

# **ALCOHOLISM AND ALCOHOL BAN: THE CASE OF BIHAR**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**GAUTAM SHARMA**



**CENTRE OF SOCIAL MEDICINE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067**

**2018**



CENTRE OF SOCIAL MEDICINE & COMMUNITY HEALTH  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
**JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY**  
NEW DELHI - 110067

Date: 20/07/2018

### DECLARATION

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "**ALCOHOLISM AND ALCOHOL BAN: THE CASE OF BIHAR**" submitted by me under the guidance of Prof. Ramila Bisht in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** is my original work and has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

Place: New Delhi

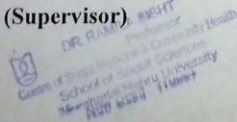
*Gautam Sharma*  
GAUTAM SHARMA

### CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

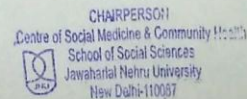
*Ramila Bisht*

Prof. Ramila Bisht  
(Supervisor)



*Ramila Bisht*

Prof. Ramila Bisht  
Chairperson



## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Ramila Bisht for the continuous support of my M.Phil. study, for her patience, motivation, and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this dissertation. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my M.Phil. study. Her support was tremendous source of inspiration and encouragement, when things were not going well for me. She stood beside through thick and thin, patiently guiding me, in spite of my all weakness and flaws.

I would also be thankful to all of those who helped me during my field visit in Bihar. And special thanks to Vyom, Chunchun, Ravi and Anand for helping me to complete my Dissertation.

## Contents

Acknowledgement .....	i
Contents .....	ii
Abbreviations .....	iv
List of Tables .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Review of Literature- .....	2
1.2 Alcohol use disorders (AUDs).....	8
1.3 Alcohol and Public Health-.....	9
1.4 Alcohol Policy across the States in India.....	12
Chapter 2- Methods and Methodology .....	18
2.1 Conceptualization .....	18
2.2 Research Questions .....	19
2.3 Methodology .....	19
2.3.1 Study Area: .....	21
2.3.2 Respondents .....	22
2.3.3 Data collection tools: .....	24
2.3.4 Method of ensuring rigor in research:.....	27
2.3.5 Limitations: .....	27
2.3.6 Ethical concerns .....	28
Chapter: 3- The Emergence of Alcoholism in Nitish Regime .....	29
3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 The Wanton Growth of Alcoholism in Nitish Regime : A Critical Analysis .....	30
3.3 Amendments in Excise Policy : .....	31
3.3.1 The Case of Financial Prudence vs State’s Paternalism (Welfarism).....	31
3.4 Fall Out of the New Excise Policy of 2007 .....	36
3.5 Network of Liquor Mafias as facilitators of the Illegal trade of liquor.....	39
3.6 The emergence of struggle against the problem of Alcoholism .....	42
3.7 The Political and Economic compulsion behind the growth of Alcoholism.....	49
3.8 Conclusion: .....	55
Chapter 4- Effect of the Alcohol Ban on Health and Family.....	56
4.1 Introduction.....	56
4.2 Effect of the Alcohol Ban on the Health of the people .....	57

4.3 Effect of the liquor ban on the financial condition of the family.....	62
4.3.1 On the Economic Side, the Liquor Ban evokes a Mixed Response.....	63
4.5 The effect of the liquor ban on the domestic violence in the family.....	67
4.6 The effect of ban on the crime and violence in the society.....	73
4.7 Poverty, not Alcohol as the main source of all evil .....	76
Chapter 5-Multiple Perspectives on the ban of Liquor: A view from women and lower castes...	80
5.1 Introduction.....	80
5.2 The Road to Resistance: A case study of struggle against alcoholism for women’s rights .	81
5.3 Role Played by Women’s Organisations in the movement against Alcoholism.....	82
5.3.1 A perspective from the leaders of the movement.....	82
5.4 Women’s struggle against alcoholism: A community perspective .....	90
5.5 A Case of a Mid Day Meal Worker .....	93
5.6 Alcoholism through the Lenses of Lower Caste .....	95
5.6.1 Drinking: Part and Parcel of Lower Caste Culture .....	95
5.7 Impact of the liquor Ban on Lower Caste Groups .....	98
5.7.1 Case of Musahars : The Harsh Reality.....	98
5.7.2 The impact of Alcohol ban on Musahars .....	99
5.7.3 A Case of a Dalit individual from Chamar community. ....	101
5.7.4 A Case of a Pasi (The <i>Toddy</i> Tapping Community) .....	102
5.7.5 A Case of a Sundi Caste.....	104
5.8 The Bihar Prohibition Act 2016: A Draconian Law .....	105
5.9 The idea of Prohibition and its legacy .....	112
5.10 Conclusion: .....	114
Chapter 6 - Discussion and Conclusion .....	116
6.1 The Public health and other concerns that led to the Bihar government policy of banning alcohol in Bihar.....	116
6.2 The change in public health indicators of alcoholism post the ban on alcohol.....	117
6.3 The responses of different social groups towards the problem of alcoholism and on the alcohol ban .....	119
Bibilography: .....	123

## **Abbreviations**

AIPWA	:	All India Progressive Women Association. Corporation
AUD	:	Alcohol Use Disorders
ICD	:	International Statistical Classification of Diseases
KSBC	:	Kerala State Beverages Corporation
CHD	:	Coronary Heart Disease
USV	:	Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini

## **List of Tables**

Table 3.1	Number of Liquor Shops in Bihar	33
Table 3.2	Collection of Revenue from Excise, Bihar	34
Table 3.3	Selected state wise production of alcohol in India, 2009-10 to 2014-15 (in million litres) 35	
Table 3.4	Alcohol Industry in India	52
Table 4.1	Cumulative Crime Data of Bihar, 2007 to 2017	57
Table 5.1	Use of Alcohol (women), NFHS, 2014-15	97
Table 5.2	Use of Alcohol (men), NFHS, 2014-15	97
Table 5.3	Caste wise breakup of arrest under prohibition law	111

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1.1	Relations among alcohol consumption, mediating variables, and short-term as well as long term consequences	9
Figure 4.1	Economic Effect of the Alcohol Ban in Bihar	62
Figure 5.1	Draconian Nature of Prohibition Act	108



## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

Alcoholism is the phenomenon used to describe a pattern of drinking often in an uncontrolled form that are explicitly manifested in the forms of physical and mental health problems. This, in turn, affects the entire economic and social life of the individual and the society at large. However, alcohol abuse is to a great extent not determined by a single factor but its causatives are multifactorial. Its determinants are widely linked to the social and economic life of the society.

To say that this problem did not exist in any society earlier would be an invalid assumption as the consumption of various forms of drinks has so far been in existence more or less across all societies since times immemorial. In other words, the problem of addictions and uncontrolled drinking of various harmful drinks has existed side by side since the very early times. Each culture and societies has its own sets of morals and ethical norms with regard to how, why, and which types of alcohols be socially and legitimately consumable. Therefore, an examination of how people actually consumed alcohol in the everyday life is deemed to be quite necessary to understand the role of the alcoholism and health issues.

Each culture and society according to its sanctioned mores and norms have made regulations for what, which, and how much drink is considered socially acceptable and legitimate. An analysis of how people actually use alcohol in their daily lives is in this light crucial to bring an explicit understanding of alcohol's role in public health. The patterns of daily use are affected by the general place of drinking in the culture, the drinking customs prevalent among different groups and in different settings, and the norms of drinking behavioural pattern of individuals. Most important from a public health perspective is knowing the cultural norms of how often people drink alcohol and how intoxicating they have become. These might also vary greatly within a society, with age, gender, religion, and ethnicity that served as criterions of significance. Drinking customs can also shape individual patterns of drinking. In drinking groups, customs of reciprocity may encourage heavy drinking.

Therefore, keeping the aforementioned discussions in mind in all societies, several measures have been taken to tackle this problem which includes religious, moral

sanctions, and more pertinently the tendency to individualize the problem as a vice and to treat the addicted person partly responsible for themselves. Thus, from the very beginning till the recent times the structural problems of poverty, unemployment, inequality, and underdevelopment lay as the root cause of this problem.

### **1.1 Review of Literature-**

John A. Lewis (1956) argued that alcoholism in form of uncontrolled drinking has different stages. However, there is no clear-cut marking of these different phases because the addiction rate happens very gradually. In the early phase of alcoholism, a person is totally unaware about his addiction to drinking. In this stage the balance between control and inability to control of drinking is delicate; in this stage, the compulsion to drink is weak this is seen when such a person is hospitalized and alcohol is not accessible. At this stage, the person can easily recover from the alcoholism. While in the later stages of alcoholism, however, the compulsion to drink becomes quite strong and that the person can do anything to get alcohol.

Further, the paper mentions that alcoholism is put into the disease category, to remove it from the category of punishable crimes and to place it in the health field where it can be treated by medical measures. Alcoholism cannot be overcome by punishment; efforts along this line have been universally unsuccessful.

Alcoholism is more accurately thought of as a behavioural syndrome in which the drinking is symptomatic of physiological, psychological, social, and economic stresses on the individual. In some cases, one of these stresses may be more prominent in the clinical picture than others. It is wise when one is working with alcoholics to investigate the possibility of stress in each of these categories.

Mark Keller (1958) shows that alcoholism as a chronic behavioural disorder that is characterized by repeated drinking of alcoholic beverages which is in excess of the community dietary and social norms and to an extent that interferes with the drinker's health or his social or economic function. He further showed that although drinking is not the same thing as alcoholism and is not even the cause of alcoholism, drinking patterns and practices have their role in the problem. This basic fact that without drinking there could be no alcoholism but the number of people who drink, as well as what, how much,

and in what context they drink, all decisively influence both the rate of alcoholism and its clinical manifestations. The important points which he talks regarding the classification of different types of alcoholism are that one needs to readily make a distinction between those who have lost total control over drinking alcohol and the other who has not lost his total control over drinking. He further tries to trace out the various etiological theories that lead to the disorder. In which first he talks about the physiologically oriented school attributes alcoholism to a biochemical defect of one kind or another which provokes an uncontrollable craving for alcohol. A psychologically oriented school considers alcoholism to be a manifestation of neurosis based on deficient or arrested development of personality, rooted in childhood.

Chalke (1974) showed that the word "alcoholism" although coined more than a hundred years ago, but its use didn't gain currency until the time when the medical importance of the condition began to be recognized, and the fact that it was an illness gained ground. This delay in the recognition of this term in popular discourse is an indication of the reluctance to shed ingrained beliefs that the uncontrolled drinker is a moral weakling, a sinner or an offender against the law, and one who deserves censure, ostracism, and punishment rather than help and treatment.

Further, the paper shows alcoholism as the ultimate stage and it should not be confused with drunkenness or regular excessive drinking, although many people in this category pass over into alcoholism. Heavy drinkers can have severe problems- financial, occupational, social or physical-but they are not necessarily alcoholics, and they can usually reduce their consumption or abstain when advised to do so. The early alcoholic may manage to conceal his addiction from his colleagues and employers for a time, but deterioration is inevitable without treatment, and the disease can no longer be hidden.

Thus, modern societies have not been very successful in coping with the problems associated with alcoholism as witnessed by the steady increase of alcoholism and its impact on health, industry (absenteeism and impaired performance) and traffic accidents: more than half of all lethal road accidents are associated with the presence of alcohol in the drivers' blood. It is now becoming increasingly apparent that a problem of such magnitude is not likely to be brought under control merely by a strictly individualized

psychiatric or psychological approach. Thus a public health approach towards alcoholism is the need of the hour.

American Society of Addiction Medicine in 1972 gave the definition of alcoholism which is based on the progressive nature, the physical sequence of alcohol use, and the phenomena of tolerance and withdrawal. In this definition for the first time the chronic and progressive nature also the fatality of the disease was discussed. Besides it also characterized by tolerance and physical dependency or pathologic organ changes, or both as a result of the direct or indirect consequences of the alcohol intake. But this definition failed to recognize the ambit of biopsychosocial factors that influence the development of alcoholism and its further manifestations. Later this definition of alcoholism was refined after the introduction of the term alcohol dependence syndrome, developed by Edwards and Gross characterized by narrowing of the drinking repertoire, salience of drink-seeking behavior, increased tolerance, repeated withdrawal symptoms, relief and avoidance of withdrawal symptoms, subjective awareness of a compulsion to drink, and reinstatement (of drinking) after abstinence. Again further this definition was broadened to include the psychosocial, and environmental factors and thus the new definition appeared to be as: Alcoholism is a disease which is often progressive and fatal. It is also a primary, chronic disease in which the genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors also influence its development and manifestations. Further, it is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with the drug alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial. Each of these symptoms may be continuous or periodic (Morse 1992). Further Vaillant (1995:19) shows that alcoholism does not conform to Koch's postulates and there is no known underlying biological defect which leads to alcoholism. Rather, alcohol abuse is a result of the continuum of drinking behaviors whose determinants are different for different people and they are result of the interaction between the culture, habits, social mores, and genes. The other types of non-communicable disease like the Diabetes, Hypertension and the Coronary heart diseases are just like the alcoholism, which has no known specific etiology, but all of these depends on number of multiple factors which can only be studied by encompassing all the medical, behavioural and sociological approaches. Very

often the value judgements, and cultural and idiosyncratic viewpoint determine and shape the problem of alcoholism.

Vaillant (1995: 22) show that Jellinek has very aptly captured the phenomenon of alcoholism as: “The usefulness of the idea that alcoholism is a medical and public health problem depends, to a large extent, upon the recognition of social and economic factors in the etiology of all species of alcoholism”

The casual factor of alcoholism is multifactorial; morbidity is relative; and abstinence from alcohol and social recovery do not always coincide

Substance abuse is defined as and when the following conditions take place: first the social and economic function of the user is compromised, second, the use leads to severe and potentially irreversible medical condition, thirdly when the person stops it use, it leads to drastic physical psychological withdrawal symptoms and another morbidity (Klieman et al 1995).

