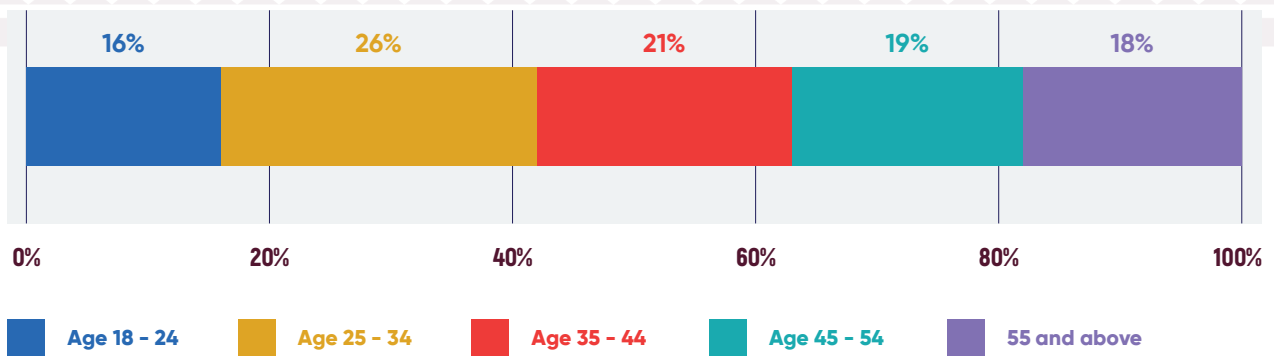


# SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHICS AND SUKI USE



This section delves into the demographic characteristics of Suki users in Fiji, exploring how age, gender, location, and socioeconomic status (SES) influence consumption patterns.

**Age:** The survey results show a significant gender disparity in Suki use, with 70% of respondents being male and 30% being female. To understand this further, a breakdown by age group is crucial:



The survey showed a varied age distribution among respondents. The largest proportion, 26%, fell within the 25 to 34 age range. Following closely behind were the 18- to 24-year-olds at 16%, and the 35- to 44-year-olds at 21%. The remaining respondents were more evenly spread, with 19% between 45 and 54 years old, and 18% above 55 years old.

## Understanding the Suki consumption habits of different age groups

- **18-24 years old:** This age group are particularly susceptible to peer pressure and social norms surrounding Suki use. Public health campaigns could target this group with messages highlighting the negative consequences of early Suki use and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.
- **25-34 years old:** This age group are more established in Suki use habits. Cessation programs tailored for young adults, addressing dependence and offering support mechanisms, could be beneficial.
- **35-44 years old and 45-54 years old:** These established Suki users have stronger dependence and potentially face challenges quitting due to ingrained habits. Public health initiatives could focus on the long-term health risks and offer support systems for those seeking to quit.
- **Above 55 years old:** This age group might have a long history of Suki use. Public health campaigns could target them with awareness messages about the health consequences of long-term Suki use and encourage them to seek medical advice if needed.

**Gender:** The higher prevalence of Suki use among males suggests a potential association with masculinity or social norms. Public health campaigns can challenge these norms by portraying positive images of men who choose not to use Suki and emphasizing the importance of health for oneself and family.

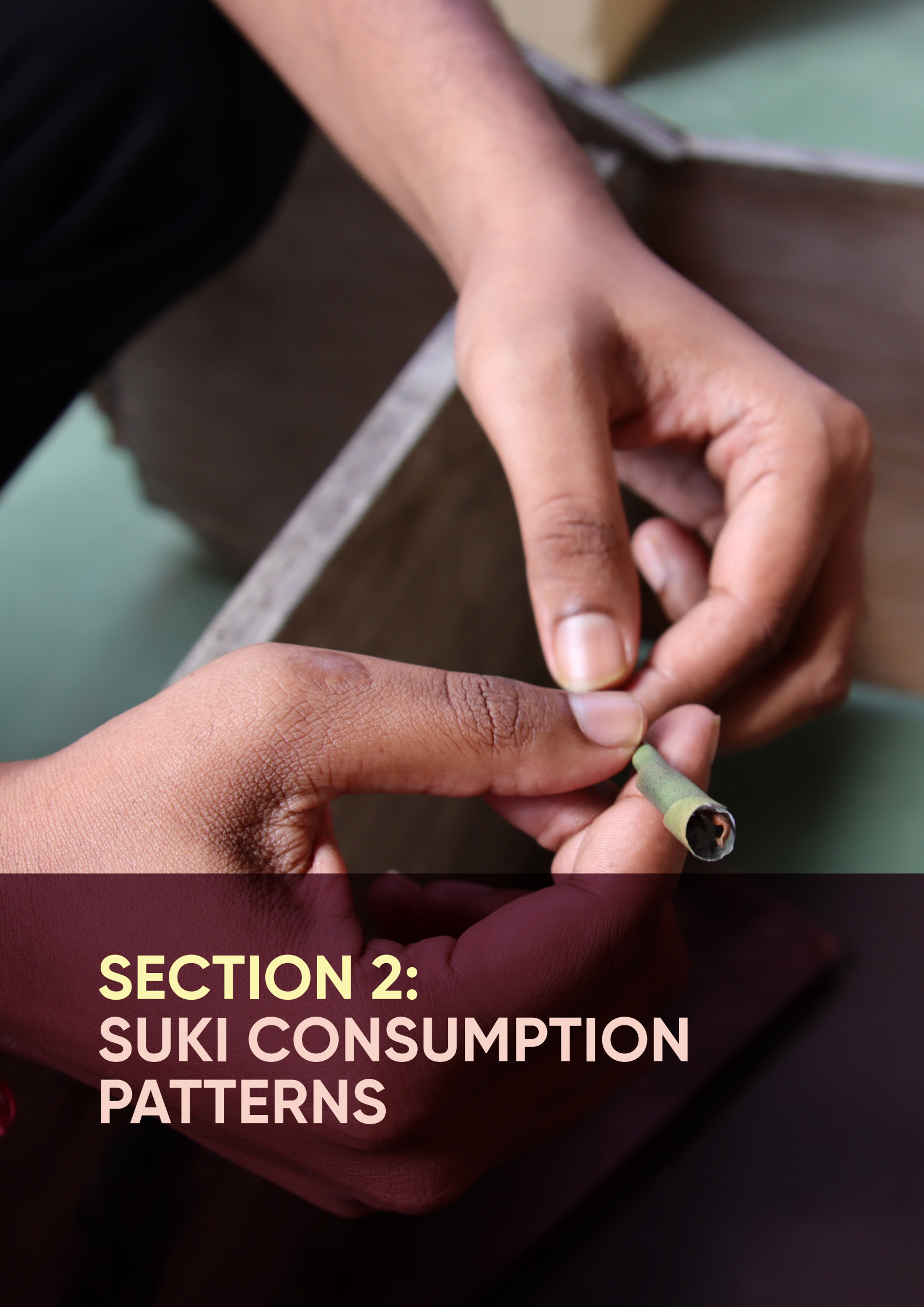
**Location (Urban vs. Rural):** The finding that 59% of respondents are from rural areas highlights the higher prevalence of Suki use in these communities. This could be due to:

- **Limited access to commercially manufactured cigarettes:** Rural areas have fewer shops selling cigarettes, which may also be more expensive, making Suki a more readily available alternative.
- **Stronger cultural influences:** Certain cultural practices or social gatherings in rural communities involve Suki use. Public health campaigns should be culturally sensitive and explore potential collaborations with community leaders to address Suki use within the cultural context.

**Socioeconomic Status (SES):** While the survey did not directly collect comprehensive income data, the cost being a major reason for starting Suki use (**60% of respondents indicated this**) suggests a potential link with lower SES. People with lower incomes might find Suki more affordable compared to commercially manufactured cigarettes. Public health strategies could consider:

- **Targeted economic interventions:** Exploring the feasibility of Suki taxation, with careful consideration for potential negative impacts on low-income communities, could be an option.
- **Providing affordable alternatives:** Offering support programs that provide access to affordable nicotine replacement therapies or other smoking cessation aids can be beneficial for those trying to quit Suki.

