

Traders: Government should let us sell grocery and tobacco together

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RANCHI: Grocery retailers on Wednesday staged a protest outside the Raj Bhawan to demand withdrawal of a recent state government rule which prohibits the sale of tobacco products and grocery items from the same shop.



The Federation of Retailers Association of India (Jharkhand chapter) sat on a protest outside Governor Droupadi Murmu's residence to demand withdrawal of the new rule which will become effective from July 1.

Ashish Kumar, chairman of Jharkhand Pan Vikerata Sangh, said, "Retailers like us will be in big trouble if this rule comes into effect. It will become difficult for us to sustain our livelihood."

The rule was framed by the state ministry of health, medical education and family welfare earlier this year. Its objective was to curtail the access of cigarettes and other tobacco products to the youth and students from schools and colleges.

L R Pathak, state nodal officer for national tobacco control program, said, "Kids who go to a shop to chocolates and biscuits end up buying tobacco products, which is harmful for them. We needed to take major steps in this direction."

Jahangir Alam, secretary of the state retailers federation, said, "There are more than 10,000 retailers all over the state and once this rule is enforced, our income will be reduced to half."

Ranchi Municipal Corporation offices have already started their checking drive to check licences." He added, "If they find a retailer selling both the items from one shop, then they will make the retailer pay the fine."

Alam said the federation will also approach health minister Ramchandra Chandravanshi and chief minister Raghubar Das to reconsider the government rule.

Roughly 39% of the total population in Jharkhand are tobacco users in 2016-17 even though their share dropped by 11% from the last survey conducted in 2010.

The national average stood at 28% of the total population of the country.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/traders-government-should-let-us-sell-grocery-and-tobacco-together/articleshow/64775106.cms>