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance with dependence-producing properties. As described by Park & Park drug dependence is a state, which is psychic as well as sometimes physical leading to the behavioural responses like a compulsion to take that psychoactive substance on a continuous or periodic basis in order to experience its psychic effects and sometimes to avoid the discomfort of its absence (Park 2011). The WHO through the development of ICD has focused attention on drug dependence as the crucial element in the health morbidity associated with substance abuse. The International Statistical Classification of Diseases (ICD-10), which is a diagnostic model used to define and classified physical, mental, and behaviour disorders. It has a section which is exclusively devoted to the identification of use, abuse, and dependence of psychoactive substance including alcohol prescription, and nonprescription drug

The broad effects of the psychoactive substances under the category of the ICD-10 terms are as follows:

Acute intoxication/ alcohol intoxication: This is defined as a short-term state of functional impairment in psychological and psychomotor performance induced by the presence of alcohol in the bodies, these symptoms include a slurred speech, which is

easily evident while other such as impair driving ability, which is subtle can only be detected by laboratory testing

Harmful use: This has been defined as a habitual pattern of involvement with a substance /alcohol that is damaging to health which results in a disease like cirrhosis or hepatitis, cancer etc. Dependence syndrome/ Alcohol Dependence. Alcohol dependence also known as alcoholism or alcohol dependence syndrome is defined as a cluster of behavioural, cognitive, and physiological phenomena that develop after repeated alcohol use and that typically include a strong desire to consume alcohol difficulties in controlling its use, persisting in its use despite harmful consequences, a higher priority is given to alcohol use than to other activities and obligations, increased tolerance, and sometimes a physiological withdrawal state

Withdrawal syndrome is present when one is physically dependent upon a substance, the ICD-10 classification codes include uncomplicated withdrawal, withdrawal state with delirium, accompanied psychotic disorder. In alcohol withdrawal delirium tremens is present as is typically seen in severely dependent users with a long history of alcohol use (Klieman et al 1995)

Further Babor (2010) shows that alcohol-related problems could occur without dependence, but that dependence was likely to carry with it with many problems. Basically, there are two dimensions of the alcohol-related problem in which one aspect is represented by the concept of the alcohol dependence syndrome, which refers to a cluster of inter-related physiological and psychological symptoms in which alcohol use takes on a much higher priority than other behaviours. The second dimension of the alcohol-related problem, refers to the harms resulting from drinking, regardless of whether the person is alcohol dependent.

Further WHO suggested mainly six criteria for the diagnosis of alcohol dependence amongst which at least three must be present in the past twelve months for a positive diagnosis of alcohol dependence. They are listed as follows:

1. Evidence of tolerance to the effects of alcohol, such that there is a need formarkedly increased amounts to achieve intoxication or desired effect, or

that there is a markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of alcohol.

2. A physiological withdrawal state when alcohol use is reduced or ceased, as evidenced by the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance, or use of the same (or closely related) substance with the intention of relieving or avoiding withdrawal symptoms.
3. Persisting with alcohol use despite clear signs of harmful consequences as evidenced by continued use when the person was actually aware of or could be expected to have been aware of, the nature and extent of harm.
4. Preoccupation with alcohol use, as manifested by important alternative pleasures or interests being given up or reduced because of alcohol use, or a great deal of time being spent in activities necessary to obtain alcohol, consume it, or recover from its effects.
5. Impaired capacity to control drinking behaviour in terms of its onset, termination, or level of use, as evidenced by alcohol is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended, or any unsuccessful effort or persistent the desire to cut down or control alcohol use.
6. A strong desire or sense of compulsion to use alcohol (Babor 2010:19).

The spread of the rate of alcohol dependence varies according to the level of drinking, besides its patterns of drinking and a variety of social, psychological and biological characteristics of the population affects the dependence rates. The two factors which are related to the prevalence of dependence are the average volume of drinking and the pattern of drinking of larger amounts on occasion and the risk of dependence increases linearly with increased drinking.

The relationship between alcohol consumption, intoxication, and dependence as a mediating factor and various type of harms is shown below. The two main fundamental pillars of the entire framework are the patterns of drinking and the average volume. Drinking patterns are not only marked by the frequency of drinking and the quantity per occasion but also by the variation between one occasion and another. It represents the way in which drinkers consume a certain volume of drink in a given time frame. (Babor 2010:14)

Further, the total volume of alcohol consumed and the pattern of drinking are mutually related to each other. This relationship is proved by the fact that the intake of the high volume of alcohol will almost inevitably lead to intoxication, a high-risk pattern of drinking. Also, Babor (2010:15) traces the different types of problems which results from the different pattern of drinking. Likewise in the wine-drinking countries where sustained heavy drinking is the norm, it may not lead to much evident intoxication but can cause tissue damage and dependence, further dependence can lead to acute medical harm as well as acute social problems. Another category of daily drinkers of even moderate amounts of wine per occasion over a long period of time can lead to cirrhosis as a result of the cumulative effects of alcohol on the liver. Further, he contrasts to show, a relatively low frequency of drinking together with the intake of a high number of drinks per occasion can lead through the mechanism of acute intoxication to a different number of medical and social problems such as accidents, injuries, interpersonal violence, and other types of acute tissue damage.

There are three main direct mechanisms of harm caused by alcohol consumption in an individual. These three mechanisms are: Firstly it leads to toxic effects on organs and tissues; Secondly intoxication, leading to impairment of physical coordination, consciousness, cognition, perception, affect or behaviour; Thirdly dependence, whereby the drinker's self-control over his or her drinking behaviour is impaired

## **1.2 Alcohol use disorders (AUDs)**

Harmful use of alcohol is defined as a pattern of alcohol use that is causing damage to health, and the damage may be physical (as in cases of liver cirrhosis) or mental (as in cases of depressive episodes secondary to heavy consumption of alcohol) (see ICD-10; WHO, 1992).

The harmful use of alcohol ranks among the top five risk factors for disease, disability, and death throughout the world. It is a causal factor in more than 200 disease and injury conditions (as described in Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) 10th revision, WHO, 1992). Drinking alcohol is associated with a risk of developing such health problems as alcohol dependence, liver cirrhosis, cancers, and injuries. For most diseases and injuries causally impacted by alcohol, there is a dose-



response relationship. For example, for all alcohol-attributable cancers, the higher the consumption of alcohol, the larger the risk for these cancers (WHO Alcohol Report 2014).

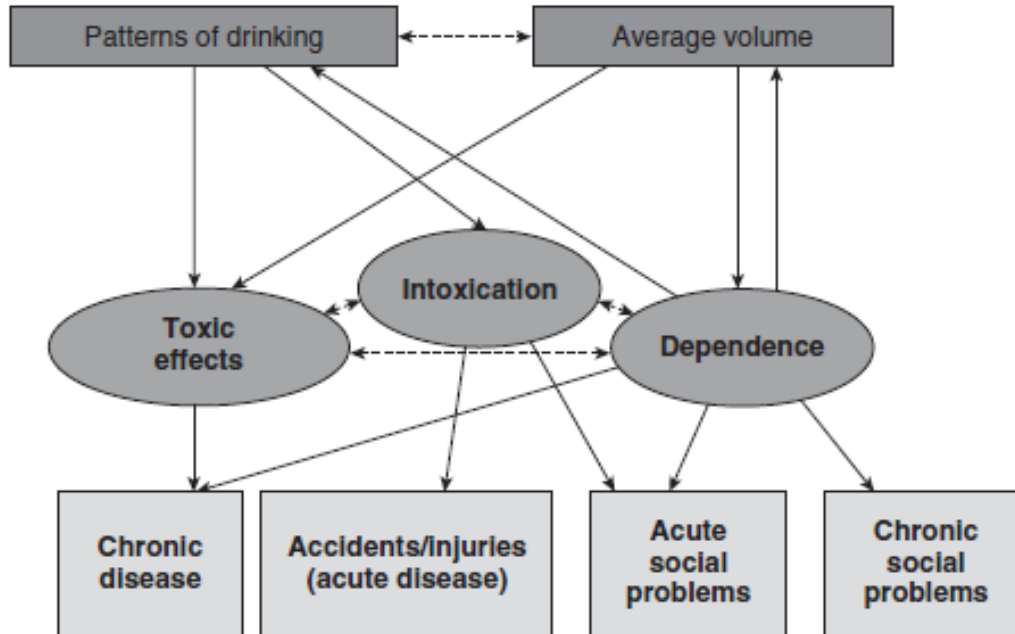


Figure1.1 Relations among alcohol consumption,mediating vaariables, and short-term as well as long term consequences.(Babor 2010:14)

### 1.3 Alcohol and Public Health-

Room Babor and Rehm (2005) traces the problem of alcoholism from a public health perspective. The paper has three parts namely the epidemiology of alcohol role in health and illness, the treatment of alcohol use disorder in a public health perspective, also the policy research about the educational and the behavioral programmes.

While looking at the epidemiology of alcohol its accounts for the 4% of the global disease burden. The relationship between alcohol consumption and health outcome is complex and multi-dimensional. Not only the volume but also the pattern of drinking effects various kind of disease like coronary heart disease (CHD), breast cancer and intentional injury. In case of higher consumption the higher chance of such diseases, but there are few exceptions like the CHD, diabetes injuries, where other dimensions of consumption than average volume play a crucial role in determining the outcome. CHD

has a “J” shaped curve association with the consumption of alcohol, low to moderate consumption is associated with lower risk of CHD also the heavy episodic and irregular pattern of heavy drinking occasions appears to be related to other types of cardiovascular problems such as stroke or sudden cardiac death.

The second issue which the paper deals is the treatment of the alcohol use disorder. Among heavy drinkers with evidence of severe dependence an intervention aimed at the reduction of drinking to moderate level of consumption in the primary health care setting. Treatment is divided into three categories namely brief intervention, specialized treatment program, and mutual help groups. The brief intervention provides an immediate prophylactic treatment before or after the onset of alcohol problem to reduce high-risk drinkers to moderate levels. It is delivered in a primary health care setting. Specialized treatment refers to intervention directed at the management of alcohol withdrawal, the prevention of relapse to alcohol dependence and social and psychological rehabilitation of the drinkers. The management of alcohol withdrawal is to relieve the discomfort prevent medical complication preparation of the patient for rehabilitation. Nonpharmacological or social detoxification includes frequent reassurance, personal attention, and monitoring of the vital signs and general nursing care. It is delivered to a mild to moderate withdrawal patients. Pharmacological detoxification is done in patients setting and is advised for serious medical or surgical illness for an individual with a past history of adverse withdrawal reactions, benzodiazepines are used for the treatment of alcohol withdrawal as it is found to have favorable side effects.

The third area which the papers covers is the policy research like the educational, behavioral, motivational public information campaigns. The school-based education and public information programmes are likely to be ineffective. The other policy options available are controlling price and availability by raising the taxes on alcohol, restricting the timings, place, and sale of alcohol are effective in reducing the mortality due to cirrhosis, drinking driving deaths and crime rates. Reducing alcohol-related vehicle casualties includes forbidding driving above a stated blood alcohol concentration, sustain police vigil to check drink driving, routine use of sobriety checks where people whom police judge to have been drinking are asked to take a breath test, e.g. in Australia, this has reduced the fatal accidents by 15 %. The other policy prescription of reducing violence

caused by public drinking includes training of the pub staffs to enforce responsible service and ensuring a policy of denying alcohol to those who have already drunk heavily. USA, Canada Australia have passed civil liability law to enforce responsible serving by holding and making accountable the establishment for the damage caused by the customers who are heavily drunk. Lastly, the paper highlights the fact that the influential alcohol lobbies maintain a veto power over alcohol policy ensuring that the emphasis only on ineffective policies like the education and public information campaigns. In a globalizing world of common markets and free trade agreement alcohol policy no longer remains a national or sub-national matter, thus an international agreement or the policy framework of the international convention for alcohol is the need of the hour.

Babor (2010) showed us that there has been a decline in drinking in many of the high alcohol consumption particularly in the traditional wine-producing countries from the early 1970s to the early 2000s in Europe and South America. In contrast, increases in per capita consumption have been noted in emerging markets for alcohol in many low- and middle-income countries. With the growth of modern industrial production, the proliferation of new products (e.g. caffeinated alcohol ‘energy drinks’ and alcopops) and the development of sophisticated marketing techniques. Thus increasingly with the few large multinational corporations like the Inbev, Anheuser Busch, SABMiller and Heineken and the Diageo alcohol have become not only a powerful industry but also is a major contributor to business opportunities and jobs in the hospitality and retail sectors.

The size and profitability of these companies support integrated marketing on a global scale. Size also allows considerable resources to be devoted, directly or indirectly, to promote the policy interests of the industry and thus now are acting as a powerful lobby groups to mould

the alcohol policies in various countries to suit their interests which is posing a major threat to the public health both at the national as well as the international level.

Further globally the Alcohol policy has been mainly classified into two main categories: Allocative and Regulatory. In allocative policies, a share of resources are allocated towards prevention which includes funds for alcohol education in schools, the training of

waiters in responsible beverage service, and also it includes the funds for the treatment of alcohol-dependent persons. While regulatory policies are those which directly the control the availability of alcohol and action, behavior and decision of alcohol producers through an increase in taxation, restriction on the timing, location, and minimum age of alcohol, or policy which control drink and driving. Globally the policy prescription of increasing taxes, restriction on the location, time and minimum age for the purchase/sale of liquor have found favour in most of the countries. Evidence suggests us that worldwide banning is practiced only in Muslim countries and in the subnational jurisdiction of Indian states, also banning is easier to enforce in isolated the areas, where alcohol imports into the dry (no-alcohol) areas can be effectively controlled. Also, restrictions have often occurred on islands or in isolated towns or communities that have severe alcohol problems, for e.g. Alcohol was banned in the small Alaskan town of Barrow, it reduced the number of an outpatient visit for alcohol-related cases. A complete ban on alcohol has also been implemented in some remote Australian communities, leading to reductions in alcohol-related problems. Babor (2010)

#### **1.4 Alcohol Policy across the States in India**

There is a no alcohol policy in India on a national level to deal with the menace of Alcoholism. Moreover, Alcohol falls in the category of those subjects which are in the state list and hence no national policy can be formulated on this which could be applicable across all the states of India. This reason was also stated in the Supreme Court decision which said that no national level policy can be made on the alcohol unless it is brought in the ambit of concurrent list. The Indian constitution in the Article 47 of the directive principles of the state policy advocates a single policy of prohibition with no other option. (Malhotra 2000: 376). As a result of the prohibition of alcohol has been long on the agenda of the national and state governments of India. With many states taking the plunge on prohibition from time to time across India. Presently prohibition on alcohol is enforced in the states of the Bihar, Gujarat, Nagaland and in the union territory of Lakshadweep. Further, there have been states in India like Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Haryana, and Uttarakhand where the policy of prohibition has been tried for a couple of years or more and after that, they have repealed it. Malhotra (2000:376) in the Gujarat where the policy of prohibition has been going on for the longest period of time since

independence, there also no organized public health statistics have been collected with regard to the prohibition on whether the implementation of prohibition has led to an improvement in the public health indicators of mortality and morbidity caused due to the alcohol consumption. And that has been the case more or less across the whole of India where there is no major database available for making a case for against the prohibition in India. Moreover, the alcohol policy in India has been operating under the framework of regulatory policies (Babor 2010), thus swinging in between the extremes of prohibition and unrestricted availability. In the regulatory framework, other options are also like the state monopoly of alcohol, in this system the state determines the availability of type beverages and timing and place of availability of such beverages. This system is being followed in Delhi. While the other option in the regulatory framework is checking or limiting the availability of alcohol on National Highway. Secondly providing low content alcohol in beer through selective outlets of beers and wines. Thirdly to have a differential tax policy on a different kind of alcohol to reduce the consumption. The fourth option has laws for checking blood alcohol levels for drinking and excluding availability across the workplace, further it also talks about having the zoning laws where the local population can vote for or against the liquor shops in their area.