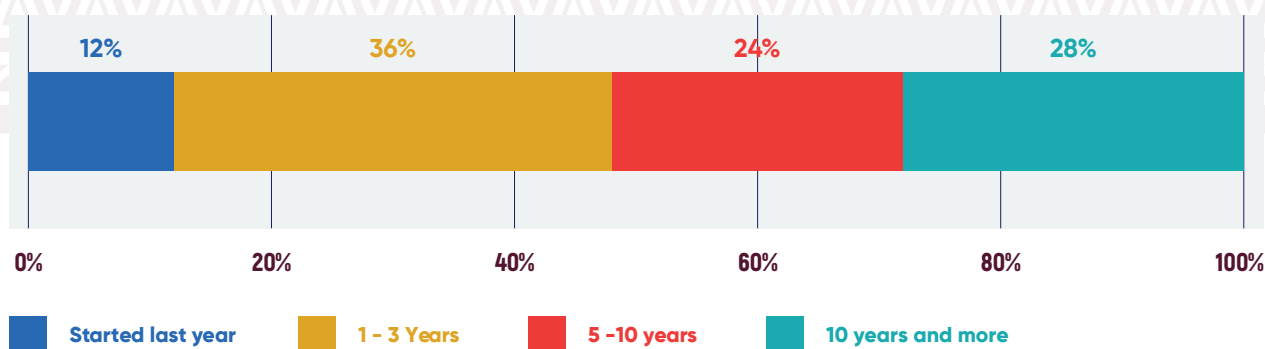
By understanding these demographic factors, public health interventions can be tailored to specific populations and have a more significant impact on reducing Suki consumption in Fiji.



**SECTION 2:**  
**SUKI CONSUMPTION**  
**PATTERNS**



This section dives deeper into the Suki consumption patterns identified in the survey, analysing the implications for public health interventions and highlighting areas for further exploration. The data on Suki consumption habits in Fiji reveals some interesting trends and potential reasons behind them.



- **Recent Uptake (12%):** A significant portion (12%) of respondents reported starting Suki use within the last year. This suggests a potential rise in Suki consumption, which requires further investigation.
- **Medium-Term Users (36%):** The largest group (36%) has been using Suki for 1 to 3 years. This could indicate several possibilities:
  - **Shift from Cigarettes:** As the report highlights, many Suki users are former cigarette smokers. This group represents individuals who transitioned to Suki in the past few years due to factors like affordability or perceived lower health risks (which needs to be addressed in public health campaigns).
  - **Experimentation:** This group represent those who recently experimented with Suki and are continuing use.
- **Established Users (60%):** A substantial proportion (60%) of respondents have been using Suki for at least 5 years (24% for 5-10 years and 28% for more than 10 years). This indicates a well-established pattern of Suki consumption in Fiji.

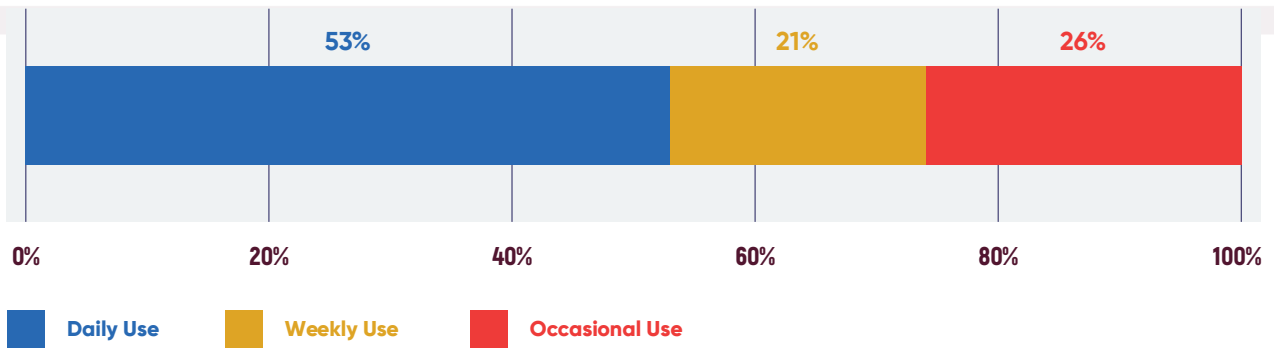
### Potential Reasons for Recent Uptake:

Several factors could be contributing to the recent rise in Suki use:

- **Economic Factors:** The report suggests Suki is cheaper than cigarettes. This economic advantage might be attracting new users, particularly high cost of living and challenging economic times.
- **Misconceptions about Health Risks:** A lack of awareness about the health risks associated with Suki use could be another factor.
- **Social Influences:** Results reveal that peer pressure, cultural influences such as social rewards/norms, media or role models' emulation are significant factors, particularly among younger users, thus steering them towards the consumption of Suki. Hence,

understanding these social influences is key to developing effective public health strategies to prevent smoking among young people, including education campaigns, stricter enforcement of age restrictions, and programs aimed at strengthening personal and social skills to resist peer pressure.

## Frequency and Duration of Use



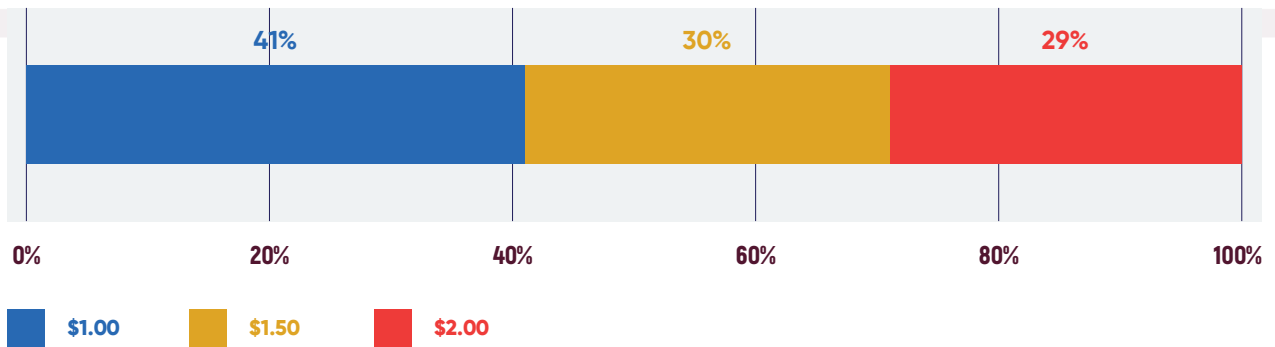
- **Daily Use (53%):** This high percentage indicates a concerning level of dependence among Suki users in Fiji. Daily use suggests a strong habit that can be challenging to overcome without proper support. Public health initiatives should prioritize promoting smoking cessation and provide readily accessible programs with relapse prevention strategies. These programs can offer guidance on managing cravings, coping mechanisms to avoid triggers, and social support networks to help individuals stay quit.
- **Long-Term Use (26% using Suki for over 10 years):** This finding suggests entrenched habits that might have developed over a significant period. Long-term Suki use increases the risk of developing severe health complications. Public health campaigns should target this group with messages emphasizing the long-term health consequences of Suki use, such as respiratory problems, heart disease, and even oral cancer. Additionally, cessation programs specifically designed for long-term users might be necessary. These programs could address the psychological and physiological dependence associated with long-term use and offer more intensive support structures.

### Methods of Consumption:

- **Smoking (63%):** This is the most prevalent method of Suki use. Similar to cigarette smoking, inhaling Suki smoke exposes users to harmful toxins and carcinogens that can damage the lungs and increase the risk of respiratory illnesses, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer. Public health messaging should highlight these dangers and emphasize the importance of quitting Suki altogether, regardless of the consumption method.

- Chewing (30%):** While some might perceive chewing Suki as less harmful than smoking, it is still a dangerous practice. Chewing tobacco can lead to nicotine addiction, gum disease, and oral cancer. Public health campaigns should dispel misconceptions about the safety of chewing Suki and educate the public about the associated health risks.

**Price of Suki and Affordability:**

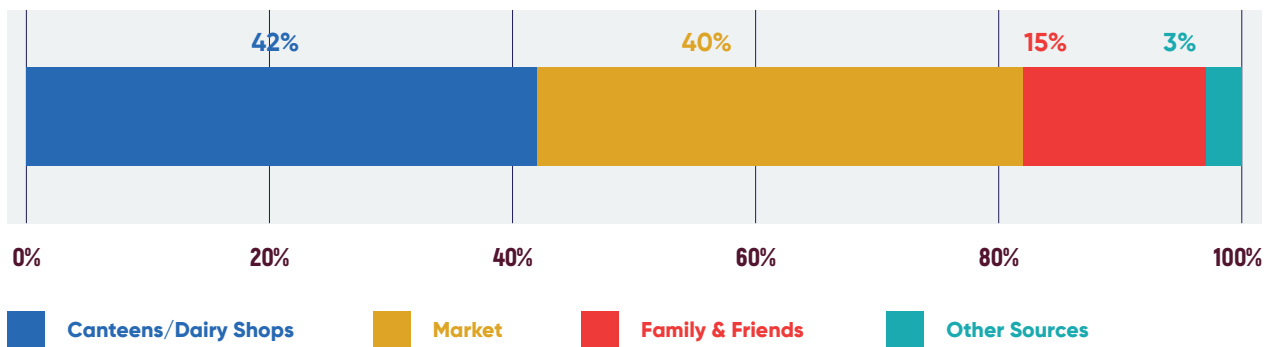


The survey revealed a clear price range for Suki purchases in Fiji. The majority of respondents (41%) reported buying Suki for \$1, making it the most common price point. A significant portion (30%) purchased Suki for \$1.50, indicating a presence of this price point as well. While less frequent, some respondents (29%) obtained Suki for \$2, suggesting a slightly higher-priced option also exists in the market. This data highlights the affordability of Suki, potentially contributing to its widespread use in Fiji.

