



Case Study

A study of Alcoholism Himanchal Pradesh: 500 meters away from National Highway, India

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Abstract

Alcoholism is one of the major causes which make vulnerable almost all section of the society especially, women and children. It led to many atrocities which further led to many other issues such as unemployment, domestic violence, poverty, suicide, road accidents, exploitation, sexual violence, psychological and emotional abuse etc. In India some culture has social sanction of alcohol drinking which make situation more miserable. Various studies revealed that the age of initiation of alcohol consumption has decrease and majority of children starts alcohol consumption around 10 year of age. Government and non-government organization has taken up various measure to prevent the alcohol drinking in different states of India. The closing of alcohol shops on the highway is one of them, this paper will try to examine the implications of closing of alcohol shops on highways in the district Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Keywords: Alcohol, Children, Women.

Introduction

Usually Alcohol consumption starts to suppress the uneasy feelings or for releasing stress. It is then converted into habit and then into addiction. After interacting and interviewing Rehabilitation center “Navchetna Sansthan at Rudrapur, Uttarkhand” and “Gunjan organization for community development” at Dhranshala, District Kangra, Himachal Pradesh India, working for prevention drugs and alcohol abuse reveals that it is only stress and culture which is dragging a big section of society into the alcohol and drug abuse. People are quitting their jobs, they are being economically and socially exploited, and they are stigmatized for the disease from which they are suffering. There are numerous efforts which are taking place to curb this menace as it is ruining families and society as a whole. But still each and every step is having loophole in its monitoring and execution.

Implementation of the Alcohol laws in India

The government of India has taken different steps to regulate the consumption of alcohol through different laws and policy. Over 6 states of India has banned the alcohol sale and consumption through legislative acts named as⁹:

GUJARAT Bombay Prohibition (Gujarat Amendment Bill), 2009 was passed in 2011 by the assent of the Governor in Gujarat, which totally restrict the sale, consumption and even possession of the liquor.

BIHAR - With the passing of the Bihar Excise (Amendment) Bill 2016 the sale and possession of the liquor was prohibited.

Nagaland - The sale and consumption of Alcohol was banned by passing Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition Act (“NLTP”) in 1989.

Manipur - This north- eastern state, Manipur imposed ban on the sale and consumption of liquor by passing the Manipur Liquor Prohibition Act of 1991.

Study of NH 20 villages: Pathankot to Dharamshala

According to the National Family Health Survey report (2016) 46% of women have faced violence after their partner consumed alcohol⁸. In Himachal Pradesh, Alcohol Abuse is destroying the present generation and humanity at large. There is a constant war between people who are trading in alcohol and people who want to stop this.

The phenomenon of the consumption of alcohol is not only among the rich class of the society, but even the middle class and the poor youth consume it more at a higher extent. The factors which trigger them is the easy availability, weak implementation of laws⁸. NH 20 which connects Pathankot of Punjab to Dharamshala a tourist place of Himachal Pradesh is having licensed alcohol venders at every distance of 500 meters. In fact on the border of Himachal and Punjab at NH20 a place called *Kandwal* has a state toll tax collection stoppage where almost every vehicle has to stop say for 10-20 minutes to deposit the toll, and at that very stoppage location there is a alcohol shop with wide front area marketing alcohol and attracting people on drive to purchase alcohol as they pause there for toll. Similarly on almost every bus stoppage where the

speed of every vehicle passing slows down and they halt, alcohol shops are very prominent.

The villages of the NH20 are immediately connected to the National highway, say in a range of 200 meters only. Therefore the government decision of shifting alcohol from highway can improve the condition of roads but will ruin of the condition of villages. As in range of 500 meters, villages will be highly affected and their children will be spoiled. As then alcohol will be served in the community which will affected women and children with high pace.

Case Study of Saroj: Saroj, aged 45 lives in a village near National Highway 20 at a place called Ghatnalu (Sehuen). She has two children a girl of 18 year and a boy of 16 year. Her husband was a pickup driver in Jalandhar Punjab, he got addicted to alcohol and got a road accident and lost his walking and standing ability. Now his wife Saroj is the bread earner of the family, she provides help in household works and earns her livelihood.