Another important aspect regarding the alcohol policy in India is the fact that the majority of states depend on the excise taxes to get a major chunk of their revenue. Hence the state always in the ambivalence to whether to increase the revenue by increasing the availability or to look for the other sources of revenue. Babor (2010) suggested that the other important issue regarding the alcohol policy is moving towards the allocative policies, in which the revenue earned from the liquor sales is earmarked for prevention and promotion and treatment activities. Malhotra (2000) suggests that in case of Indian states it very unclear that whether the revenue generated from the liquor sales is used in the alcohol related issues or not. Further, it is also unclear whether this revenue goes into the general consolidated fund or earmarked for the social sector spending.

Looking at the alcohol policy of five states in India, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Uttarakhand, and Kerala where the policy of prohibition has been tried and the ban had already taken place evidence is chequered.

Illiah (1992) the evolution of the anti-attack movement of the state of AP. Kancha depicted the arrack movement as a very unique and radical movement as differed from the feminist point of view as the movement was led by the subaltern working-class women. He called the movement neither a Gandhian nor a Marxian. The women as the author depicted had literally become "kali" the Hindu goddess who defied every odds to stop the liquor menace which they were facing for the many years. They used each every tool at their disposal from boycotting their husbands, to fighting with the broom, chili powder and lathis with the contractor, police, the even the most dreaded liquor mafias of the region and also the politician even against the CM too. The movement started as an offshoot of the Nelioire liquor movement and soon spread in other parts of AP. These women resorted and literally stopped the auctioning of a liquor shop in various parts of the state through protests, 'dharnas', human roadblocks. At the home front, the women decided to meet out symbolic punishment to their husbands. The women's collective declared that those who drink would have their heads shaved and those who sold liquor would be taken through the village on a donkey. On the political front, all the parties and the leaders were too worried about the movement as it had become very powerful and it dared to the expose and end the nexus of underground political funding by the various liquor lobbies. Further NT Rama Roa with the help of campaign of Eenadu (a Telugu daily) came back to power with the promise of imposing the total liquor ban in the state. In a state where the class movement and the Dalit movement have been paving newer ways, the anti-liquor movement, started and led by women has shocked many patriarchs irrespective of their caste, class, and status, also Illiah called it a 'prelude' to a 'matriarchal revolution' which may, in the long run, pose major questions for- feminism, as the most of the women who started and led this movement belonged from very poor SC, ST, and the OBC families and they posed grassroots question which was very different from the white upper-class feminist.

Pathak (1985) explores the anti-liquor movement of Uttarakhand led by a group Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini (USV), the anti-alcohol movement raised wider questions which had serious social and political ramifications. State-induced commercialization brought by the coming of the Britishers led to the widespread growth of the alcohol industry. After the independence congress who initially had opposed the liquor sale also

adopted the same policies which encouraged the production and sale of alcohol as a major source of revenue to the state exchequer. The opposition to alcohol was started by the Sarvodaya workers who launched the prohibition in few districts in 1969 which was later quashed by the high court, later the Janta govt. reintroduced the prohibition in 1977. Due to the wrath of alcohol the entire social and cultural life of the hill was disrupted as the sale of liquor had led to the increase in crime rates, thefts, selling of women into prostitution and the entire bureaucracy was complacent to it, this agitated the local masses who were inspired by the success of the recent Chipko movements to rise up in arms and launch a sustained and concentrated movement across the state for the ban of alcohol beside it the movement also demanded employment from the state govt. thus linking the liquor question to the broader socio-political process.

Panicker (2015) traces the alcohol industry of Kerala as an offshoot of the capitalism as in the current neoliberal era. the homogenizing tendency of global capital has led to the emergence of cosmopolitan culture, coupled with the breakdown of the traditional family and communal support structures has led to rise of individuation, which all fed into the mushrooming of the alcohol industry in Kerala under the guise of policy that was initiated to prevent the distribution and unauthorized sale of spurious alcohol has now itself grown into monopolistic corporation that has entered into contractual arrangements with commercial liquor manufacturers to offer “reasonable” prices which are essentially much lower than those quoted in other states. Further, the Kerala State Beverages Corporation (KSBC) was set up the recommendation of a committee set up for preventing the dissemination of spurious alcohol the KSBC has gone on to run 337 liquor shops across the state till 2010. These shops are open all days of the week and coupled with the low alcohol prices, and large remittances being sent back home led to Kerala becoming the state with highest per capita consumption of liquor. This has led to many adverse social consequences many mental health problems, declining economic productivity, the rise in divorce rates, increasing suicide rates, and a rise in road accidents. The further paper ends with the study that shows the amount of revenue loss due to the alcohol ban would be much lower than the aid the state was extending to the rural families affected by abuse of country-made liquor.

Looking at the move of Haryana's Bansi Lal govt to impose an alcohol ban in the state it comes out that apart from leading to huge revenue to the state exchequer the problem that surrounding wet states posed in total implementation of the ban, as already clandestine distribution networks in the bordering states posed a serious hindrance in the total imposition of the ban. Also, the powerful hotel and tourism lobby had expressed its displeasure over the decision, further due to banning the problem of illicit brewing would also increase. The paper also explores the fact there have been studies which have been conducted to check the alcohol consumption pattern in the country, whereas the in the report on the worldwide consumption pattern shows that sales of alcohol have come down in most European countries as the markets have reached saturation point, but in the case of south-east Asia the trend shows the opposite, especially in those countries where religious taboos do not apply nationally, have become prospective markets. Thus to reduce the consumption besides banning other policy measures such as stricter driving laws, workplace requirements and social support groups would do the needful. Besides the paper makes apprehension about the weak administrative machinery would face an added pressure in enforcing it , also as the Haryana liquor has not come out from a consistent anti-liquor campaigns as in case of AP & TN and thus runs the risk of getting influenced by the powerful lobbies who are at the receiving end due to this move (Editorial EPW, 1996)

Nitish Kumar's decision to impose a blanket ban on alcohol in Bihar seems more to be of a populist measure which has been done to appease a particular sections of voter i.e. Women and the rationale of physical violence due to, alcoholism fails to explain such a kind of move as the data shows that Gujarat is the state which has the longest history of banning and yet it is the state which has highest no in terms of domestic violence The paper further argues that the banning, not the solution to the problem as due, to poor implementation of by the state machinery the rich, continue to have higher quality of alcohol but the poor get the alcohol of a more substandard quality. Further, the paper argues to address this problem one has to increase the taxes, on alcohol and use this money in solving the core structural problems of unemployment, poverty and improving the health services to solve this problem. (Kumar and Prakash, 2017).



Benegal (2005) puts alcohol India into historical and cultural perspective. It traces out the drinking culture, prevalence of alcohol use in the country. The early roots of drinking are very often seen in the Brahmanical Hindu religion of the Vedic ages, the sanskritisation and bahmanisation of the abstinence culture were clearly noticed in the lower caste who earlier used to have a normal drinking culture. The colonial era also encourages the production and drinking of alcohol on a mass scale. The focus is exclusively on supply reduction (prohibition-centric) and tertiary prevention. Further, the paper focuses as supply reduction as a tool for checking the alcohol menace by the means of banning although time and again the various state govt have to retreat from the banning in the wake of mounting trade deficit, illegal smuggling from the neighbouring states and flourishing underground alcohol economies. Also, the policy of increasing taxation which is more often used in the foreign countries is found to be ineffective in India as the easy access to the undocumented (illicit and excise evaded) liquor. The policies regulating the timings of the sale, sale to minors and drunken driving are observed in the breach. The Indian Motor vehicles Act specifies a blood alcohol cut-off of 30 mg% for drivers, which is arguably one of the strictest in the world. With regards to the treatment provision the governmentt of India has opened 483 detoxification centers, amongst which most of them are defunct as till now they only got one-time grant only. Public awareness and research programme related to alcohol remain a low key priority of the govt. as most of this program is devoid of funds. Lastly, the paper talks about the mixed approach combination of (a) a population-based approach reducing overall consumption and (b) a high-risk approach targeting high-risk behaviours is essential to reduce the alcohol; menace in the society. Also, the paper talks about the sensitization of the local social welfare system and the criminal justice system, who often the first to come into contact with alcohol-related problems.

A gap of literature: Until now the problem of alcoholism has been analyzed in terms of its direct public health outcomes. However, alcohol consumption is much beyond that. There are very few studies which probed its production, distribution and the role of the state in the process. There was no such study in the context of Bihar. This study attempts to fill this gap. Using the political economy framework I have analyzed the phenomenon of alcoholism and alcohol ban in Bihar.

## **Chapter 2- Methods and Methodology**

### **2.1 Conceptualization**

The problem of drinking has been found in different region of the world. Like any other problem the problem of alcoholism has its origin in the society itself. Alcoholism as the social problem has its genesis drawn from varied set of forces that rather than simply a logic of Koch's postulate. In simple words, alcoholism is not a purely medical phenomenon but a process as well as an outcome of social, cultural, economic, and political and more importantly, prolonged abuse of alcohol. However, alcoholism is easily labelled as medical problem given its ease of labelling and obscuring macro and meso structures that undergird the alcoholism as a social problem. Though, one cannot deny its medical nature but to present alcoholism as uni-causal phenomenon is to obscure its multi-causal origins. Alcoholism is a continuum of range of drinking behaviors whose causes are differentially associated in different cultures and societies. Thus, alcoholism phenomenon varies both at individual level as well as collective level (social and cultural level). Theoretically, alcoholism is an interactive outcome and process of impulses ranging from gene factor, social mores to the larger structures like economic and political.

Alcoholism and its risk factors are linked to the social hierarchies of the caste, class and gender in the society. And also the severity and the impact of the alcoholism outcomes are also structured along these social hierarchies. Therefore, alcoholism as a social problem has public health consequences. Alcoholism not only impacts the individual but its effect could be observed at larger level of the society. The problem of drinking just like the other societies also exists in Bihar. With respect to Bihar the determinants as well as the outcomes of alcoholism are also entrenched in the caste, class and gender hierarchies of the society. Alcoholism and its medical and social outcomes are affecting different populations in a different way. Thus our attempt would be to capture the complexity of problem in the context of Bihar. In the context of the Bihar, government decision to bring the prohibition of alcohol to fix the problem of alcoholism, the study will try to explore the Bihar government decision to effect the ban has taken all the multifactorial aspects that lay at the root of the problem of alcoholism in Bihar. The study

will also try to look at various health aspects of the problem post the alcohol ban. And lastly the study would also try to explore how the alcohol ban has affected the different social groups in Bihar.

The broad research questions guiding the research have been listed below. These must come from your conceptualization- must flow from them

## **2.2 Research Questions**

1. Which were the factors that led to emergence of alcoholism as a social as well public health problem?
2. What were the public health and other concerns that led the government of Bihar to implement the policy of alcohol in Bihar?
3. Did the women's movement demanding alcohol ban remain restricted to concerns around home economy and domestic abuse or did it enable women to come together as a group to challenge larger patriarchal structures?
4. Does the problem of alcoholism and the effect of the subsequent ban have only a class dimension or does caste also play a role on how this problem and its proposed solution play out.
5. What role does the class, caste and gender intersection play in the way people have responded to the alcohol ban in the state?

The following specific objectives were sought to be addressed in the study.

The broad objective of our study was `

1. To understand the history of alcoholism in Bihar
2. To explore the reasons that led to Bihar government policy of banning alcohol in Bihar.
3. To explore the implication on public health indicators post the ban on alcohol
4. To study the responses of different social groups towards the problem of alcoholism and on the alcohol ban.

## **2.3 Methodology**

The study is exploratory and evaluative in nature. The exploratory study is used when the nature of the problem is not clearly defined yet. The exploratory study helps to deal with

new problems on which very little research or almost no research has been done. This study is conducted to identify the nature of the problem and helps to develop a better understanding of that problem. The exploratory study are flexible, informal and unstructured in nature and in the light of revelation of new data or insight the study changes its direction accordingly. The exploratory research designs does not aim to provide final and conclusive answer to the research questions but it explores the research topic from varying levels of depth.

The research h questions and objectives outlined above require an in-depth exploration of historical processes that led to alcohol becoming a massive public concern and also a detailed investigation of people’s responses. Hence, a qualitative methods of data collection and analysis are best suited for this study.

The proposed study on the “Alcoholism and Alcohol ban: The Case of Bihar” uses both kind of data primary as well as the secondary data.

Secondary data sources used in the study are the newspaper and government reports, NFHS data alcohol consumption, the crime statistics of the Bihar police. While the primary data includes the focus group discussion, In-depth interview, participant observation and triangulation. Since the nature of the study was such in which banned substance alcohol was investigated so most of the time the informal interviewing was done to get the information about the banned substance.

**NFHS-** The NFHS-4 field work was done between 20<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to the 4th December 2016. It has a sample size of 601,509 households, for the women the sample size was 699,686 and for the men the sample size was 103,525. The questions used for the man’s alcohol consumption were:

1. Do you drink alcohol?
2. How often do you drink alcohol?
3. Which type of alcohol do you drink?

However, the information provided was not adequate enough to gauge the impact of ban on alcohol on public health.

**Crime Statistics Bihar-**The Bihar police crime statistics contains all the records of cognizable and non-cognizable crimes committed in the state of Bihar. The cumulative crime data of Bihar from 2001 to 2018 shows the various cases of crime committed in Bihar in the previous years.

**Reports- Government reports:** The reports of the various government departments like the department of the prohibition excise and registration and finance departments, were also analysed for getting the foot hold of the problem.

**Newspaper Reports:** The newspaper reports of the local and National Dailies were also used for getting the information of alcoholism in Bihar.