**Analysis of Price Factor:**

The affordability of Suki compared to commercially manufactured cigarettes emerges as a significant driver of Suki use in Fiji. As highlighted in a previous report, a packet of cigarettes can cost seven times more than a Suki roll. This significant price difference makes Suki an attractive option, particularly for individuals or communities with limited financial resources.

**Source of Suki:**



- **Unregulated Market (Canteens, Dairy Shops, Markets - 82%):** The dominance of unregulated channels for obtaining Suki highlights a critical gap in tobacco control efforts in Fiji. This lack of regulation raises concerns about:
  - **Quality Control:** Suki sold through unregulated channels might not be subject to quality checks, potentially containing harmful additives or contaminants.
  - **Underage Access:** The easy availability in these settings increases the risk of underage Suki use, leading to potential addiction and long-term health problems.
- **Family/Friends (15%):** While this percentage is lower than those obtained from shops and markets, it suggests a potential social aspect to Suki use. Public health interventions might benefit from exploring the social norms surrounding Suki use within communities and developing strategies to address peer pressure and encourage social support for quitting Suki.

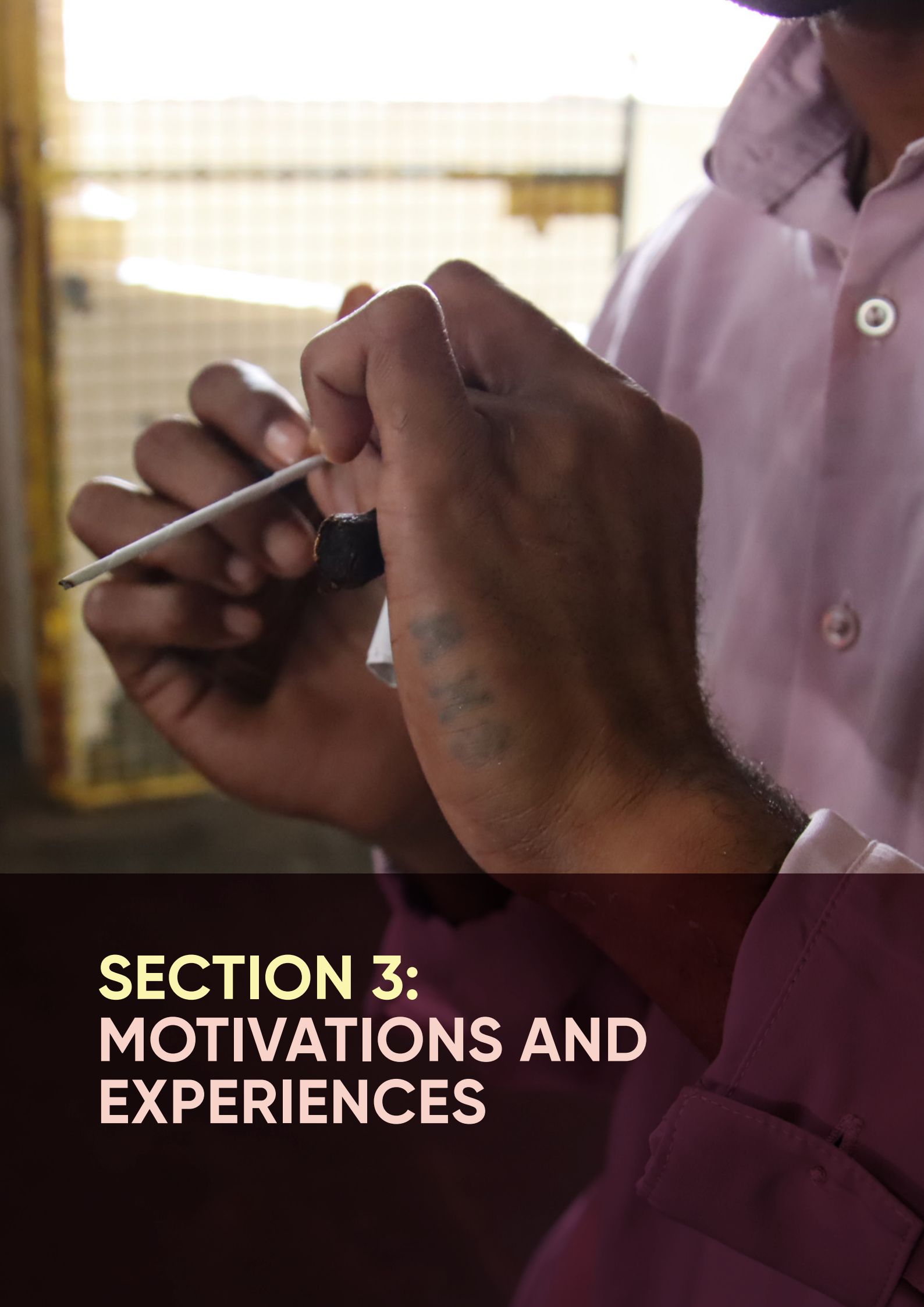
### Overall Implications:

The findings on Suki consumption patterns highlight the need for a multi-pronged approach to address this public health issue. Findings/Discussions suggest that Suki consumption will continue to rise, leading to various consequences that impact individual health, public health systems, and society as a whole. Some of the key areas that would be impacted:

- **Health Consequences** – Increased Suki consumption directly correlates with a rise in health issue and also affects non-smokers through exposure to second hand smoke, leading to similar health risks;
- **Economic Burden:** The healthcare costs associated with treating smoking-related diseases can be substantial. This includes direct medical costs and indirect costs such as lost productivity due to illness and premature death. Increased consumption can strain public health resources and increase health insurance premiums;
- **Social Impacts:** Suki consumption can affect the quality of life, not just for the smoker but also for their family and friends. It can lead to social isolation or tension within families, especially if non-smokers are adversely affected by secondhand smoke. In households with smokers, children are at higher risk of respiratory diseases and other health problems;
- **Workplace Productivity:** Increased consumption rates can lead to higher incidences of absenteeism and lower overall productivity due to Suki smoking-related health issues; and
- **Life Expectancy and Demographic Changes:** Higher smoking rates can lower overall life expectancy and alter demographic profiles, particularly by increasing mortality rates among middle-aged and older adults. This can have long-term effects on population dynamics and economic factors like pension systems and workforce composition.

Addressing the implications of increased cigarette consumption requires comprehensive efforts that include education, regulation, and support for cessation programs. These strategies not only will aim to reduce Suki smoking rates but also mitigate the broad societal and economic impacts of Suki use.



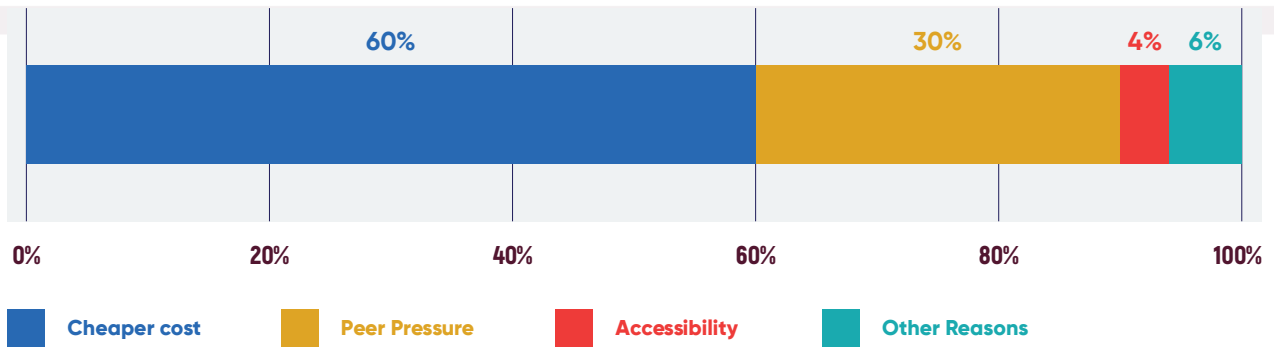


**SECTION 3:**  
**MOTIVATIONS AND**  
**EXPERIENCES**



Understanding the motivations and experiences behind Suki use is crucial for developing effective public health interventions and informing policy decisions. This section delves into the key findings from the survey and explores their implications for tackling this public health challenge.