She regrets on her fortune, that whenever her husband went to bank to have get sanctioned his disability pension he drunk a lot on the way to home and spent his whole earning. Since the youngster of his locality are also getting indulged into drug and alcoholism so she has departed her son to her uncle house so that he may not get into this habit of drinking. She is also getting worried from the news that if liquor shops will be shifted to 500 meters from the highway then the condition of the villagers will be more worsen. As by today they have to go far to purchase liquor but if it will be in village itself then it will hamper them badly.

While sharing her views she says that this will ruin off my life more. As now at least my husband drink monthly or fortnightly but if these shops will be in the locality then he will drink regularly and will spent all of her earning. And she will not be there in home for full day so the condition will be very bad for her son too. She strongly resists alcoholism.

This is the only one case study, but there were many women's who resists alcoholism as this is going to ruin their life. They share that comparatively to men, female are working more to earn the livelihood. They did farming, cattle rearing, vegetable plantation etc which help them to have feeds for their family, and usually 80% men drink occasionally and 20% every night while returning to houses as liquor shops are at distance. But if they were be in the community the consumption will be very high which will affect Women and children more as they are the one who are more sufferers. Shifting of alcohol shops 500 meters away from national and state highway in Himachal will led them to establish in the residential locality of the villages.

Caste structure and alcoholism

Caste structure is very prominent in our Indian Society. On the basis of caste our society determines their culture, habits, and way of living. Brahmins are subjected to be away from alcohol

and other bad habits as they belong to higher caste and they are the role models and respectable section of the society. Therefore if someone has to gain respect must follow teetotalism i.e. no to alcohol and meat. But still they will not be considered as equal as the Brahmins. So alcohol is morally allowed for dalits, ultimately making dalits more vulnerable⁴.

Although we are in this modern era of 21st century where we blindly believe that there is no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, racial or untouchably. But reality is very different, to the shock we are still consciously or unconsciously discriminating marginalized section of the society either in the name of their culture, rituals or traditions. To the fact, dalits are not allowed the move on the roads where upper caste people lives. In case someone dares to do so then they have to present a goat to the upper caste people whose sacrifice and blood sheds will be done for purifications of the road which was being impured by dalits as he has put his feet on the road (real story of Upper bharol a small village of Himachal Pradesh). Due to advance in technology and thanks to swach bharaata abhiyan which promote toilets has improved the condition of dalits. But still they are discriminated on the ground of their rituals, like drinking alcohol.

Critical Analysis of 500 meters away alcohol

Government efforts to control road accidents by shifting licensed alcohol bar from state and a national highway inside 500 meters is appraisable. But simultaneously this is again leading to major atrocities that now that 500 meter range will be direct into a village population which will lead to more alcohol consumption. Socialization is an important component of grooming our society, but if children will see every day alcohol outlet in his village then for him it will be a regular routine work which has its acceptability and nothing is wrong in consuming it.

In factin alcohol and Drug rehabilitation or detoxification one of the major things which is preached to avoid elapse is to keep away the alcohol or drug to which the person is addicted. Addict in the process of detoxification is not allowed to attend any sort of gathering which has alcohol or drug. But moving of drinking bars and shops inside the community will led this movement of rehabilitation as a failure. Or person who is trying to overcome addiction will live in rehabs only; he can't live like a common human being in his/her village.

Beside it government has a rule that if there are three incidents which reports that illegal alcohol is prevailing on any particular locality then government will setup a legalized vender or shop of alcohol which does not require any formalities which make process of setting shop bit difficult.

Women on wagon

Government and NGO cannot do this alone; people have to make immense contribution in curbing this menace. Generating Awareness, Sensitizing, educating masses and training Workers

who are dealing with this issue can be a step to curb this menace¹.