### **2.3.1 Study Area:**

The district of Ara is also known popularly as Bhojpur. The district is located about 50 km from state capital Patna in the western side of Bihar. Further in the north side it is bounded by the Ganga river and in the southern part lies the Aurangabad and Rohtas district, whereas in the eastern part is the Patna district and in western part is the Buxar district . It is located at a longitude of  $83^{\circ} 45'$  to  $84^{\circ} 45'$  east and the latitude is  $25^{\circ} 40'$  north. It has three sub divisions namely Ara sadar i.e. (Ara town), Jagdishpur and Piro. While it also has 14 blocks or tehsils namely Ara Sadar, Udwananagar, Jagdishpur, Koliwar, Sahar, Barhara, Sandesh, Shahpur, Charpokhari, Piro, Tarari, Bihia, Agaiwon and Garhani. The district headquarter is located at Ara Sadar (Ara Town). The district covers an area of 2,935 square kilometer (925 sq mi). Its population density is 2,940/sq mi. The district has a sex ratio 900 females per every 1000 males while it has a literacy rate of 72.79%. While when we see the topography of this district we found that the whole district comprises of gangetic plain which is very fertile and suitable for agriculture, and hence the major occupation of the people in this region is agriculture. (web page-Bihar.com)<sup>1</sup>. The reason for choosing the Ara district was the convenience. Also the many of the struggle and protest against alcoholism had taken place in this district.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bihar.com/dist bhojpur is website by private group.where they place all information about the state.

Patna: The district Patna is capital of Bihar. The district is located in the southern part of Bihar.

The district is bounded in the north by Ganga river. In the south it is surrounded by Jahanbad and Nalanda districts. In the eastern part lies the Lakhisaria district and in the west lies the Bhojpur district. It is located between 25 ° 13 ' North and 25° 45 ' North latitude and 84°43' East and 25 ° 44' East longitude. The district covers an area of 3,202 square kilometer. The district has a sex ratio 897 females per every 1000 males while it has a literacy rate of 70.68%. ([www.bihar.com/dist\\_Patna](http://www.bihar.com/dist_Patna)) The reason for choosing the Patna district as it was the state capital and since the entire administrative machinery is located here. Also to get an overview of the struggle and protest against the alcoholism from the leaders of the movement who were based at Patna.

### **2.3.2 Respondents**

Different sampling techniques were used for selecting alcoholics and other stakeholders of this problem of alcoholism. Firstly with the use of convenience sampling, alcoholics were selected. It was done so because the matter of alcohol is sensitive and stigmatized in Bihar. After that snow ball sampling was used to build trust and rapport with the first set of respondents. The first set of respondents were person living in the ward number 29 of the Ahirpurwa Tola of Ara Town. They provided the idea and location about the known alcoholics of the area. The ward parshad of the area gave information about the other stakeholders, like the aganbadi sevikas and the liquor shop owner. After this different stakeholders like the leaders of movement were identified with the help of local left party activists. While other stakeholders were purposively selected like police station official and doctors at the Hospital of the Ara Town.

Stakeholders were purposively chosen for getting information about the various aspect of alcoholism and alcohol ban. The stakeholders included the liquor shop owners, police station officials, doctors at the hospital, the leaders of the women organization, Aganbadi sevikas members of the local governing bodies.

The respondents included alcoholics and their family members. There were ten alcoholics and the majority of the alcoholics were the member from the working or the laboring class. And out of the ten alcoholics three were from the Badhai Caste, two were from the

Yadav caste, one was from the Mali caste(O.B.C), one was from the muslim community and the one was from the upper caste. Another category of the respondents was the different stakeholders such as the liquor shop owners, police station officials, doctors at the hospital, the leaders of the women organization, Aganbadi sevikas members of the local governing bodies and also the member of voluntary organization like the alcoholic anonymous.

**Table 2.1 Respondents' profile, Ara and Patna, 2018**

In-depth Interview	Stakeholder	Age	Sex	Occupation	Caste	Place
Respondent 1	Alcoholic	65	Male	Labor	S.C.	Ara
Respondent 2	Alcoholic	60	Male	Labor	Yadav(O.B.C)	Ara
Respondent 3	Alcoholic	45	Male	Labor	Bhagat(O.B.C)	Ara
Respondent 4	Alcoholic	42	Male	Labor	Bhadai(OB.C)	Ara
Respondent 5	Alcoholic	65	Male	Labor	Bhadai(OB.C)	Ara
				Liquor shop owner.		
Respondents 6	Stakeholder	50	Male	owner.	Bania (O. B.C)	Ara
Respondent 7	Alcoholic	65	Male	Labor	Bhadai(OB.C)	Ara
					Rajput	
Respondent 8	Alcoholic		Male	Teacher	General	Ara
Respondent 9	Alcoholic	55	Male	Butcher	Chik (O.B.C)	Ara
	alcoholic/ stakeholder			liquor		
Respondent 10			Male	selling Toddy	Sundi(O.B.C)	Ara
Respondent 11	Stakeholder	24	Male	seller	Pasi (E. B. C)	Ara
Respondent 12	Stakeholder	45	Male	Ward Parshad		Ara
Respondent 13	Stakeholder	42	Male	Ward Parshad		Ara
Respondent 14	Stakeholder	35	Female	Agan Badi Sevika		Ara
Respondent 15	Stakeholder	35	Female	Agan Badi Sevika		Ara
Respondent 16	Stakeholder	50	Female	housewife		Ara
Respondent 17	Stakeholder	45	Female	women Leader		Ara
Respondent 18	Stakeholder	60	Female	housewife		Ara
Respondents 19	Stakeholder	50	Female	housewife		Ara
Respondents 20	Stakeholder	55	Female	women Leader		Patna
Respondents 21	Stakeholder	50	Male	De-addiction officer		Patna
Respondents 22	Stakeholder	50	Male	Alcoholic Anonymous		Patna
Respondents 23	Stakeholder	45	Female	Mid-day Meal worker		Patna
Respondents 24	Alcoholic	35	Male	labor	Yadav(O.B.C)	Patna
Respondents 25	Alcoholic	23	Male	buisness		Patna

Group Discussion: For getting a foot hold of the problem. I conducted three group discussion in the district of Ara. The first group discussion was done at the Mushar locality of Jawahar Tola of the Ara Town. In this group discussion around 10-12 people of that musahar locality participated in the group discussion. All the members of this group discussion were male. Their age group of these people was in between 25-65 years. The second group discussion was conducted into Musahar locality of Sheetal Tola of Ara Town. In this group discussion 9-11 people were present. And out of 11 people five were women and rest were males. The male members were age between the age group of 35-60 years. While the female members were between the age group of the 30-60 years. The Third group discussion was conducted at the Bin Tola Locality of Ara Town. In this group discussion around around 8-10 people were present. In this discussion five to six were female while the rest were males. The age group of the females was in between 30-55 years of age.

### **2.3.3 Data collection tools:**

The data collection tools i.e questionnaire/ interview schedule were developed keeping in mind the different kinds of stakeholders like the liquor shop owner, members of the local bodies, doctor of hospital/de-addiction center and leaders and organization involved in the struggle of alcoholism. This set of questions were broadly based on the issue such as the emergence of alcoholism, general crime and violence in society, and question related women campaign against alcoholism. The other set of questionnaire were developed for the alcoholics and their family members especially women to capture their differential of living with alcoholic members. (See Annexure I)

**Semi-Structured interviews:** Semi structured interview is an important method for data collection in qualitative research (Willig, 2010). According to Smith (1995), semi structured interviews- *“gives the researcher and respondent much more flexibility than the more conventional structured interview, questionnaire or survey. The researcher is able to follow up particularly interesting avenues that emerge in the interview and the respondent is able to give a fuller picture. Then by employing qualitative analysis an attempt is made to capture the richness of the themes emerging from the respondent’s talk rather than reduce the responses to quantitative categories (p.9).”* Hence semi-



structured interviews were used to understand the people's perceptions about the ban policy and the problem of alcoholism.

**Focused group discussions:** In the focused group discussion, participants are encouraged to interact with each other around certain issues and their interactions constitute the data. The researcher may also use a semi-structured interview schedule to conduct a group interview. The researcher may ask a question and have multiple participants respond to it. The question may also lead to discussion among the participants. In this method, a small group of participants having some shared characteristic or interest in an issue are selected and brought together to discuss an issue relevant to the research. The objective is to get information about participants' belief and perceptions on the topic of interest. According to Willig (2010), an advantage of this method lies '*in its ability to mobilize participants to respond to, and comment on one another's contribution*'.

**Observations:** Observations forms one of the key methods of data collection in both quantitative and qualitative research. According to Angrosino (2005), observation provides researcher the opportunity to observe not just the human activities but also the physical setting in which activities take place. In qualitative research, a researcher makes detailed descriptive notes guided by objectives of the research. Observation could be both participant and non- participant. I used both participant and non-participant observations as sometimes, I watched group of people in a locality of the town engaging in their work or in discussions from a distance so that my presence does not make them hesitant. However, on other occasion, with different set of people, I realised that interacting with them allowed me more opportunities to observe them in their contexts.

The data collection was done between the months of December, 2017, and February, 2018. In the months of December I did my preliminary field visit in the Ara districts. The preliminary field visit was done to get the feasibility of the study. Earlier I had approached the field presupposing that since the subject matter of my research on alcohol was banned, and was sensitive issue so I might be facing difficulties in getting the desired respondents for my study. This assumption was found true during the preliminary field visit in Ara district. Initially when I approached many of the respondents they were very

hesitant and reluctant about talking anything related alcohol as the ban was in operation and they feared of talking anything about it. Even if they told, after some rapport building, they could not reveal any substantial information on this subject as they were afraid of the prohibition law. Even if the other stakeholders of the study like the leaders and ward parshad, were more approachable, the main difficulty was in getting the alcoholics and their family members who could share their experiences on the issue. Hence after a couple of days I realised that it was very difficult to get the in-depth interview of the alcoholics. To overcome the problem of stigma and legalities related to alcohol, I approached the alcoholics through my known contacts and acquaintances.

After getting the firsthand experience of the problems faced in the field, I went for my main field visit which happened between the months January and February, 2018. I first started my field visit with the interaction with Ward Parshad of the Ahirpurwa Tola which comes under the ward number 29 of the Ara town for getting the foothold of the problem of alcoholism in that area. After that I also talked with other key informants of that area like the aganbadi sevikas. and liquor shop owners of that area. During the informal interaction with the people of area the alcoholics were identified and thereafter the alcoholics and their family members were interviewed to know their experiences. The other stakeholders like the police *thana* and the nodal officers of the de-addiction center were also interviewed. Besides, to capture the problem faced by the musahars, families living in the localities of the Jawahar Tola and Sheetal Tola were also interviewed and group discussions were conducted. I also talked to the local leaders as well the women leaders from the Bin tola area where the protest against alcoholism had took place in 2012. Also, the district as well the state level women leaders of left parties who had taken part in the movements against alcoholism were interviewed. Similarly in the Patna district the places like Fatuha, sub-division of the district, where the movement against alcoholism was led by the women were also interviewed. Besides this the officials of de-addiction program of state was also interviewed. Lastly I also talked to the members of alcoholics anonymous as well the private de-addiction center in Patna.

**Thematic Analysis:** The data collected from the above-mentioned sources was analysed using the thematic analysis technique. The in-vivo themes were generated accordingly from the research. This will help in analyzing and answering the research questions. In

order to do this, the texts identified as secondary sources, the interview transcripts and observation notes were read several times to identify themes around concerns leading to alcohol ban and also people's attitudes and perceptions around it.

#### **2.3.4 Method of ensuring rigor in research:**

Issues of descriptive and interpretive validity (i.e. the extent to which the descriptions about the field and the interpretations arrived at, are close to the actual experience of the participants) and around generalizations from the findings are important to ensure rigour in qualitative research. A method used to ensure this was triangulation, whereby data was collected from multiple sources and the process of analysis involved exploring links between different themes emerging from the various data sources. According to Patton (1999), triangulation involves use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of phenomena.

Full of generalities- does not at all capture your research methodology in specific. So last minute I do not know what to tell you do.

#### **2.3.5 Limitations:**

There were several factors that posed challenges to this research and may have posed limitations to the findings.

1. Since alcohol is banned in the state of Bihar, people were reluctant to talk about it or sometimes admit that they either consumed it earlier or that they still procure it through illegal means. It was difficult to find networks through which people could be contacted for the interview. Given, that those who could be contacted were through known contacts and not through random sampling does limitations towards generalization of the results.
2. Since, the problem of alcoholism is significantly connected to domestic abuse, my identity as a male researcher posed problems in interactions with women. Women participants found it difficult to talk to a nonfamily man about their experience of living with an alcoholic. To address this, I tried not to ignore my gender identity and try to understand the hesitation of the women. I tried to form a rapport with them by being patient and not forcing them to start speaking immediately. I also

tried to contact women through known people so that they would be less hesitant to share their experiences with me.

3. The one year time frame in which the research has to be conceptualized, conducted and written, posed challenge to the extent of time that I could give to the field. In future the study can be conducted with a larger and more representative sample.
4. As mentioned earlier, since the study was about a problem on which there is a strict law now, not only were people afraid to speak about it, sometimes to be able to find people who will speak on the issue also brought security concerns.

### **2.3.6 Ethical concerns**

It was ensured that informed consent was obtained from all participants and strict confidentiality was assured.

As a researcher several ethical concerns that I had to struggle with during the course of research.

1. I had to be conscious that even as I may have my own positions on this problem and the possible solutions, I should not allow this to come in the way of the participants sharing what they feel. I tried my best to keep my positions to myself and not shape the participants' response either through directed questions or my own gestures of becoming uncomfortable.
2. Some of the people I had contacted to be able to approach the participants had political leanings and this may also have affected the participants I could get to meet.
3. A number of times, a huge dilemma was that on few occasions some participants shared information about illegal procurement of alcohol. While the ethics of research required me to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality as I had assured them, but as an aware and concerned citizen, it was also difficult for me to keep this knowledge just to myself.

## **Chapter: 3- The Emergence of Alcoholism in Nitish Regime**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Bihar is one of the Indian states which has lowest per capita income. This implies that the Bihar is also one of the poorest Indian state (Government of India 2017). Based on the United Nation's Human Development Index, Bihar is positioned at the rank of the twenty one out of the total ranking of the twenty three states (United Nation Development Program 2008). In this regard, high rate of consumption of alcohol by the people in the state can be held as one the main factor that has significantly contributed to the overall growth of poverty, social unrest, ill-health, and even premature death. So detail examination of how the issues has been rooted and how it can be tackle has been by and large remain as an unaddressed question among the academic discussion in India. Taking up the larger issue of the alcoholism in the state, this chapter specifically set to examine the problem of the alcoholism especially during the regime of the Nitish Kumar. The rationale behind choosing Nitish Kumar regime in this chapter is mainly because of the fact that the level of consumption as well as production of the alcohol in the state have shown to reach a new high in contrast to the preceding period. As the level of the alcoholism has increased the social problem became very much apparent and thusly it became a major issue for every section of the society.