## Cost as a Primary Driver



Cost emerged as the most significant reason for starting Suki use (60%). This finding highlights the economic factors influencing tobacco use in Fiji. Suki's perceived affordability compared to commercially manufactured cigarettes makes it a seemingly attractive option, particularly for individuals or communities with limited financial resources.

### Implications:

While the affordability of Suki compared to cigarettes is a major draw for users, it presents significant challenges for policy intervention:

- **Limited Policy Options:** Traditional tobacco control measures like taxation are difficult to apply to unregulated products like Suki. This limits the government's ability to directly increase the price of Suki and deter consumption through price discouragement.
- **Lost Government Revenue:** The shift from taxed cigarettes to untaxed Suki results in lost tax revenue for the Fijian government. This revenue could be used to fund vital public health initiatives, healthcare services, and social programs.
- **Potential for Increased Consumption:** The affordability of Suki leads to increased overall tobacco consumption, especially among low-income communities. This could negate any progress made in reducing tobacco use through cigarette control efforts.
- **Hidden Economic Burden:** While Suki appears cheaper upfront, the long-term health consequences associated with its use can lead to significant economic burdens for individuals and the healthcare system. This includes costs associated with:
  - **Increased healthcare utilization:** Suki use can lead to a range of health problems, requiring more frequent doctor visits, hospitalizations, and medication use.
  - **Lost productivity:** Tobacco-related illnesses can cause individuals to miss work or be less productive, impacting their income and overall economic well-being.

Beyond these economic implications, the affordability of Suki can also have broader social consequences:

- **Normalization of Tobacco Use:** The easy accessibility and perceived affordability of Suki makes tobacco use seem more acceptable, especially among younger generations. This could lead to a normalization of tobacco use and potentially increase overall tobacco use rates in the future.
- **Widening Health Disparities:** The affordability of Suki disproportionately impacts low-income communities. With limited resources for healthcare and cessation programs, these communities might be more susceptible to the long-term health consequences of Suki use.

### Beyond Cost: Exploring the Social Context

Peer pressure and cultural/social reasons contribute to Suki use for 30% of respondents. This finding indicates the influence of social norms and the potential role of Suki in certain social settings. This presents unique challenges and requires specific considerations: such as

- **Normalization of Suki Use:** Suki use is embedded in certain social gatherings and traditions in Fiji, making it seem like a normal or even expected behaviour. This can make it difficult for individuals, especially young people, to resist peer pressure or challenge social norms surrounding Suki use.
- **Limited Support Systems:** If quitting Suki goes against social norms, individuals struggling with dependence might have limited support systems within their social circles. This can make quitting more challenging and discourage individuals from seeking help.
- **Loss of Cultural Identity:** In some cases, Suki use is interwoven with cultural practices or traditions. Cessation efforts need to be sensitive to these cultural contexts and avoid alienating individuals by appearing disrespectful of their traditions.
- **Intergenerational Transmission:** The social acceptance of Suki use can lead to its intergenerational transmission. Children and young people exposed to Suki use in their social circles are more likely to initiate use themselves, perpetuating the cycle of dependence.

### The False Allure of Relaxation: Debunking Misconceptions

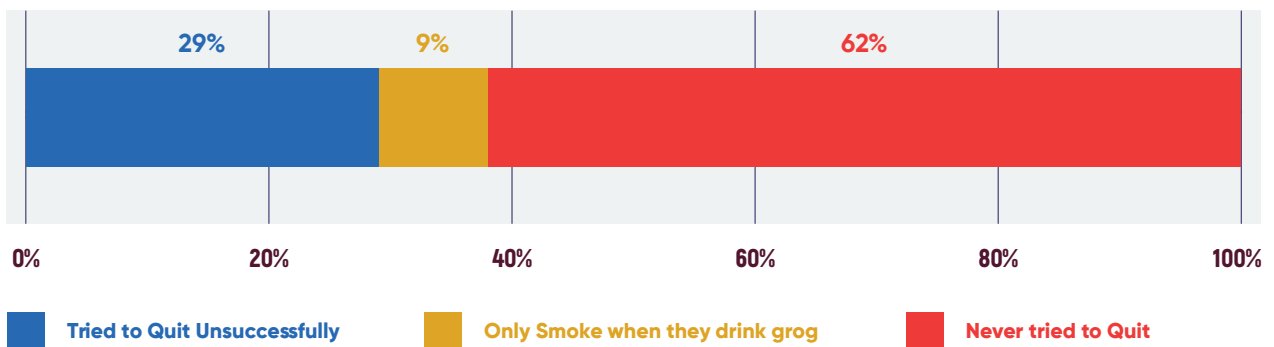
A significant portion of respondents (72%) reported feeling relaxed as a positive effect of Suki use. This perception highlights a lack of awareness about the true effects of Suki and the potential for dependence. Nicotine, the addictive component in Suki, does produce a temporary feeling of relaxation. However, this is followed by withdrawal symptoms when the nicotine wears off, triggering the urge to use Suki again.

### Implications:

The findings above have some important implications:

- **Delayed Gratification and Long-Term Risks:** The belief that Suki provides relaxation can overshadow the long-term health risks associated with its use. Users will prioritize the immediate feeling of relaxation over the potential for developing chronic health problems like respiratory illnesses, heart disease, and even cancer.
- **Increased Dependence:** The misconception about relaxation can fuel dependence. As the temporary "relaxation" effect wears off and withdrawal symptoms set in, users will crave Suki more frequently to achieve the same feeling, leading to a cycle of increased dependence.
- **Reduced Motivation to Quit:** As users believe Suki offers relaxation and stress relief, they will be less motivated to quit. Public health campaigns need to address this misconception and highlight alternative, healthier ways to manage stress and anxiety.
- **Missed Opportunities for Intervention:** Individuals will not seek help for quitting if they believe Suki is simply a relaxation tool. This can delay intervention and make quitting even more challenging.

### The Struggle to Quit: Breaking the Cycle of Dependence



Only 29% of respondents reported trying to quit Suki. This low percentage suggests a lack of awareness about the health risks associated with Suki use or the difficulty of quitting due to dependence.

### Implications:

- **Limited Awareness:** This finding suggests a lack of public awareness about the health risks associated with Suki use. Individuals might not understand the severity of the health consequences or the potential for long-term harm, leading them to underestimate the need to quit.

- **Underestimated Difficulty:** The low quit attempt rate also indicates an underestimation of the difficulty of quitting Suki due to its addictive nature. Users may not be aware of the withdrawal symptoms and cravings associated with nicotine dependence, making quitting seem easier than it is.
- **Lack of Support Systems:** The absence of strong support systems may also discourage individuals from even attempting to quit. This could be due to a lack of knowledge about available cessation programs or a social environment that doesn't support quitting.
- **Stigma Around Addiction:** Stigma surrounding addiction can prevent individuals from seeking help or acknowledging their dependence. This can be a significant barrier to quitting Suki and accessing appropriate support.

### **Additional Considerations:**

- **Understanding the Gender Gap:** Further research is needed to explore the gender disparity in Suki use. Tailoring public health messages and cessation programs to address the specific needs and motivations of both men and women is crucial.
- **Mental Health and Addiction:** Exploring the potential link between Suki use and mental health concerns like stress or anxiety requires further investigation. Cessation programs can benefit from incorporating strategies to address underlying mental health issues that might contribute to Suki dependence.

By delving into the motivations and experiences of Suki users in Fiji, this section sheds light on the complex interplay of economic factors, social norms, and misconceptions about the effects of Suki. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that combines public health awareness campaigns, culturally sensitive cessation programs, and potentially, economic interventions carefully designed to minimize negative impacts on low-income communities. Only through a multi-pronged approach can Fiji effectively combat Suki use and empower its citizens to make informed choices for a tobacco-free future.