Women are considered as most vulnerable, discriminated and stigmatized section of society². They are always victimized by the Patriarchal society. Their gender stereotype has stigmatized their identity. But we always underestimate the power, will and courage they have inherited from their gender. They are the one who has the capacity to hold a life in her womb till the nine month, she is the one who can rear a child, cares for his husband, respect and love her family and her in-laws, bear the responsibility of being social with near ones. Not only on cultural and social grounds her role is appraised, rather on economic zone are her efforts numerous. History is a witness that women will always be there to manage the economic crises of the family. She can earn bread to feed her family which many times males can't do. But still we can't ignore the fact that our society is exploiting our women and dragging them into dark graveyard.

Reasons why Women are on Wagon to prohibit Alcoholism

Reduced domestic violence: A woman says that they will have good relationship between husbands and wives in the families if their men don't drink and they will feel more emotionally secure. Sundarya, a 40-year old woman from Dramman village of Kangra district, happily says: "Great reduction of domestic violence can take place if men will not drink.

Better lives for children: The fear which a woman has that her children will have adverse impact on his mind as after seeing his near one drunken and behaving in abusive manner will be released of men don't drink or drink to a extent only. Children will feel more secure and pampered as their needs are better taken care of now with the extra money saved from checking liquor consumption. Besides, the dependence of the children on their fathers will also increased as they are spending more quality time, unlike days when they were afraid of their intoxicated fathers. Thus with improved household situations, the children will gradually learn to value their parents and concentrate on educational activities.

Pro Active Role of Women in H.P. who Banned Liquor In Their Villages: Of course, it takes time for any visible social change but the liquor ban is a result of the struggles of many people to put pressure on the government. A lot of families were ruined and lots were sociologically and economically struggling with liquor habits. Therefore women of villages in H.P have also started to ban liquor in their areas.

Lady Pradhan of village in Mandi district pledged in Gram Sabha to levy fine on the person whoever will be found drunk or is serving alcohol. They have announced community ban on consuming and serving alcohol in the village. Whoso ever did

has to pay fine of Rs. 10,000/-. Women are strongly standing for the concern and making community followed sincerely.

There are many undercover villages of Himachal Pradesh where Women under Mahila Mandals or in forms of SHGs are actively participating in banning the liquor in the villages. But they are also afraid of getting shifting of liquor shops into their villages. The story of liquor ban in Bihar is an example to motivate them.

Pros and Cons of the measures against Alcoholism: i. In India, we cannot ignore the fact that, "In India, the idea of prohibition has to do with vote bank politics," Palshikar said. "This is the one issue that is likely to win them more votes, especially from women, as politicians don't have to rake up issues on caste and religion." Since undercover liquor is available illegally⁹. ii. We cannot ignore the fact that still Women are suppressed under patriarchy. Although they have power to struggle and fight but still they cannot stand all alone without the support of their counterparts. So women have to be active and need to have financial and administrative support to rum their mission against alcoholism. iii. Shifting of Liquor 500 meter away from highway will not solve the problem as it will then provide easily access to liquor to the villagers, and their children will also learn and adapt the habit of drinking. Since they are most vulnerable so need to be protected. iv. Government should increase the cost of the liquor. That must be too high that one should think twice before purchasing it. And a hand to mouth earner cannot afford it. So that whatever he earns can exclusively spend on his family only not on liquor. v. The ranges of installing licensed liquor shops must be on outskirts like as LPG storage are built in risk free area. So this must be also out of the reach of normal community residential places. Keeping it in risk free zone. vi. Government and Ngo must rum Behavioral change programs to help the community people. But Government and Ngo cannot do it all alone; community participation has to be insured for it. vii. Alcohol must not be served socially. Consider it taboo rather than status.

Conclusion

In spite of all the positive impacts, it is true that prohibition of liquor through legal enforcement is a short-term solution and if imposed for a considerably long period of time, its operation may become difficult. It may lead to illegal marketing of alcohol. Hence the emphasis should be on behavioral change of individuals and the society at large. Awareness generation and sensitization programs in schools, colleges and other institutions clubbed with societal awareness drives by the government at regular intervals should be the key to usher in behavioral change.

In addition, the government and civil society organizations fighting against the ill effects of liquor consumption in poor families should also design and implement special programs for the economic and political empowerment of the women who can become agents of change in their families. Building social

capital among women in Bihar can yield long-terms dividends for the state.

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