This chapter therefore sets out to examine the factors which had contributed to the increase level of alcoholism in Bihar. In doing so it will trace the changes in the excise policies during the tenure of the Nitish Regime, increase in the number of the liquor shops around the residential area, illegal smuggling of the liquor, and increase in the production level. The second objective of the chapter is to present the negative impact on the society as culminated by the excise policies amendment. It also vividly traces the growth of mass movement against the growth of the alcoholism in the Bihar. The next sections traces the struggle against this problem of alcoholism and specially with reference to women groups, who were responsible for making this problem as political agenda of the state. The third objective of the chapter is to assess the political and economic factor that had could have contributed to the rise of the alcoholism in the state. This part of the chapter highlights the political and economic compulsion behind the

emergence of the problem of alcoholism in Nitish Kumar and whether his decision to bring the law for alcohol prohibition in the state was politically motivated or this decision was made keeping in mind the health and wellbeing of the people.

### **3.2 The Wanton Growth of Alcoholism in Nitish Regime : A Critical Analysis**

The magnitude and the scale of the prevalence of alcoholism has been beautifully captured by a popular Nepali adage which travelled southwards crossing the open border to become Bihari:

" *Suryaast, Bihar mast*" As the sun goes low, Bihar goes high'' (The Telegraph 28/08/2016).

Needless to say that the above quote was not an exaggeration of reality but it aptly tells the whole story of what was going on all over the state of Bihar. The fact that under the reign of Nitish Kumar, the availability of liquor had increased manifold was not an open secret. The increase in the number of liquor shops was such that it had become visible with open eyes. These shops had come up everywhere, whether be it at the residential areas or be the place of education and worship.

A report by Malhotra (2014) in the Business Today magazine suggested that before 2006 there was only one liquor shop for 16 panchayats. This has "improved" considerably now as there are five shops available for the same number of 16 panchayats. The report further quoting official data suggested that the number of liquor shops also has gone considerably up both in the urban as well as rural areas. The figures quite amply showing it as the number of liquor shops has gone up from 3,436 in the year 2006-2007 to around 5,467 liquor shops in the year 2012-2013. This increase was more remarkable in the rural areas as the number of liquor shops had almost tripled from 779 shops in 2006-2007 to 2,360 shops in the year 2012-2013.

Besides the increase in availability, the other pull factor towards the liquor was its cheap pricing as the country liquor was made available in sachets of 200 ml poly pouch packaging and priced as low as twenty rupees per sachet. Thus due to the free and easy availability of alcohol in the reign of Nitish Kumar, his tenure was aptly termed as that of Laissez faire alcoholism. (The Telegraph 2016)

### **3.3 Amendments in Excise Policy :**

#### **3.3.1 The Case of Financial Prudence vs State's Paternalism (Welfarism)**

Ever since the country gained independence the, liquor sales have formed one of the most important sources of revenue for state governments. In many cases the liquor sales accounted for around 20 % of the share of the state government revenue, like in the case of Kerala where it accounts for around 22-23% of share the state revenue, while in Karnataka it accounted for the 20% of the state government revenue (Basheer 08/12/2013).

This was main reason behind why the provision of prohibition was kept in the directive principle of the state policy, leaving it to the will of the states to implement the prohibition or to keep their revenue intact. There was thus an apparent conflict between state paternal role to act for the welfare of its citizen and yet at the same time keeping its revenue sources intact. This tension between the two role was amicably resolved in the favour of the financial prudence as it can be witnessed by the fact most of the states in India, barring a few<sup>2</sup> have opted against the provision of prohibition; thus keeping this source of revenue intact (Benegal 2005).

It was clear that when the Nitish Kumar came to the power for the first time in the year 2005, he also saw liquor as one of the main sources of revenue for the state. He therefore took the decision to amend the existing excise policy so that income from alcohol could be increased and it could be used for development. Thus Nitish Kumar also chose the path of financial prudence for augmenting the excise revenue by amending the existing excise policy in 2007 (Jha 2015).

Government of Bihar (2007), mention in its notification, deliberated to form a committee for stopping the sale of illicit liquor. The same notification discussed measures to end the monopoly of private firms on alcohol sale and bring in the government recognized liquor shops to ensure the sale of only good quality alcohol . To ensure this state government established the Bihar State Beverages Corporation to provide suppliers remunerative

---

<sup>2</sup> Gujarat, Nagaland and the Lakshadweep are the states and union territory in India where prohibition on alcohol is still prevalent.

prices, make liquor available at reasonable prices, maintain buffer stock and intervene in the market for price stabilization

Further the notification stated that under the present system of license policy the number of liquor shops existing did not match the required alcohol consumption levels. This shortfall paved the way for the supply of sub-standard liquor through unauthorized sources posing a great danger to the health of the people. This was more evident in the rural areas where due to the unavailability of retail shop in local areas, people were forced to drink substandard liquor through illegal sources. To rectify these anomalies in the existing excise policy, the committee decided to raise the number of retail liquor shops to double, especially in the rural areas in the first phase. And in the second phase it was decided to increase the number of shops to the national average (Government of Bihar 2007). Thus the government's decision to increase the liquor shops to protect the people from illicit liquor was not an act of state paternalism but a well calculated move of financial prudence as the increase in the number of liquor shop meant more state revenue.

A report published in the Hindi daily Prabhat Khabar (22/12/2012) showed that the number of liquor shops increased since the year 2005. But in this increase, what was more important to note is that the number of liquor shops almost doubled after the implementation of the new excise policy in 2007 in which it was decided to raise the number of shops. The Table (3.1) shows that the number of liquor shops in 2006-07 was only 3,436. But after the new excise policy got into effect in 2007, the liquor shops suddenly doubled and it touched an all time high of 6,184 liquor shops. Now this was a quantum jump and this increase no doubt had serious ramifications on the consumption of liquor in Bihar. The changes like the increase in number of liquor shops coupled with the increase in the minimum procurement levels would only facilitate an increase in alcohol drinking across the state. Thus as a result alcoholism became a major problem of Bihar, which was now further hard to ignore.

It was evident from the new excise policy that the decision to increase the number of liquor shops was visibly cloaked. The motive was to save people from spurious alcohol but the new changes in the policy had other implications too. the primary motive being the increase in the revenue of the state government. As we can see in the table 3.2 the



state government massively benefitted from this increase in revenue from the increased liquor sales. It is interesting to note that just as the liquor shops doubled after the excise policy change in 2007, in the same way the excise revenue also almost doubled after the change in excise policy in 2007.

Table 3.1 Number of Liquor Shops in Bihar

Year	No of Liquor Shops
2005-06	3439
2006-07	3436
2007-08	6184
2008-09	5718
2009-10	5644
2010-11	5555
2011-12	5460
2012-13	5468

Source: Prabhat Khabar (22/12/2012)

The excise revenue, which up till 2004-05 was contributing only 272 crore to state exchequer witnessed a sea change post the excise policy amendment in 2007. It leapfrogged up to 525 crore in 2007-08. This trend of massive increase continued year after year and now the excise revenue has reached 4001 crore in 2015-16. As a result of this massive increase the contribution of the excise revenue now has become the second biggest source of the state revenue, only behind the commercial taxes revenue, which makes the largest contribution to state exchequer (Government of Bihar 2015-2016).

This trend, which was started by the Nitish Kumar government to follow the path of fiscal prudence in matters related to alcohol, was continued thereafter. The Bihar industrial incentive policy of 2011 bears testimony to this fact as in this industrial policy the state government was giving special incentives in the form exemption of taxes to the Beer manufacturing units to step up industry in the state. This was despite the fact that this exemption was not meant for other intoxicating drinks and substances (Government of Bihar 2011). Due to this exemption many bigger players of the Beer market in India

like the United Breweries and the Carlsberg had also set up their manufacturing units in the state of Bihar in the year 2012 (The Economic Times 16/12/ 2012).

Table 3.2 Collection of Revenue from State Excise, Bihar

Year	Revenue from Excise (in Rs Crore)	Year	Revenue from Excise (in Rs Crore)
2004-05	272.47	2010-11	1523
2005-06	318.59	2011-12	1981
2006-07	381.93	2012-13	2430
2007-08	525	2013-14	3168
2008-09	679	2014-15	3216
2009-10	1082	2015-16	4001

Source: Economic Survey of Bihar (2007-08: 233: 2015-16 :63)

Thus as a result of the liberalized alcohol policies followed by the Bihar government the alcohol production in the state increased quite a lot. This can be seen from the table no 3.3 that the production of alcohol in Bihar has significantly increased since 2009. It had touched a new height in 2013-14 when 83.75 million liters of alcohol was produced in the state. This stupendous increase in alcohol production further amplified the problem of alcoholism in the state.

This fact of the increase in the availability of alcohol after the amendment of the excise policy was too confirmed by the new excise policy of 2015 which announced to bring in the prohibition to offshoot the negative fall out of the increased availability of liquor in the state. The New excise policy of 2015 stated and acknowledged the fact that old policy which was helpful in increasing the number of liquor shops and thus was also helpful in curbing the trade of illegal and illicit liquor to a large extent. Though this excise policy resulted in the expected rise in the revenue but this policy had some negative fallout as it hit the poorest people the hardest and subsequently the worst consequences of this policy were witnessed in the rural areas.

3.3 Selected State-wise Production of Alcohol in India (2009-2010 to 2014-2015) (in Million Litre)

States/UT	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Andhra Pradesh	63.84	114.96	130.56	120.00	80.75	70.50
Bihar	30.00	47.52	54.00	72.75	83.75	68.25
Gujarat	122.40	141.12	106.56	123.50	120.50	131.00
Haryana	31.44	51.12	66.24	65.25	70.50	70.50
Karnataka	257.76	364.80	605.52	375.25	421.50	514.00
Maharashtra	585.84	789.60	756.96	731.50	682.50	963.75
Punjab	22.32	36.72	45.84	55.25	55.75	63.50
Tamil Nadu and Puducherry	165.36	241.92	299.76	264.75	195.50	180.50
Telangana	-	-	-	-	37.25	35.25
Uttar Pradesh	685.44	777.12	924.72	1043.00	873.50	918.50
Uttarakhand	36.48	37.20	42.00	44.75	38.25	41.00
Others	15.12	30.96	34.80	40.00	60.75	63.75
India	2016.00	2633.04	3066.96	2936.00	2720.50	3120.50

Source: Lok Sabha 2013

The NEP 2015 further stated that in the light of above-mentioned negative fallouts on the poor people in the rural areas it decided to revise the old excise policy of 2007 and thus frame a new excise policy. Though the ultimate aim of the NEP 2015 was to impose a total ban but that was to be carried out in a phased manner, thus this policy in the first phase stated that it would impose a ban on the country liquor and the spiced country liquor and hence they shall be banned all across the state and thus no new licenses will be issued for the same from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 only foreign liquor/ Indian Manufactured Foreign Liquor(IMFL) would be sold only in urban areas i.e.

Municipal Corporation and Municipal Council level . All of these shops in the urban areas selling Foreign Liquor/ IMFL would be “off” sale category which implies that in this no facility would their drinking on the shop premises itself. Besides it all the existing bars and restaurants selling Foreign Liquor/IMFL would otherwise cease to operate in the rural areas and towns panchayats. The Bihar State Beverages Corporation Limited(BSBCL) would only be entitled to sell foreign liquor /IMFL in these urban areas through its authorized shops/vends (Government of Bihar 2015).

### **3.4 Fall Out of the New Excise Policy of 2007**

The new excise policy had number fallouts as it not only increased the number of licensed shops, but it had also increased the license. The minimum procurement levels of the various types of liquor had also been increased. Thus, in case of the Indian Manufactured Foreign Liquor (IMFL), now the vendor quota was increased from 2.90 million London Proof Litres (LPL) in 2012-13 to 3.91 million London proof litres (LPL) in 2013/14. It was the same case for the country and spiced country liquor; the quota was increased to 9.25 million LPL from 7.71 million LPL (Malhotra 2014).

Besides Malhotra (2016) also highlighted the fact that the new lottery system, which was introduced for awarding licenses after the introduction of new excise policy in 2007 was mainly responsible for this steep rise in the number of shops. This was because under the new policy/scheme a single license is not granted, but instead licenses were allotted for two or three shops in a group, which was mandated to sell Indian Manufactured Foreign Liquor (IMFL) or country liquor. It seems that now under this policy the licenses can be clubbed or grouped together and thus in some cases the shops in the rural and municipal areas were clubbed together and could be allotted to a same person.

But this decision of revising the existing liquor policy in order to boost the state revenue has drawn a lot of criticism was questioned by the left parties who said this move of the government saying it was only driven with the motive of increasing the state revenue and it has nothing to do with illicit liquor (Hindustan Times13/12/ 2012). But the then Bihar state excise minister Sudha Srivatsava defended the new liquor policy of 2007 by saying that this would increase the revenue from liquor sale and would put an end to the illicit

liquor trade by increasing the availability of liquor through a enhanced network of licensed shops across the state. (Oneindia 2007)

These policy measures were defended by the ruling alliance of JDU & BJP as the statements made by the member testify this fact. Defending the New Excise policy the spokesperson of the JDU, Mr. Shivnand Tewari, although acknowledging this fact that there has significant increase in the alcohol consumption, defended the new policy stating that the it was a step closer in the right direction, as before 2005 nearly 80 % of the liquor trade was outside the ambit of the revenue net. However, the rise in revenue was not only due to newly opened licensed liquor shops as Sushil Kumar Modi of BJP who was then the Bihar deputy chief minister suggested that the structural changes in the tax regime, after 2005 was responsible for the rise in the revenue from excise as they have adopted a new uniform excise tax structure (Malhotra 2014).

Another important aspect of this increase in availability that happened post excise policy change in 2007 was that it facilitated the growth of a system of drinking on credit. The one important thing about this system was that as the license fees has increased considerably after the change in excise policy in 2007, it created a lot pressure on the liquor shop owners to recover their license fees. Hence many of the liquor vendors/ shop owners started selling the liquor through credit to those drinkers who don't have the cash at their disposal. Also some of the vendor lowered the price of the liquor so that they could attract more and more drinkers which would help them in recovering their license fees as well as aid in making more money and profit (Malhotra 2014).

While the researcher was doing data collection he met two persons who were admitted at the private de-addiction center in Patna. They confirmed this fact of drinking on credit. Both these persons belonged to Gaya district. They told that this system of drinking on credit was very much prevalent in the Gaya district. The first respondent who was an alcoholic said that whenever he did not have the money for drinking, he did not have to borrow from his relatives or friends. Instead his drinking was very often financed by the liquor shop owner itself who gave a credit of around Rs 12,00 to 13,00 for drinking in a month. He further told that the liquor shop owner gave him the credit for drinking, as he

knew that “I will not run away and would pay back the money when I earn it”. The second respondents experience was also identical..