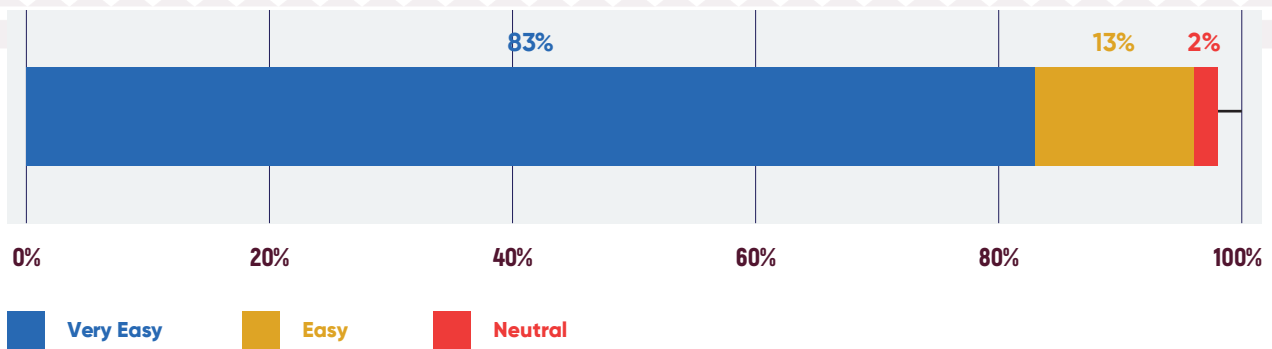


**SECTION 4:**  
**ACCESS, PRICE AND**  
**PERCEPTIONS**



This section explores the survey findings on access, affordability, and perceptions surrounding Suki use in Fiji. These factors form the bedrock of Suki's prevalence and require a nuanced understanding to develop effective public health interventions. Here, we will explore each aspect in detail, examining the implications, reasons, and potential solutions.

### The Looming Shadow of Easy Access: A Barrier to Quitting



The survey results paint a concerning picture: a staggering 83% of respondents reported finding it very easy to obtain Suki. This ease of access stems from the unregulated nature of the Suki market. Suki is readily available in canteens, dairy shops, and markets, creating a constant presence in Fijian communities. This ubiquity poses a significant challenge for those trying to quit Suki. Every corner store, every social gathering, becomes a potential trigger, making it difficult to resist temptation and maintain cessation efforts.

#### Implications:

The survey finding that 83% of respondents reported very easy access to Suki presents a significant barrier to quitting and requires a multifaceted approach:

- **Increased Relapse Rates:** The ease of obtaining Suki makes it highly likely for individuals to encounter triggers during their quit attempts. This constant exposure can lead to cravings and increase the risk of relapse, hindering long-term success in quitting.
- **Reduced Motivation:** Knowing Suki is readily available will discourage some individuals from even attempting to quit. The perception that quitting will be extremely difficult due to constant temptation can lead to feelings of helplessness and a lack of motivation to initiate cessation efforts.
- **Challenges for Support Systems:** The easy availability of Suki can make it difficult for support systems like families and friends to effectively help individuals quit. The constant presence of temptation can undermine their efforts to encourage and support quitting behaviour.
- **Limited Environmental Control Strategies:** Traditional cessation strategies that emphasize avoiding triggers and maintaining a smoke-free environment become less effective when Suki is so readily available. This necessitates exploring alternative strategies for managing triggers in a Suki-saturated environment.

## Comparing Cigarette and Suki Costs as Socioeconomic Drivers

The survey reveals that 89% of respondents perceive Suki as affordable compared to commercially manufactured cigarettes. This affordability is a significant driver of Suki use as highlighted in Section 3, particularly for individuals and communities with limited financial resources. Cigarettes can cost up to seven times more than a Suki roll, making Suki a seemingly attractive option for those struggling to make ends meet.

### Implications:

- **Increased Suki Consumption:** The perceived affordability of Suki compared to cigarettes could lead to a shift in consumption patterns, potentially increasing the overall number of tobacco users. This could negate progress made in reducing tobacco use through cigarette control efforts.
- **Economic Disparities:** The affordability of Suki might disproportionately impact low-income communities. With limited resources for healthcare and cessation programs, these communities might be more likely to turn to Suki due to its lower cost, leading to increased health risks in these populations.
- **Focus on Cost-Effectiveness:** Public health messages emphasizing the long-term health costs associated with Suki use might resonate less with individuals struggling financially. These messages might need to be tailored to address the immediate financial needs and challenges faced by low-income communities.

### The Power of Perception: Addressing Misconceptions and Shaping Attitudes

Beyond affordability and accessibility, perceptions surrounding Suki use also play a significant role. In terms of perception and misconceptions, further research is needed to explore:

- **Perceived Benefits:** Understanding the perceived benefits people associate with Suki use can help tailor public health messages to address those misconceptions. For example, some might believe Suki offers relaxation or social connection. Public health campaigns can debunk these myths and highlight the negative health consequences.
- **Social Norms:** Exploring the social norms surrounding Suki use within communities is another crucial aspect which can be explored further.

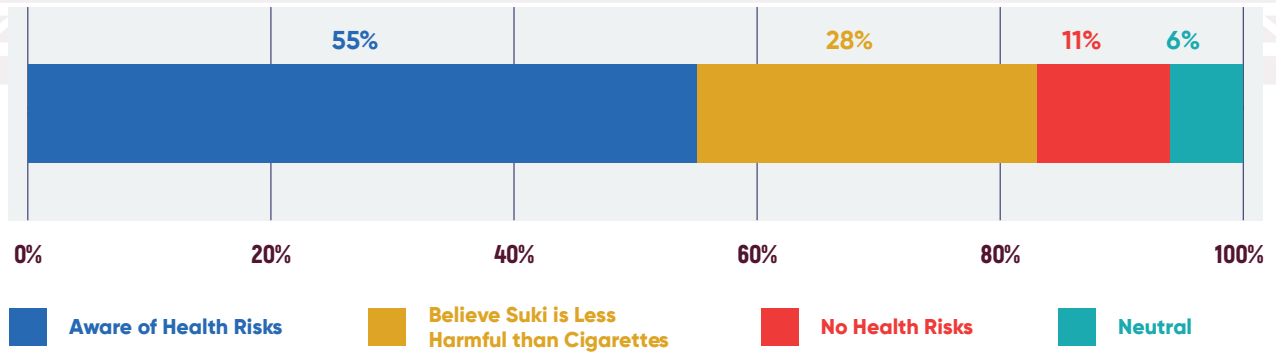
By delving into the issues of access, affordability, and perceptions, this section sheds light on the complex interplay of factors driving Suki use in Fiji. A multi-pronged approach is required to address this public health challenge. This includes strengthening regulations, developing accessible cessation programs, promoting culturally appropriate alternatives, and implementing effective communication strategies. By empowering Fijians with knowledge and support, we can create a healthier future where Suki use becomes a relic of the past.



**SECTION 5:**  
**HEALTH AWARENESS**  
**AND CONCERNS**  
**SURROUNDING SUKI USE**

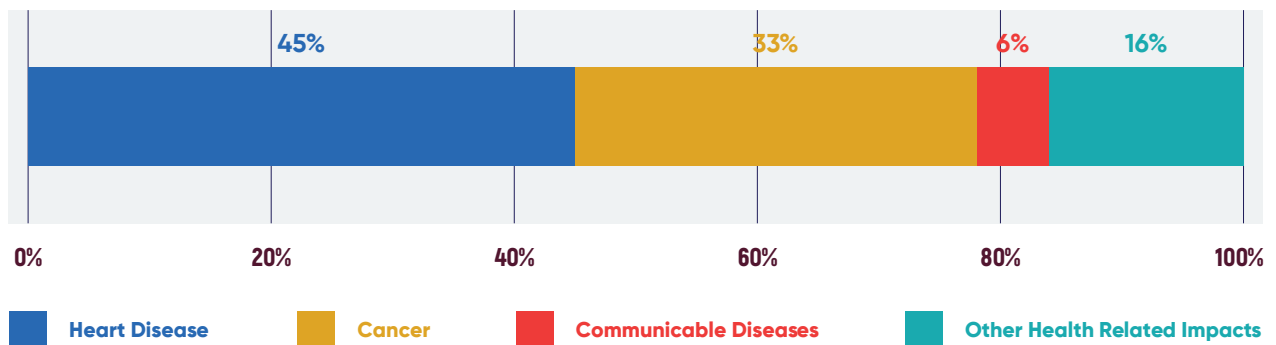
This section delves into the survey findings on health awareness and concerns surrounding Suki use in Fiji. Understanding the knowledge gaps and misconceptions held by the public is crucial for developing effective public health campaigns that promote informed choices.

### A Cause for Concern: Limited Awareness of Health Risks



A significant finding of the survey is that only 55% of respondents were aware of the health risks associated with Suki consumption. Furthermore, 28% of the respondents believed that Suki has a lower health risk compared to cigarettes. This highlights a concerning knowledge gap among the Fijian population. Many people who use Suki are unaware of the potential dangers they are exposing themselves to, creating a barrier to quitting and jeopardizing their long-term health.

### Expanding Knowledge of Health Impacts



The survey also revealed a gap in knowledge about the full spectrum of health consequences associated with Suki use. While a significant portion (45%) identified heart disease as a potential health risk, awareness about other health problems was lower:

- **Cancer (33%):** Public health campaigns need to emphasize the risk of not just lung cancer (like with cigarettes) but also oral cancer associated with Suki use.
- **Communicable Diseases (6%):** Educating the public about the potential for sharing Suki pipes or rolls to increase the risk of transmitting infectious diseases like tuberculosis is important.

### Implications:

- **Delayed Health Seeking Behaviour:** Unawareness of health risks can lead to delayed diagnosis and treatment of Suki-related illnesses. Individuals may not recognize symptoms or attribute them to other causes, delaying crucial medical intervention.
- **Delayed Quitting efforts** If individuals are unaware of the potential consequences of using Suki, they are unlikely to quit. This delay can increase the time her body is exposed to harmful toxins, thereby increasing the risk of developing smoking-related diseases.
- **Increased Vulnerability to Addiction:** Individuals who do not recognize the addictive qualities of cigarettes may not realize how challenging quitting can be. As a result, they might lack the motivation to seek help or support, such as counselling, nicotine replacement therapies, or smoking cessation programs. This can lead to under preparation for withdrawal symptoms and cravings, potentially increasing the risk of relapse.
- **Missed Opportunities for Early Intervention:** Limited awareness about health risks can lead to missed opportunities for early intervention and preventive measures. This delay can lead to more advanced stages of diseases being diagnosed, which are often more difficult to treat.





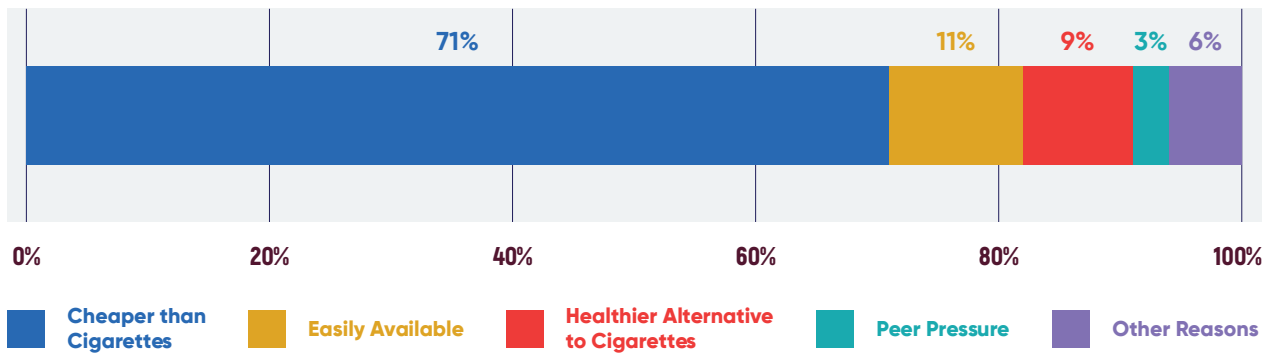
**SECTION 6:**  
**TRANSITION FROM**  
**CIGARETTES TO SUKI**

This section delves into the survey findings on the transition from cigarette smoking to Suki use in Fiji. Understanding the motivations behind this shift is crucial for developing effective public health interventions that address the root causes of tobacco dependence.

### A High Prevalence of Cigarette Use: Setting the Stage for Transition

A staggering 98% of respondents reported having smoked cigarettes previously or are current smokers. This high prevalence of cigarette use indicates a significant population segment susceptible to transitioning to Suki. The survey findings suggest that Suki use might not necessarily represent a new habit for many Fijians, but rather a substitute for commercially manufactured cigarettes.

### The Allure of Affordability: A Driving Force for Change



When asked about the reasons for transitioning from cigarettes to Suki, cost emerged as the primary factor (71%). This finding aligns with data from Section 2, where Suki was perceived as significantly more affordable compared to cigarettes. For individuals or communities facing financial constraints, the price difference between Suki and cigarettes creates a strong incentive to switch.

### Beyond Cost: Exploring Additional Motivations

While cost was the dominant factor, other reasons for transitioning to Suki were also reported:

- **Easy Availability (11%):** As highlighted in Section 4, the unregulated nature of the Suki market makes it readily available throughout Fiji. This easy access can be a contributing factor for those seeking a cheaper alternative to cigarettes.
- **Misconceptions About Health (9%):** This finding connects to Section 5, where a portion of respondents believed Suki to be a healthier option. This misconception can influence the decision to switch from cigarettes, even though Suki poses significant health risks.
- **Peer Pressure (3%) and Other Reasons (6%):** These factors suggest that social influences and individual motivations also play a role in the transition from cigarettes to Suki. Further

research might be needed to understand the specific social dynamics and personal reasons that contribute to this shift.

### Connecting the Dots: Implications for Public Health

The findings in this section, when viewed alongside data from other sections, paint a clear picture regarding Suki consumption and behavioural pattern in Fiji. Here's a breakdown of the connections of key findings:

- **Affordability Concerns (Section 2 & 6):** The significant price difference between Suki and cigarettes incentivizes people to switch, particularly those with limited financial resources. Public health interventions need to address this economic disparity.
- **Easy Availability (Section 4 & 6):** The unregulated market makes Suki readily available, posing a challenge for those trying to quit and creating a constant temptation. Strengthening regulations, as discussed in Section 4, is crucial to limit access and create a more supportive environment for quitting.
- **Misconceptions About Health (Section 5 & 6):** The belief that Suki is a healthier alternative is a significant public health concern. Public health campaigns need to emphasize the dangers of all forms of tobacco use, highlighting the potential for addiction, respiratory problems, and various cancers associated with both cigarettes and Suki.

## A Multi-Pronged Approach for a Tobacco-Free Future

By addressing the economic factors driving the transition from cigarettes to Suki, coupled with efforts to dispel misconceptions and make cessation programs more accessible, public health interventions can empower Fijians to make informed choices about their health. Furthermore, strengthening regulations to control the Suki market can create a more supportive environment for those seeking to quit all forms of tobacco.

In conclusion, this section on the transition from cigarettes to Suki underscores the complexity of the issue. Public health strategies need to be multifaceted, addressing affordability, availability, and misconceptions to achieve a tobacco-free future for Fiji. By implementing a comprehensive approach, we can empower Fijians to break free from the grip of tobacco dependence and embrace a healthier lifestyle.





**SECTION 7:**  
**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**  
**OF FIJI'S TOBACCO**  
**CONTROL LEGISLATION:**  
**GAPS, CHALLENGES,**  
**AND OPPORTUNITIES**



This comprehensive analysis delves into Fiji's Tobacco Control Act (2010) and its effectiveness in addressing tobacco use, particularly Suki, in light of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and its protocols. This section dissects the existing legal framework, identifies critical gaps and ambiguities, and explores opportunities for strengthening tobacco control legislation in Fiji. This analysis will be enriched by incorporating insights from relevant literature and best practices from other countries.

## 1. Historical Context and the FCTC Framework: A Commitment to Tobacco Control

Fiji's commitment to curbing tobacco use is evident by its ratification of the FCTC in 2003. This landmark treaty established a comprehensive framework for tobacco control policies, emphasizing both demand reduction strategies (e.g., price and non-price measures) and supply reduction measures (e.g., tackling illicit trade). The FCTC recognizes the global nature of the tobacco epidemic and the need for coordinated international action.

Fiji's Tobacco Control Act (2010) draws inspiration from the FCTC and incorporates many of its provisions. This demonstrates Fiji's commitment to aligning its domestic legislation with international best practices. Furthermore, Fiji's accession to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products in 2012 underscores its intent to address the entire spectrum of tobacco control challenges, including the threat posed by illicit markets.

## 2. Key Measures for Tobacco Control: Striking a Balance

The FCTC outlines two key categories of tobacco control measures:

- **Price Measures:** These measures aim to discourage tobacco consumption by increasing costs through taxes, registration fees, licensing fees, and import duties. Higher prices can make tobacco products less affordable, particularly for price-sensitive demographics like low-income communities and youth.
- **Non-Price Measures:** These measures focus on influencing behaviour through regulations on product content, disclosures, packaging and labelling, public awareness campaigns, restrictions on advertising and promotion, and support for smoking cessation programs. Effective non-price measures can raise awareness about the health risks of tobacco use, denormalize smoking behaviour, and encourage smokers to quit.

Finding the right balance between price and non-price measures is crucial. Excessive regulations and taxation can inadvertently create black markets, as evidenced by the case of Malaysia, where high tobacco taxes fuelled a thriving illicit cigarette trade. A 2020 report by Euromonitor International highlights how excessive regulation can disrupt legitimate supply chains, pushing consumers towards cheaper, often counterfeit, cigarettes from the black market. This not only undermines public health goals but also deprives governments of tax revenue.