A liquor shop owner in the Ara named Nirmal who was in this profession from the year 1992, also confirmed the fact that after the amendment of excise policy in 2007 the license fees had increased significantly. He recalled that when he had joined this profession in the 1990s then at time the license fee was only 15,000 to 20,000 per month but that kept on increasing over the years and he further told that now just before the ban the license fee had gone as high 5 to six lakh per month for country liquor and for the IMFL/ Foreign liquor it was around four lakh rupees per month.

He informed that after the lottery system was introduced the number of shops in the area doubled. According to him in 2007-08 the consumption of country liquor was around 45,000 LPL, but after the lottery system got introduced the consumption of alcohol increased to 3,500,000 LPL. He further recalled that there was a time when his monthly income used to be around one lakh. But after the ban his income had drastically been reduced. In fact he was forced to open a ration shop which he claimed is also not running well. Despite suffering financially as well as mentally after the ban he supported the government decision as he told that the violence had considerably increased in the area as the liquor consumption had increased

Besides an another person who worked at the liquor shop for a very long period of time gave an inside view of the problem of alcoholism in Bihar. His name was Jeet Kumar, and he was working at the liquor vendor in Ara. He told that:

“The revised excise policy was a win -win situation for the government on all fronts as under the new lottery system, all the people had to first pay for bidding the liquor shops, and thus government gets the money from all the bidders even from the ones who didnt get the license. Also under this lottery system the license fee had become very high, for one shop it was as high upto six to seven lakhs per month. The license fee of the country liquor was quite high around 5 lakhs as its consumption was more; while the license fee for foreign liquor and IMFL was not so high .i.e. three lakhs as it consumption was low. The minimum procurement level had also gone up under the revised excise policy. The rules related to the

sale of liquor were very lax which in turn created the problem of alcoholism. If a sound mechanism is developed where the liquor is only sold from authorized shops and the people are told that to drink the liquor in their homes only then alcoholism would have not become such a big issue. The role of excise department was not upto mark and was questionable as the main function of the excise is look after the issues of alcohol, cannabis and hemp and they have the duty of catching them who are illegally selling the liquor. But instead of that the police department is always on the look for ways and means to harass those who are doing this profession. Its the Nitish government's decision of amending the excise policy due to which the problem of alcoholism arose. The liquor ban is only on the paper but on the ground everywhere in the state it is available. One of the main reason why other states don't ban the liquor as the reason being the liquor acts as a major source of revenue for the state. In Bihar the two sources i.e. the liquor and sand, which is the main ingredient of the construction sector, generates the revenue as well as employment has been banned, due to which a lot of people have been left jobless" Jeet Kumar, 45, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

### **3.5 Network of Liquor Mafias as facilitators of the Illegal trade of liquor**

One important feature of the growth of alcoholism in Bihar was the strong network of Liquor Mafias across the state who had amassed huge amounts of wealth by doing the business of illegal liquor trade. The liquor mafias flourished by the illegal trade of liquor, causing a great loss to the state exchequer. At the same time it also resulted in deaths of many people, who died consuming the illicit liquor brewed by these mafias. The number of deaths due to the illicit liquor had risen upto 150 people spanning across the districts of Gaya, Muzaffarpur, and Ara. It had resulted in loss of around rupees 200 crore revenue to the state exchequer. All of this came to the light in the wake of the two hooch tragedies which had occurred in month of December 2012. It had taken the lives of more than three dozen people across the district of Gaya and Ara. This had broken the slumber of the state government with the state police department ordering a crackdown on the illegal liquor trade. A top police official had stated that a three-day drive against the illegal liquor trade mafia had resulted in the arrest of 304 persons; 109 manufacturing units were also destroyed; and the police also seized 43,000 litres of illicit liquor and firearms.

Respondent from the police force also confirmed the fact that the illegal liquor trade in the state could not have flourished without the nexus of excise officials, policemen and political patronage. One such example of political patronage in Gaya was the Mantu Yadav who was the brother of the MLA from Rashtriya Janta Dal. Due to his political patronage he was able to run the syndicate of illegal manufacture in the Gaya district and he was wanted in few extortion cases in the region (The Hindustan Times 15/12/ 2012).

According to a report published in Hindustan Times (13/12/2012) the most scathing attack on the state government was launched by the left parties and especially by the CPI-ML who said that the sale of illicit and spurious liquor was flourishing only because it was run under the protection of political leaders connected to the ruling parties which helps them from being caught. Also they said that the illegal trade was very often carried under the grab of the license liquor shops and this fact is also known to everyone but no action has yet been taken on them. Further it claimed while the people are dying due to the consumption of illicit liquor the government is only busy in earning the income from the sale of liquor. Thus it further accused the state government for killing the mahadalits through the illegal liquor trade and it demanded the complete ban on alcohol sale. Further in the wake of the recent hooch tragedy in which many people had lost their lives the CPI-ML had given a call of Bihar shut down ( Bandh) on 15 th December 2012. The leader of the opposition in Bihar legislative Council, Gulam Ghaus highlighted the fact over 90 people have due to the consumption of illicit liquor over last three months. Thus he stated that yet the state government is in no mood the ban the alcohol in Bihar. (The Hindustan Times 2012b).

This fact was also confirmed by the respondent Satyadev Prashad, who was the Ward Parshad of ward number 33 of Ara. He said that mostly people belonging to the Rajput and Yadavs castes were involved in this business of liquor. Even in the hooch tragedy which occurred in the year 2012 in Ara town, in which many people lost their lives, the owner of that liquor shop where the tragedy occurred belonged to the Rajput caste. Satyadev Prashad claimed that the owner had some political connections. According to him the people belonging to lower and marginalized sections of the society have suffered a lot, while at the same time, those upper caste people who were involved in this business of liquor have amassed huge amount of wealth.



The power and influence of these liquor Mafias was such that even the elected representatives of the area feared them and thus it allowed the illegal trade of liquor to continue in that area. This fact was confirmed by another ward parshad of ward number 29 of Ara, who told the researcher about the emergence of alcoholism in his area. He said that earlier when the liquor was not banned officially, there were no liquor shops in the ward, but many people were illegally selling the liquor in this area. Despite knowing about these illegal shops, he did not complain about them as he did not want to pick up animosity with people who were quite powerful. Further he said government has not done the right thing by putting the onus of implementation of the ban on the Mukhiya/Ward parshad.

Another important feature of the growth of alcoholism in the state was the illegal trade in liquor which was done through the network of illegal shops which flourished under the cover of the licensed shops. A report, which was published in the magazine Aadhi Zameen (2013:18-19), showed that total number of licensed shops in the state of Bihar had increased upto 5,624. But this increase in licensed shop was mere a trailer, as the real story was unfolding behind the curtain. After this increase in number of licensed shops, almost every panchyat in Bihar now had at least one licensed liquor shop. It was an open fact that behind each one of these license shop there were two to three illegal shops which were also in operation. The government policy of increasing the number of licensed liquor shop to stop the growth of the network of the illegal shops had not borne any significant result and the licensed as well as the illegal liquor shops were smoothly running hand in hand with each other (Madhu 2013 :18-19).

This fact of the network of illegal shops was also confirmed by Satyadev prashad, who was the ward parshad of ward number 33 of Ara. He highlighted the fact that before the tenure of Nitish government there were only four liquor shops in whole of the Ara town. They were namely at Nawada , Mirganj, Abarpul, and Gangi localities of the town. Now after the change in the excise policy during the Nitish government regime, within a range of one kilometer there are four to six legal liquor shops , not to mention the illegal ones which were innumerable. He informed that the women of the area were full of anger against the increase in alcoholism, because it had resulted in the deaths of many people.

Similarly this fact was also confirmed by the another ward parshad of ward number 29 of Ara. He too had seen that although officially before the liquor ban there were no liquor shops in the ward but many people were illegally selling the liquor in this area. He further defended the old excise policy that was before 2007, as under that policy there were only three liquor making units in the entire Ara town, namely at Abarpul, Navada and Mirganj and liquor that was available was also of better quality. However the people had to travel long distances to get it, as there was only three liquor points in the entire town. But under the new policy which made the liquor easily available at doorsteps, and also the fact that the liquor which was sold was also of very sub standard quality, resulted in the death of many people. He talked of the case of hooch tragedy in Ara in 2012 in which around 35 people had lost their lives due to the consumption of spurious sub standard quality of liquor. He acknowledged the fact that the most of persons who had died in the hooch tragedy belonged to the lower and marginalised sections of the society. Among the deceased, some of them were dalit, mushars and a few belonged to the bania community.

### **3.6 The emergence of struggle against the problem of Alcoholism**

This decision to increase the availability of liquor through an increased network of licensed liquor shops spelt doom for the fortunes of many people in the society as it led to the widespread growth of alcoholism in the society. Due to these policy changes the various social groups have started feeling the heat of these transformations. Among these groups the impact and the outcomes of alcoholism has a social gradient, but the most affected were the women, and lower caste people, these people along with the help of self help groups and various women organizations, campaigned, organized marches and dharnas across the state making this issue a political one. These section will look at the chain of protests which took place against the growth of alcoholism during the Nitish Regime in the different parts of Bihar. The implication of this movement on the various social groups will be dealt in the fifth chapter.

A story of struggle against the alcohol comes from Kuransaraya block in Buxar where a woman named Rita Devi recalls her struggle when she along with the help of Mahila Kala Kendra and other women of his village launched a very aggressive campaign against the liquor shops in the surrounding village a few years ago. For these women this

was a matter of life and death as they belonged to very low socio economic background and the widespread availability of alcohol in their vicinity and its consumption by their husbands was resulting in their further impoverishment and it was virtually becoming impossible for them to feed their children and thus these women literally forcibly closed these liquor shops in these villages (Doshi 2016).

Another such story of putting a relentless campaign against alcoholism comes from another elected women representative named Sobha Devi belonging to the scheduled caste category who won the post of Mukhiya twice in 2006 and 2011 panchayat election in Bihar. Even after the death of her husband she continued her fight against the liquor shops with the help of SHG which she had earlier formed (Kumar 2015)

Government of Bihar (2017:65) also mentions that in two villages, women had come together to demolish six liquor shops, prior to prohibition. And in one village, community has enforced prohibition for the last two years. These community initiatives were led by the elected *Mukhiya* and Jeevika women.

The State government also was starting to feel the heat of the issues as this was reflected in their sudden decision in 2011 to celebrate November 26 as the Prohibition Day. The choice for this date was a political one as on same day a year ago Nitish Kumar was sworn in as the Chief minister for his second term, rather it would have been appropriate to celebrate the Gandhi Jyanti as the Prohibition Day who is supposed to be champion of Prohibition<sup>3</sup>. The women groups under the banner of Bihar Women's Network (BWN) and Patna chapter of National Alliance of Women's Organization severely criticized this government move to celebrate the Prohibition Day as merely a political gimmick. They further organized street-plays and held big march in the state capital to protest against the rampant alcoholism in the year 2012 (The Bihar Times 2012).

While in many other parts of the state like Vaishali, Rohtas and Kaimur Districts the women SHGs have taken out protests against alcoholism as increased alcohol consumption had not only created law and order issue but has also put women safety in the dock. Also thus women SHGs made during their state level meeting in Patna where

---

<sup>3</sup> Gandhi was considered as a champion of prohibition as during the freedom struggle. He has introduced the picketing of liquor shops as part of national movement and it would help to save the poor people. Fahey and Manian (2005:495)

Nitish Kumar was present made a plea for prohibition of alcohol in the state. Besides this the SHGs also wanted that the prohibition of alcohol should also be included in state-sponsored Vision Document 2025, and also they wanted to have a 10-year action plan for its implementation. Thus Nitish Kumar who was then present at the meeting had assured these SHGs that next time when he will come back to power he will ban the alcohol in the state. (Kumar 2015).

One such example of mobilization comes from Ara District where a woman named Indu Bala with the aid of Mahila Samakhya launched a campaign against the liquor in the rural parts of the Ara District. The women groups in these were very happy when the Bihar Government announced the decision for the alcohol ban as their campaign had born fruitful result and also from the fact the incidents of eve teasing of school and college girls in many localities of Ara District would now be a thing of the past (Hindustan Times 2016). This was not only the story of Ara district, but the mobilization of different women groups across different regions of the state continued unabated. There were similar stories coming from Gaya, for some liquor ban meant revival of broken marriages and for some it meant a chance to earn a dignified living. In Gaya people across different social groups have taken a vow to stop liquor, inspired the various anti- liquor awareness rallies that were held across the Gaya district. Similar stories of revival of broken marriages also kept coming in from other districts of Bihar too like Hajipur, Rohtas, Bhabau, and Kaimur (Hindustan Times 2016).

Similarly the Aadhi Zameen (January – March 2013) edition reported deaths of many people in Ara due to the consumption of spurious liquor. To protest against these deaths the Communist Party of India Marxist- Leninist (CPI-ML) and All India Progressive Women Association (AIPWA) had given call of Ara Bandh (closure) on 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2012. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of December these organization had organized a protest march in the Ara town for punishing the culprits and to push for the demand of total alcohol ban and also for giving them a compensation of 5 lakh each to the family of those deceased and a government job to a member of the deceased family. The protest march was very aggressive and had culminated at the District Magistrate Office and the due to the pressure put by these protesters the administration ceded to their demand of giving

compensation to all the bereaved families including those whose names were not there in the Below Poverty line (BPL) List (Madhu 2013 :18-19).

Also there were reports of deaths of people due to the spurious liquor in Patna and Gaya as well. There was also a call given for Bihar shut down (Bandh) on 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2012 to press for the demand of total ban on liquor by the CPI-ML and this was the first time since 1974 that the struggle against the liquor Mafia had become a major political agenda of the state (ibid).

Aadhi Zameen (2012:12-13) also mentions the story of fight against the alcoholism comes which comes from Sivan district of Bihar. Here a woman named Ramavati Devi had launched a successful campaign against the existing liquor shops owners of her region. She lived in the Raghunathpur Block of the Sivan district. She had already joined the women organization of C.P.I-M.L in 2012. In her interview with the researcher, she recounted the struggle against the liquor shop. Due to the strong mobilization of women against these shops she was able to close many liquor shops in her area. One of her major struggle against the liquor shops was in the Aamvari and Kadsar villages in her region. Earlier in this region a person had died due to the consumption of liquor and his body was found in a suspicious state. The powerful liquor mafias conspired and put the blame of murder of that person on the party worker. Another person too died in the region due to the consumption of liquor. This angered the women of the village and the next day a group of ten women with the leadership of Binda Vedi, went to the police station for the closure of the liquor shops in their region. However the police inspector posted there told them he cannot do anything and that they have go the district magistrate. After that women went with the application to the D.M to demand for the closure of liquor shops. But the D.M in turn told them to go to the police station. This time when the women came to the police inspector, he got very angry and abused them for complaining against him to the district magistrate. Then women held a meeting in a school in Kadsar village to plan for the closure of shops. Around 80 women had participated in the meeting and they decided that to launch a joint protest demonstration against the police inspector. On 30 August 2012 a group of hundred women and men under the banner of A.I.P.W.A started the demonstration against the police station. The women also exposed the bribe taken by the police inspector from the liquor shops owner to remain silent. As the protest

was becoming very aggressive, the police inspector came outside and said that since he was new to that area he did not know much and from now on he will take action against these liquor shops. And thus all liquor shops in that area were closed down due to the effort of the women and men in that region (Aadhi Zameen 2012 :12-13).

The researcher during the field visit held discussions with A.I.P.W.A leaders Indu Singh and Saroj Choubey, and the local ward parshad as well the local party workers of the C.P.I-ML. From the discussion with these people the researcher came to know that the changes made by Nitish Kumar in the excise policy had resulted in the doubling of the existing liquor shops. Not only the shops were opened in residential areas but also near schools, and religious monuments as well. They also told that to counter the growth of alcoholism they launched many campaigns against liquor in Siwan, and Ara. In Ara too, they launched many protests in various parts of Ara District like Bin tola, and Jawahar tola . Among all the protest and campaign launched by the women groups against menace of alcoholism the Bin Tola protest was worth while mentioning as this protest saw a huge and spontaneous participation of the women especially from lower castes. These women from the Bin Tola and the adjacent Ujjiyar tola had come out to protest against the widespread growth of alcoholism in their areas, which has ultimately resulted in death of two persons from the malah caste, belonging to the Bin tola of Ara in the year 2012.

A local lady named Sonia Devi who had played an instrumental role in launching the protest campaign against the alcoholism. She recollecting the fateful day, narrated the story that:

“There was a widespread availability of liquor in our area and the situation was such that in every second house liquor was being illegally sold and thus there was no family left in area which was not affected by the problem of alcoholism. As a result of this two persons had lost their lives. Before the liquor ban the condition had become so worse that any of the youths who went to work they did not go without drinking to the work. On that fateful day out of the two workers who had died, one had entered into a well for cleaning it, since he was already in the state of intoxication after drinking and after cleaning the half part of the well when he

entered again for the second time in the well he got caught by the wire of the earthing that was placed inside the well. Due to being in the state of intoxication he could not pay attention to the wire of the earthing and thus was hit by the current resulting in his death. When the first youth who had entered into the well did not come out the second youth also jumped inside the well to find out what had happened to him. But he too got caught by the current and died inside the well. On hearing this the entire community rushed to the spot and also the wife of the deceased who started crying. The two persons who died had left behind two small children, the onus of their upbringing had fallen on her shoulders. These two youths who had died had no house of their own and had only a little bit of land which was lying barren. Neither they could build their homes nor they could educate their children and they died only in the habit of drinking. Due to the drinking their condition had become worse and it had reached to such an extent that they could not save any money and thus they did not have the money to buy their coffin.” Sonia Devi,50 years; Female; Bin Tola , Ara Town

The death of two laborers in June 2012 Chedi and Binod Prasad of Malah community had rang alarm bell in this area. Sonia devi with the help of local CPIML & AIPWA leaders campaigned undertook a protest rally to the DM’s office. She raised some quite important question that if the people continue to die by drinking liquor than, who will take care of their children and wives. The protest was quite aggressive and vocal as around 1000 women marched with brooms and sticks in their hand to press for the ban of liquor in the area. On that day people were full of anger and to show their anger they had tied the body of two deceased persons on the *Thela* (Cart) and they carried the body to the DM resident where there was quite an aggressive protest. As a result DM at to come out to listen to their grievances. The DM ordered a post mortem and also gave 1500 rupees for burning the body of the dead. The DM also gave them assurance that they will take strict action on these liquor shops. She told as result the powerful march the area remained silent for some time as excise department on the instruction of DM had raided the illegal shops in the area. But after some time the condition became just like before when where the liquor was widely available

Lal Mohan C.P.I.M.L. party worker also informed that around thousand women of the Bin tola had taken out a protest rally against the alcoholism. Further he said that these people had carried broom and sticks in their hand and also they had tied the liquor pouch in their sticks. During the protest there was a clash between the police and protestor, further he said that when the leader of A.I.P.W.A. had talked to the D.M. after that some people from the excise had come and raided the area and had arrested the those people who were selling the liquor illegally. Due to this raid many of the illegal shop which were running in this area reduced significantly. Nearly 50 % of the illegal trade of alcohol had been controlled and reduced. This was the biggest step which has been taken regarding the liquor the stoppage of illegal liquor in this area. And this campaign against alcoholism, most of the people who participated I n this campaign had belong to the backward and schedule caste and women. Due to this protest some of the liquor Mafias had run away and some of them still remaining. Lal Mohan was also the member of local Fishery committee

There was struggle against alcoholism which was also witnessed in the Fatuha. The widespread availability of alcohol had also affected the family lives in the region. The women were here too at faced the brunt of this problem and hence the women of the area especially the mid-day meal workers had come to protest against the menace of alcoholism. The mid-day meal worker with the help A.I.P.W.A leader Saroj chaubey had launched the campaign against the problem of alcoholism prevalent in the area. Sona Devi who was a mid-deal worker, played an instrumental role in launching the campaign against alcoholism in this area. Recalling her struggle she said;

“Initially I too faced the violence by my partner, and thus decided to undertake protest and rallies in the Fatuha town as well as Patna to press for their demands during the year 2015 before the ban was put in place. We first organized protest rallies and gheared the Block development officer(B.D.O) office. The B.D.O told that he will inform the senior officer and government on this. The government after the continuous pressure from the women group had taken the decision to ban the country made liquor only by the foreign liquor freely available. We too protested against this arbitrary decision, and demanded the full closure of all kind of liquor shops. We had further intensified their campaign



against the liquor and they had held protest rallies close to two or three times in 2015 itself. They had also went to Patna to protest in front of the district magistrate. There they had also sat on a hunger strike to press for their demands. We not only raise the question of wide spread alcoholism but also raised the question of increment and regular payment of their salaries.”Sona Devi, 45, Female, Fatuha

### **3.7 The Political and Economic compulsion behind the growth of Alcoholism.**

We see that the state’s political regime which due to the economic compulsion first facilitated the growth of alcoholism in Bihar and later the same political spectrum was forced to give up its economic priorities in compulsion of populist power politics. If we carefully analyse the economic and political scenario of the state, then we find that Bihar has historically been an agrarian economy this was more so evident post the bifurcation of the state after which the mineral and the Industrial belts went to the Jharkhand. Even though after the bifurcation of the state it is the third most populous state in the country but interestingly its has also the state which has highest rural population i.e. around close to 88% of the total population is living in rural areas in Bihar. Also in terms of human development indicators i.e. sex ratio, literacy rate and maternal mortality rates, it ranks the lowest among all other states of India (Census 2011). On the UN Human Development Index, Bihar figures third from bottom among Indian States (21 out of 23). (UNDP 2008) Kumar (2014) shows that unlike his predecessors Bihar in the reign of Nitish Kumar in the past have achieved very significant economic growth rates which is quite remarkable as the state for long had remained out of reach of big investors even after the opening of the economy in the 1990s due to a number other reasons like the lack of proper infrastructure like the roads, power and effective law and order in the state. And the bifurcation of the state also dealt a severe body blow to its growth prospects (Kumar 2014:197). Thus taking on the mantle from Lalu Yadav , who failed to deliver on the developmental agenda, Nitish Kumar in spite of depending on the same electoral support base of the lower castes and minorities, has successfully in creating a broad based secular constituency for the reforms, which got support not only from the urban middle classes but as well from the vast majority of the rural poor population which was evident from

his landslide victory in the 2010 assembly elections .Thus buoyed by the massive support base Nitish Kumar jumped on the bandwagon of reforms which are more or less followed the World Bank driven agenda, as this can be evident from the fact that the Bihar government official economic survey documents which matched with the recommendations of the World Bank document (Kumar 2014:200).

Nitish Kumar government pursued its economic interest by changing the excise policy in 2007 which almost doubled the liquor shops in the state, for the purpose increasing the revenue of the state, without heeding to the fact that such a move would lead to adverse social as well negative public health impacts on the vast majority of the population.

The growth of alcoholism has started affecting the lives of the people, specially the poor and the women have started to feel the heat as this resulted not only in the economic deprivation but also as well the graph of domestic violence and the graph of violence on the overall has also increased. This resulted in women on their own in different parts of Bihar coming out of their homes against the closure of the liquor shops. Beside it many women groups and the NGOs also campaigned against the growth of alcoholism. Even in the wake of increasing protest and growing opposition against the liquor business in the state it is well known fact that the liquor `business would not have bolstered without the political patronage to the liquor traders and the liquor mafias. The increasing political clout of the liquor mafias could be gazed from this fact that when many people had gathered in front of DM's office in Muzaffarpur to protest against the liquor, they were badly beaten there by the liquor mafia and no action was taken against these liquor mafias who beat the protesters (Madhu 2013:18-19).This brings us to the important question that if the official excise revenue from the liquor increased six folds in six years .i.e. it rose from rupees 329 crores in 2005-06 to 2,045 crore in 2011-12, then how much benefit does the liquor mafia could have accrued given the fact they were running two to three illegal shops behind one licensed liquor shop. This sounds something fishy about this huge profit margins in the liquor trade could not have been possible albeit some huge scam in the excise department as this apprehension came to the fore when in 2010 Nitish Kumar had expelled the excise minister Jamshed Ashraf in a quick time when he had ordered an inquiry into a 500 crore scam in the excise department. (Madhu 2013:18-19).

Tiwari(2017: 107-108) see the problem of alcohol as viscous cycle in which the poor classes get trapped, which results not only in their financial impoverishment but also the women of these poor household had to bear the brunt violence and thus halting their progress in the society. Further it claimed the nexus between the liquor mafia, the feudal elements and the state helps them to sustain this business in which the poor classes are not only exploited by giving them minimal wages but the liquor also wipes off the little bit of earning which they make and thus helping the ruling classes to sustain their rule. Moreover in a poor state like Bihar the business of liquor helps the feudal elements to maintain their hold in the society as the recent increase in violence against the poor and oppressed classes bears testimony to this fact. The populist measures such as Alcohol ban is another ploy by the Nitish Kumar to divert the attention from the core issues of poverty, unemployment, and most importantly redistribution of land.

Though the revenue generated from the excise helped him to launch his various populist schemes like the bicycle scheme for girl students and it also helped him to finance the SHG model of grassroots development to empower women. (Hindustan Times 2015). But an interesting revelation which came to the fore about this Bicycle scheme was that in a public rally the Chief Minister had himself offered an open invitation to the people to drink liquor as this would help to increase the tax base of state government and from which he was able to run this Bicycle schemes for girls. Although the Chief Minister had to face stiff opposition from the girls on this statement and at many places they had even offered to return the bicycle to him (Madhu 2013:18-19). Moreover Kumar (2014:201) has also been confirmed this fact that the increased excise revenue was used by the state government to pay back the interests of the debt taken from the world bank to launch these programs

But if we analyse his developmental policies, then we can clearly unravel the hidden agenda of the world bank as for example Nitish's SHG formula of poverty reduction and empowerment of women is highly questionable as these SHGs though it give some agency to the women, but when we see in the larger context it promotes the maintenance of status quo, without changing the social class relation and also we have to keep in mind that without structural transformation i.e without affecting any fundamental shift in the

distribution of political or economic resources poverty cannot be reduced. Further Pattenden (2010) also shows that

“SHGs as the part of the broader depoliticized neo liberal civil society framework which provide low-cost, highly visible anti-poverty initiatives that complement the erosion of the state’s role in development and help to forestall social instability in a context of ‘jobless growth’ and stagnation in the agricultural 4sector.” (Pattenden 2010 :509)

Also as we know that alcohol consumption has a social gradient as with regard to Bihar after the easing out of excise policy regulations to promote the growth of liquor shops in the name of providing quality drink through legalized liquor shops in a way indirectly facilitated the growth of alcohol consumption in Bihar as the structure of alcohol industry in India (See Table 1)suggests that the country liquor has the highest share of market close to 48% owing to its low and cheap price and easy availability as this was made available in the case of Bihar when government changed its excise policy in 2007 in a bid to increase the state revenue .

Table: 3.4 Alcohol Industry in India

Type of Industry	Market Share	Pricing	Geographical Consumption	Target Audience
IMFL	36%	Affordable and competitive	Mostly south India	Above 35
Country liquor	48%	Cheap prices that is driving factor	All over/large scale tribal belt	Above 35
Beer	13%	Expensive	Urban cities, AP	18-40 years
Illicit Liquor	NA	Extremely cheap	small town and villages	NA
Imported Liquor	3%	Luxury	Metropolitan cities	women/ 35 and above

Source: Alcohol Marketing and Regulatory Policy Environment in India Report 2013

Also regarding the class gradient of the alcohol consumption this has been confirmed by the NFHS-3 (2005-06) data, 27% of men and 0.5% of women in the highest wealth quintile drink alcohol, while 41% of men and 6.2% of women with lowest wealth index drink alcohol. Alcohol usage is more in educationally deprived populations as 42.8% men and 4.3% women with no education v/s 24.8% men and 0.6% of women with highest level education. The above factors further amplify the problem of alcoholism in Bihar in the context of economic policy followed by the state government which facilitated the wanton growth of alcoholism in Bihar.

Singh (2016) claims that though there many other fall outs of alcoholism, yet poverty remains its greatest bane. He further argues that the daily wage earners are very likely to report abuse of alcohol. Lower the income of a family, the greater the chance of alcohol addiction. The people belonging to lower strata of the society are more prone to consume local brews and toddy which does pose risk to their lives in the long run. Moreover, the illicit liquor brewed in the homes also poses challenge to the lives of the people.