### 3. A Deep Dive into the Tobacco Control Act: Strengths, Weaknesses, and Implementation Challenges

#### Strengths:

- **Comprehensive Scope:** The Act covers various aspects of tobacco control, including:
  - Bans on advertising and promotion of tobacco products, protecting Fijians from the manipulative marketing tactics of the tobacco industry.
  - Requirements for health warnings on tobacco packaging, informing consumers about the health risks associated with tobacco use.
- Restrictions on the sale of tobacco products to minors, preventing youth initiation into tobacco use.
- **Acknowledgement of Suki:** The Act acknowledges Suki as a distinct tobacco product with separate licensing requirements for vendors. This is a positive step towards regulating the Suki market and potentially raising awareness about its health risks.

#### Weaknesses:

- **Ambiguity Regarding Suki Regulations:** Despite separate definitions, the Act lacks clarity on whether provisions related to advertising bans, labelling requirements, and health warnings for cigarettes also apply to Suki. This ambiguity creates a loophole that the Suki industry can exploit, hindering public health efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of Suki use.
- **Limited Regulation of E-cigarettes:** The Act does not effectively address the marketing of e-cigarettes, particularly on social media platforms. The rapid rise of e-cigarettes, especially among young people, necessitates comprehensive regulations to prevent their normalization and potential health risks.
- **Unregulated Nicotine Content in Suki:** The Act mandates regulations for tar and nicotine content in tobacco products, but Suki, often sold unpackaged, falls outside this regulatory scope. This lack of regulation makes it difficult to inform consumers about the nicotine content of Suki and its potential for addiction.
- **Weak Enforcement of Existing Provisions:** Loose enforcement of restrictions on selling loose cigarettes and the lack of licensing compliance among Suki vendors weaken the effectiveness of the Act. Inadequate enforcement creates an uneven playing field and undermines public trust in the regulatory system.
- **Limited Scope of Chewing Tobacco Ban:** The Act prohibits selling chewing tobacco, but doesn't address other potential forms of tobacco use like betel quid, which can contain tobacco and pose health risks. A broader definition of prohibited tobacco products is necessary to encompass all forms of tobacco

### 4. Gaps and Opportunities for Improvement

Based on the identified strengths, weaknesses, and implementation challenges of the Tobacco Control Act, several key areas for improvement emerge:

### Addressing Ambiguity Regarding Suki Regulations:

- **Legislative Amendments:** Amend the Act to explicitly apply relevant provisions like advertising bans, labelling requirements, and health warnings to Suki. This will create a level playing field with cigarettes and raise awareness about the health risks associated with Suki use.
- **Standardizing Suki Packaging:** Introduce regulations mandating standardized packaging for Suki. This will facilitate the inclusion of health warnings and information about nicotine content, similar to regulations for commercially manufactured cigarettes. Standardized packaging can also make Suki less appealing, particularly to young people.

### Strengthening Regulations for E-cigarettes:

- **Ban on Online Advertising:** Develop and implement a comprehensive ban on online advertising and promotion of e-cigarettes, including social media platforms. This will restrict the reach of e-cigarette marketing campaigns and protect vulnerable populations like youth from targeted advertising.
- **Age Verification for Online Sales:** Introduce regulations requiring age verification for online sales of e-cigarettes. This will prevent minors from accessing these products and minimize the potential for youth initiation into e-cigarette use.
- **Licensing and Taxation of E-cigarettes:** Explore the feasibility of licensing and taxing e-cigarettes to generate revenue that can be used to fund public health initiatives focused on tobacco control and smoking cessation programs.

### Enhancing Enforcement Mechanisms:

- **Increased Resources for Enforcement Agencies:** Allocate additional resources to enforcement agencies, such as increased manpower and training, to effectively enforce existing regulations on loose cigarette sales, Suki vendor licensing, and adherence to tar and nicotine content standards.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns on Enforcement:** Develop public awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of enforcing tobacco control regulations and encourage citizens to report violations. This can foster a culture of compliance and strengthen the effectiveness of enforcement efforts.
- **Expanding the Scope of Tobacco Control:**
- **Broadening the Definition of Prohibited Tobacco Products:** The Act should be amended to encompass a broader definition of prohibited tobacco products, including all forms of chewing tobacco and betel quid containing tobacco. This will ensure comprehensive coverage of all potential sources of tobacco exposure and addiction.
- **Taxation Strategies for Suki:** Explore the potential of targeted tax structures on Suki. This could involve a tiered tax system that considers the price difference between Suki and cigarettes while minimizing the impact on low-income communities. Revenue generated from Suki taxes could be directed towards public health initiatives and smoking cessation programs.

## 5. Public Health Campaigns and Behaviour Change Strategies:

The effectiveness of tobacco control legislation hinges on its synergy with robust public health campaigns. These campaigns should be:

- **Tailored to Specific Audiences:** Develop targeted public health campaigns that address the specific risks associated with Suki use, alongside campaigns promoting awareness about the dangers of all tobacco products. These campaigns should be culturally appropriate and utilize effective communication channels to reach diverse populations.
- **Promoting Smoke-Free Alternatives:** Promote smoke-free alternatives like nicotine replacement therapies and cessation counselling services. This can provide smokers with the resources and support they need to quit tobacco uses altogether.
- **Leveraging Mass Media and Community Outreach:** Utilize mass media platforms like television, radio, and social media to disseminate public health messages. Complement these efforts with community outreach programs that engage local stakeholders and community leaders in tobacco control advocacy.

## 6. Drawing from Literature and Best Practices: Global Insights

To strengthen Fiji's tobacco control efforts, valuable insights can be gleaned from relevant literature and best practices implemented in other countries:

- **WHO FCTC Implementation Guidelines:** The World Health Organization provides comprehensive implementation guidelines for various tobacco control measures outlined in the FCTC. These guidelines offer practical advice on areas like legislative amendments, enforcement strategies, and public health campaign development.
- **Studies on Suki's Health Effects:** Research on the specific health consequences of Suki use is crucial. Understanding the full spectrum of health risks associated with Suki can inform the development of targeted public health messaging and advocacy efforts.
- **Case Studies from Other Countries:** Examining successful tobacco control strategies implemented in other countries with similar cultural contexts can provide valuable lessons for Fiji. Countries like Bhutan, which has implemented a comprehensive ban on the sale and production of all tobacco products, offer compelling case studies for potential adaptation in the Fijian context.

Fiji's Tobacco Control Act provides a solid foundation for addressing tobacco use; however, there is room for significant improvement. By addressing the identified gaps and ambiguities in the legislation, strengthening enforcement mechanisms, and implementing targeted public health campaigns, Fiji can achieve significant progress towards a tobacco-free future.





**SECTION 8:**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**FOR ADDRESSING THE**  
**SUKI CHALLENGE IN FIJI**

Fiji has made strides towards tobacco control through its Tobacco Control Act (2010). However, the Act's ambiguity regarding Suki regulations creates a loophole that hinders efforts to address this distinct tobacco product. This section presents a comprehensive set of recommendations informed by the preceding sections' analysis. These recommendations aim to strengthen the legal framework, enhance enforcement mechanisms, promote behaviour change through public health campaigns, and bolster knowledge through research and collaboration. By implementing these multifaceted strategies, Fiji can effectively tackle the Suki challenge and create a tobacco-free environment for its citizens.

## 1. Legislative and Regulatory Framework:

- **Clarity on Suki Regulations:** Amend the Tobacco Control Act to explicitly include Suki within its regulatory scope. This ensures Suki adheres to the same advertising bans, labelling requirements, and health warning regulations as commercially manufactured cigarettes. However, this will require additional feasibility study and there is also a need to ensure that it does not negatively affect local producers.
  - Rationale: Explicit inclusion eliminates ambiguity and ensures Suki is not exempt from crucial public health measures that have proven effective in reducing tobacco use.
  - Implementation: Collaborate with legal experts and tobacco control advocates to draft amendments that clearly define Suki and incorporate it within the Act's regulatory framework.
- **Standardized Suki Packaging:** Mandate standardized packaging for Suki. This allows for the inclusion of health warnings and information about nicotine content, similar to cigarette packaging. Standardized packaging can also make Suki less appealing, particularly to youth.
  - Rationale: Standardized packaging reduces the influence of branding and marketing tactics that can glamorize Suki use. Additionally, information about nicotine content empowers consumers to make informed choices about the potential addictiveness of different Suki varieties.
  - Implementation: Develop regulations outlining packaging specifications, including size, color restrictions, and prominent placement of health warnings. Partner with the packaging industry to ensure compliance and explore cost-effective solutions for Suki vendors.
- **Regulation of Nicotine Content:** Establish regulations for the maximum permissible nicotine content in Suki. This empowers consumers to make informed choices about the potential addictiveness of different Suki varieties.
  - Rationale: Setting limits on nicotine content can potentially reduce the dependence-forming potential of Suki and discourage heavier use.
  - Implementation: Conduct research to determine appropriate nicotine level thresholds and collaborate with public health experts to establish science-based regulations. Develop testing mechanisms to ensure compliance from Suki producers and distributors.

## 2. Enforcement Mechanisms:

- **Enhanced Enforcement Capacity:** Allocate additional resources to enforcement agencies. This includes increasing manpower, training enforcement personnel on Suki-specific regulations, and developing robust monitoring and inspection programs.
  - Rationale: Increased enforcement capacity ensures effective implementation of regulations. Well-trained enforcement personnel can identify and address violations related to Suki advertising, packaging, and vendor licensing.
  - Implementation: Conduct training programs for enforcement officers to equip them with the knowledge and skills to identify Suki-related violations. Increase manpower by allocating additional personnel to focus on Suki enforcement. Utilize technology for efficient monitoring, such as establishing hotlines for reporting violations.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns on Enforcement:** Launch public awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of reporting Suki vendors operating outside the legal framework. Encourage citizens to report unlicensed vendors and non-compliant packaging practices.
  - Rationale: Public awareness campaigns can empower citizens to become active participants in tobacco control efforts. By encouraging reporting of violations, these campaigns can create a climate of accountability and deter non-compliance.
  - Implementation: Develop public awareness campaigns utilizing various media channels like television, radio, and social media. Partner with community leaders and influencers to spread the message and encourage reporting through hotlines or designated channels.

## 3. Public Health Campaigns and Behaviour Change:

- **Targeted Suki Messaging:** Develop culturally appropriate public health campaigns specifically focused on the health risks associated with Suki use. These campaigns should address the potential for addiction, respiratory problems, and oral cancers linked to Suki consumption.
  - Rationale: Targeted messaging resonates more effectively with specific audiences. Campaigns should address the misconceptions surrounding Suki's perceived safety and highlight the long-term health consequences of its use.
  - Implementation: Conduct focus groups and research to understand Fijian communities' perceptions of Suki. Develop culturally sensitive messages in local languages that resonate with different demographic groups, particularly youth. Utilize a mix of emotional appeals, testimonials from former Suki users, and statistics on Suki-related health risks.
- **Promoting Cessation Support:** Expand access to smoking cessation programs and nicotine replacement therapies. This provides Suki users with the necessary resources to quit and transition towards a tobacco-free lifestyle.
  - Rationale: Cessation support programs offer crucial assistance to individuals seeking to quit Suki use. These programs can provide counseling, medication, and support



- groups to help manage withdrawal symptoms and increase long-term quit rates.
- **Implementation:** Partner with healthcare institutions and NGOs to expand existing smoking cessation programs and make them readily accessible to Suki users. Train healthcare professionals on Suki-specific cessation strategies. Explore the feasibility of offering culturally appropriate quitline services.
- **Community Engagement:** Partner with community leaders, faith-based organizations, and local schools to organize Suki awareness workshops and educational programs. This grassroots approach can foster community dialogue and encourage social disapproval of Suki use.
  - **Rationale:** Community engagement strategies create a sense of ownership and empower local communities to take action against Suki use. Educational programs can raise awareness about the health risks of Suki, particularly among youth, and encourage social norms that discourage its use.
  - **Implementation:** Partner with local stakeholders to develop age-appropriate educational materials and workshops. Train community leaders to deliver Suki awareness sessions within their communities. Organize school-based programs to educate students about the dangers of Suki and promote healthy lifestyle choices.

## 4. Research and Knowledge Building:

- **Invest in Suki Research:** Commission research studies to investigate the specific health consequences of Suki use. This research can inform the development of targeted public health messaging and advocacy efforts.
  - **Rationale:** Research on the specific health effects of Suki can provide crucial scientific evidence to support policy decisions and public health interventions. Understanding the long-term health risks associated with Suki use strengthens arguments for stricter regulations and targeted public health campaigns.
  - **Implementation:** Partner with research institutions and public health organizations to conduct studies on the health impacts of Suki. Explore funding opportunities from international agencies dedicated to tobacco control research.
- **Monitor Suki Use Trends:** Regularly monitor trends in Suki use, particularly among youth populations. Data-driven insights are crucial for tailoring public health interventions and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented strategies.
  - **Rationale:** Monitoring Suki use trends allows for the identification of emerging patterns and potential risk groups. This data can inform the allocation of resources and guide the development of targeted public health campaigns.
  - **Implementation:** Establish a national tobacco control surveillance system to collect data on Suki use prevalence, demographics of users, and trends over time. Utilize data from household surveys, school-based surveys, and healthcare facilities to monitor Suki use patterns.



## 5. Collaboration and Partnerships:

- **Civil Society Engagement:** Build strong partnerships with civil society organizations dedicated to tobacco control. These organizations can mobilize communities, raise awareness, and advocate for stricter Suki regulations.
  - Rationale: Civil society organizations play a critical role in advocating for policy changes and mobilizing public support for tobacco control initiatives.
  - Implementation: Partner with NGOs and advocacy groups with expertise in tobacco control. Provide technical support and capacity building for these organizations to effectively address the Suki challenge. Encourage civil society participation in policy dialogues and advocacy campaigns.
  
- **Regional and International Collaboration:** Collaborate with regional and international public health agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO) to share best practices and access technical assistance in tackling the Suki challenge.
  - Rationale: Collaboration with international organizations allows for knowledge sharing, access to technical expertise, and potential funding opportunities for research and program implementation. Learning from successful Suki control strategies implemented in other countries can inform Fiji's approach.
  - Implementation: Actively participate in regional tobacco control initiatives facilitated by WHO and other relevant bodies. Seek technical assistance from international experts in areas like legislative drafting, enforcement strategies, and public health campaign development. Explore opportunities for collaboration on research projects to investigate the health effects of Suki.

The Suki challenge in Fiji necessitates a multifaceted approach. By implementing the comprehensive recommendations outlined above, Fiji can effectively address the public health concerns associated with Suki use. A strengthened legal framework that explicitly regulates Suki, robust enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance, and impactful public health campaigns that raise awareness and promote behaviour change are crucial elements in this strategy. Investing in research to understand the specific health consequences of Suki and fostering collaboration with civil society organizations and international partners will further strengthen Fiji's tobacco control efforts. Ultimately, a commitment to a tobacco-free future for all Fijians requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach that tackles Suki alongside all other tobacco products.

# CONCLUSION

This comprehensive report has delved into the intricate tapestry of tobacco control in Fiji, meticulously examining the vibrant threads of progress and gaps which needs analysis. The Council's analysis, woven from the insights gleaned in Sections 1 to 8, reveals a commendable commitment to public health evidenced by Fiji's ratification of the WHO FCTC and the enactment of the Tobacco Control Act (2010). However, like an unfinished tapestry, gaps remain. Ambiguities regarding Suki regulations within the Act, limited enforcement capacity, and the absence of targeted public health campaigns for Suki users threaten to unravel the progress made.

This report serves as a call to action, urging a multi-pronged approach to tackle the Suki challenge and create a tobacco-free tapestry for all Fijians. The recommendations outlined in Section 8 provide the missing threads to complete this vital work. Strengthening the legal framework by explicitly including Suki under the Act's regulatory umbrella, alongside standardized packaging requirements and limitations on nicotine content, will create a more robust foundation. Bolstering enforcement mechanisms with increased resources and public awareness campaigns that encourage reporting of violations will weave in accountability and ensure effective implementation.

The success of this endeavour extends beyond legislation and enforcement. We must weave impactful public health campaigns, tailored with cultural sensitivity, to address the specific risks of Suki use. Promoting smoking cessation support programs and nicotine replacement therapies can empower Suki users to embark on a journey towards a tobacco-free life. Investing in research on the specific health consequences of Suki will provide the scientific weft, strengthening the fabric of evidence-based policymaking and public health interventions.

No single thread can achieve this transformation. Collaboration is the golden thread that binds all efforts. Partnering with civil society organizations, faith-based groups, and local communities fosters grassroots movements that promote social disapproval of Suki use. Engaging with regional and international public health agencies like the WHO allows for knowledge sharing, access to technical expertise, and potential funding opportunities, enriching the tapestry with valuable resources.

By implementing these recommendations, Fiji can embark on a transformative journey towards a tobacco-free future. A strengthened legal framework, robust enforcement mechanisms, impactful public health campaigns, ongoing research, and collaborative partnerships will empower Fijians to make informed choices about Suki and all tobacco products. This, in turn, will lead to a healthier population, reduced healthcare costs, and a more productive Fijian economy. Fiji's leadership in tackling the Suki challenge can serve as a vibrant thread in the global tapestry, inspiring other nations to join the fight for a world free from the burden of tobacco use. May this report be a catalyst, weaving a brighter future for Fiji, thread by thread, towards a tobacco-free tomorrow.





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