Further after having won the 2010 elections with a huge margin had realized the importance of women voters thus again during the campaign for the next elections and also in the background of growing protests against increasing liquor shops by the women groups across the state he promised to impose the ban on alcohol to appease the women voters of whom he had carefully constructed with help of pro women measures and programs. (Singh and Tiwari 2018)

The exemption of the taari from the alcohol ban also highlights the fact that this decision was done out of compulsion of power politics to appease the Pasi a traditional Toddy tapping community who have a significant population of 1.5 million. But at the same time this kind sympathetic treatment was not meted with in case of the Mushars who belong to the Mahadalit caste and they have traditionally knowns as “ratcatchers”. The economic condition of this caste is very bad as they hardly any land and most of them earn their living by doing low paid menial jobs like the rag picking and hence this caste are not able to fulfill the minimum daily living needs easily. To supplement their income most of the Maushars are involved in the business of selling and making the country liquor from mahua and jaggery. After the ban the Maushars from whom it’s a matter of

death and survival, now have no options left but indulge in underground selling of desi liquor. It's quite ironical that how by one stroke of law the state easily takes away from a community a source/agency of making a dignified living by increasing their income. This ban has not only taken away from a source of livelihood but also has pushed the future of their children in the darkness, as after they ban have no option left but to send their children to work. These children were anyhow enrolled in the school where they were at least ensured of getting one time a wholesome meal in a day, even this could resist their parents from again sending them to do some menial jobs like garbage collecting so that they can make up for the bare essentials of living like the food and clothing (The Hindu 2016).

Government of Bihar( 2015) mentions that the new excise policy 2015,was put in place not on the basis any other concrete public health rationale apart from the point of view that it was affecting the poor sections of the population in the rural areas. No other proper studies or research was conducted by the state government to study the public health aspect of alcoholism i.e. say for instance the adult mortality/ morbidity rates due to alcoholism, or the data related to rise in domestic violence, accidents, violence and crime rates in the society due to alcoholism.

Prakash and Kumar (2016) also show that the Nitish kumar decision to impose a blanket ban on alcohol , seems more to be of a populist measure which has been done to appease a particular sections of voter i.e. Women and the rational of physical violence due to alcoholism fails to explain such a kind of move as the data shows that Gujarat is the state which has the longest history of banning and yet it is the state which has highest no in terms of domestic violence The paper further argues that the banning not the solution to the problem as due to poor implementation of by the state machinery the rich continue to have higher quality of alcohol but the poor gets the alcohol of a more substandard quality. Further the paper argues to address this problem one has to increase the taxes on alcohol and use this money in solving the core structural problems of unemployment, poverty and improving the health services to solve this problem.

But once again, here lies the basic fallacy in the kind of development model being followed by the states which on one hand promotes the growth of alcoholism to meet the

revenue demands on the other hand it utilizes the same income to run its populist welfare program. Further a study also highlights the fact that the cost of management of consequences of alcohol use in the country i.e. 244 billion are higher than the total revenue generated from alcohol manufacture and sale, i.e. 216 billion ( Total excise revenue of all central and state governments for 2003–2004)( WHO 2006 Report)

### **3.8 Conclusion:**

The chapter shows that how the problem of alcoholism emerged in Bihar specially under the Nitish regime. It was his urge to boost the revenue of the state which led to the massive increase in the number of shops across the state. The most important feature of this growth in alcoholism in Bihar was the network of liquor mafia who ran almost a parallel network of illegal shops in the grab of the licensed shops. As with the passage of time this problem of alcoholism started assuming mammoth proportions and so it also had many negative fallout especially for women and lower sections of the society. The movement of alcohol ban is considered to be a watershed moment in the recent political, economic and social arena of the state of Bihar. The last assembly elections in Bihar was largely based on the ban of alcohol as the women groups which drew attention towards this problem by series of protest and campaign against the alcoholism across the state. Thus Nitish Kumar was in a fix as he during his first tenure had liberalized the excise policy and now to appease the women he decided to bring the law for alcohol prohibition. Thus liquor ban in state was politically motivated move and this decision was not made keeping in mind the health and wellbeing of the people. Also it's quite obvious that business of the liquor in poor state like Bihar, helps the ruling as well the feudal elements to maintain their hold in the society. Thus rather than offering the populist solution of prohibition in dealing with the problem of alcoholism the states instead of acting in ad hoc manner rather should look to deal with structural issues of poverty, hunger and unemployment should address these problems in the long run which would prevent the problem of alcoholism from becoming an individual phenomenon.

## **Chapter 4- Effect of the Alcohol Ban on Health and Family**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Alcohol consumption, is one of the main cause of ill health, across the globe. Alcohol accounts for the 4% of the total deaths worldwide and accounts for 4.5% of the total global burden of disease and injury. Further, increased alcohol consumption is also assumed to be responsible for the 20% to 50% of the cases of cirrhosis of liver, road traffic accidents, and several types of cancer (WHO 2011:20). Increased consumption of alcohol is also results in loss of productivity and in some cases it may leads to loss of job, thus resulting in the financial impoverishment of the family. Families where the husband, who is the main breadwinner, and would drink frequently were more likely to face major illness and also they were more likely to be in debt. (WHO: 35) Thus, alcohol is not only one of the main causes of mortality and morbidity, but also increased alcohol consumption facilitates domestic violence which effects the lives of other family member specially women and children.(WHO 2011: 15)

The objective of this chapter is to study the impact of alcohol ban on health and family life. In order to do so, the chapter attempts to look at the effect of the liquor ban on health and family life of the people living in the localities of Ahirpurva and Mirachak parts of the Ara District Bihar. It tries to explore what are health problems that are related to alcohol and what difficulties people face in getting treatment for these health problems. Secondly, it deals with economic effect of the liquor ban on the family members and it tries to find out whether the ban has led to improvement or worsening of their financial condition. Further, it explores the impact of ban on the domestic violence within the family. It also attempts to uncover the effects of the ban on the crime and violence in the society. Finally it attempts to explore the link between alcohol and poverty. For doing all this, chapter uses the case studies of the alcoholics and their family members of Ahirpurwa and Mirachak localities of Ara. Also the researcher conducted interviews with different stakeholders like the officials of the de-addiction centre in Ara as well the State level official of the de-addiction program in Patna. Group discussion was conducted with the people in the musahar tola of the Sheetal and Jawahar Tola of Ara Town to know the economic impact of the ban in the from fieldwork done in the Ara Town. Besides the



interviews and the discussion, secondary data from the Bihar police crime statistics was also used. Additionally the chapter refers to the study conducted by the Bihar Government and several relevant newspaper reports to highlight the impact of alcohol ban.

#### **4.2 Effect of the Alcohol Ban on the Health of the people**

Alcohol accounts for a significant number of morbidity yet the alcohol related problems are more than often ignored by the primary care physicians in India. Alcohol misuse not only results in accidents and injuries but is also related to the tuberculosis, liver disease, HIV infection, oesophageal cancer and Duodenal ulcer(Benegal 2005) . Moreover the treatment of alcohol related problem through the De-addiction centre in India has been a low-key affair as most of these centres are defunct owing to the neglect and paucity of funds. Also, interestingly among the Indian states, the state where the consumption of alcohol is high, the rate of help seeking in de-addiction center of that state is the lowest (Benegal 2005).

As we come to the effect the liquor ban on the alcohol related morbidity we find that the ban on liquor has helped to lower the number of cases related to alcohol morbidity. This was highlighted by the study conducted by the health department and doctor association of Bihar which was reported in the local daily, Prabhat Khabar in 2017. The study showed that the number of cases of liver, heart diseases and road accidents decreased in comparison to 2016. The report mentions that before the liquor ban 70 cases of liver came on the daily basis to the Indira Gandhi Institute and Medical Sciences (IGIMS), while in the Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) its number was 120- 130. But after the liquor-ban, the number of patients of liver declined by 25%, and the number of liver surgeries by 25%. Similarly, the number of cases of road accidents that came to IGIMS after the liquor ban has declined up to 20%(Prabhat Khabar 2017).

During the field visit the researcher found that there was no de- addiction centre in the government hospitals of Ara district before the ban. But after the ban these de- addiction center were opened in an ad-hoc manner. This was despite the fact that due to the ban it was expected that a large number of people will come for withdrawal related symptoms owing to the non availability of alcohol. Notification issued by the Excise and Prohibition

Department in 2015, clearly stated that it planned to open De-addiction centres in each district so that the addicts could be treated in these centers (Government of Bihar 2015).

The Hindustan times (2017) shows that after one-year of the ban as per the official records the number of people who came to the 39 government de-addiction center is reported to be around 10,072. The paper reported that majority of the patients who were visiting the de-addiction centre were not for alcohol de-addiction but also for other substance dependence such as the **on poly** substances, which largely included cannabis, solvents, drugs and various forms of tobacco products. The newspaper report showed that total number of beds for inpatient treatment of alcoholics across all the government de-addiction centre in Bihar were around 645, but almost after a year of the implementation of the liquor ban the number of patients who were found to be reported to be receiving inpatient treatment was only 174. Out of these 174 patients only a few were confirmed to be admitted for treatment of alcohol de-addiction. The Hindustan Times (2017) reported that the one of the referral units of the government de-addiction centers .i.e. at the Nalanda Medical College Hospital (NMCH) in Patna, out of 25 patients admitted at this referral units none were alcoholics. The newspaper report quoted the state de-addiction program officer Dr AK Shahi, who informed that the majority of people who were coming to the government de-addiction centre for treatment were addicted to substances other than liquor. As a result the Bihar government had to sent 19 doctors for training at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore, so that they could treat varied patients of different substances abuse.

Also when the researcher went to the office of the State Health Society in Patna, to meet the officer who was in charge of all the De-addiction centers for the state, he gave the following information about the alcohol ban:

‘ The data related the De-addiction was monitored on a daily basis and the all the de-addiction centre across the state reported to this place on a daily basis. But owing to sensitive nature and the high stakes which the government of Bihar had put in the prohibition, I could divulge the details of the data related to the de-addiction like the total number of cases reaching the de-addiction centers across the state, whether their number has increased or decreased after the ban. The chief

minister of Bihar was personally monitoring the entire program related to the prohibition/de-addiction”. Dr H K , Officer in Charge Of the De-addiction Program, State Health Society Office Patna, Bihar,

The Telegraph (2016) reported that in a private de-addiction centre at Patna which was running for the last ten years the number of patients/ addicts coming to their de-addiction center has decreased from 300-350 patients to 180-190 patients after the liquor ban. Director of the de-addiction said that the possible reason for this decrease could be that since the law was very harsh, people were afraid and thus drinking has gone underground.

Also during the field visit, the researcher found that till February 2018 .i.e. after one and half year the ban on liquor became operational, the total number of patients that came to the De-addiction center at Ara, was found to be only 307 patients. While a year earlier i.e. in march 2017 the number of patients was 204. Here too the number of cases of other substance abuse (other than alcohol) has considerably increased over the period. The nodal officer at the De-addiction said that “in the early phase after the alcohol ban many cases of other substance abuse (other than alcohol) i.e. the use of hemp, heroine ,cannabis and solvents(fast drying glues and adhesives, etc) were reported at the De-addiction center of Ara”.

He felt that this could be due to the fact the after the ban in the first days severe alcoholics owing to immediate alcohol shortage resorted to these other substances like the cannabis, hemp and solvents to satisfy their intoxication habit. This phenomenon was observed in the case of Ram Ayodhya Ram aged 65, a person belonging to *chamar* caste i.e Scheduled Caste (SC) who lived in the Mirachak locality of Ara. He was doubly hit by the alcohol ban as after the ban owing to non-availability of liquor he fell seriously ill as he took a double dose of bhang to get himself intoxicated. Although the patient till this time was unaware of the **fact** that he was suffering from tuberculosis (T.B.) which resulted in co morbidity. He further recalled that fateful moment when in 2016 after festival of Holi ,when the liquor ban had just been implemented. Recalling this he said:

“ For the past eight days there was no source of getting liquor, I was desperate to satisfy my drinking needs, so I ate two balls of cannabis. As a result I became

very restless and short of breath and became unconscious after which my children took me to a private doctor named B.K Shukla. I had to spend a lot of money on my treatment as doctor had conducted many kind of test and also gave me very costly medicine. I continued my treatment there for six months in which nearly close to sixty thousand rupees were spent. The private doctor had not informed the family members that I was suffering from T.B. but when my family members and I got to know that I was suffering from T.B., then I left the private doctor and decided to get myself treated at the government D.O.T.S center. My condition started improving thereafter. Now I have realized that my condition became so worse that I was on the verge of losing my life due to drinking of liquor and thus have taken a pledge that I will never touch the liquor again. I have not drunk for the past twelve month.’’ Ram Ayodhya Ram,65, Male, Mirachak Ara.

Although it was well known that the state government had opened the de-addiction center only after the state government announced the decision to ban the alcohol in March 2016, Ram’s family members had no knowledge about the de-addiction center. So at one hand, Ayodhya Ram fell seriously ill after taking the ball of cannabis and the situation was further compounded by the fact that his family had no knowledge about the availability of any such de-addiction center where one could get treated for such conditions related to addiction. During the interview his wife emphatically claimed that if had they known about it, they would have definitely taken him to that center.

During the researcher’s field visit it was found that many people who were living the town had no knowledge of any such center, where one could get treated for addiction to addictive substances like alcohol, hemp, cannabis etc. Even if some people had the knowledge of the de-addiction center, then also there was big problem of stigma and shame, which the addicted person faced while going to the de-addiction center. This problem of stigma was further complicated by the fact that this de-addiction center was located in government hospital and going there would make the person’s problem of drinking liquor public. The members of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) group at Patna during the interaction with researcher, also confirmed this fact. They empatically said that biggest problem related to alcoholism was social acceptance of it as a disease. Further the members of the AA group said that the alcoholic never accepts the fact that his habit of

drinking liquor is a disease and most the time the alcoholic person is in a denial mode and he never accepts the fact that he has this problem of drinking.

The researcher came across another alcoholic from Ahirpurva tola who also faced stigma in approaching the de-addiction center for treatment. He was a heavy drinker and he had developed his drinking habit when he had gone to work in the liquor factory in Orissa. He accepted that drinking harmed him in many ways, as it not only led to the loss of finances but it also made him weak, as after drinking he on most of the occasions skipped his meal. Despite his habit of heavy drinking, he did not face any health problem. However he recounted cases of several men who after the ban due to sudden stoppage of liquor had to face some problems. Few even had to be admitted in the hospital and some in the de-addiction center. He felt that because of his perseverance and control on himself, he could actually to quit drinking.

“When for the first time liquor was banned then I had decided not to drink. I kept that promise, as I had enough of will power to quit it. Also I did not consume any other kinds of addictive substances like cannabis or hemp to fill the gap left after the ban on alcohol. However I did drink from the illegal sources; whenever it was available, not on a daily basis, but with a gap of two three days. I think I reduced my drinking because after the ban, liquor had become very costly. It was becoming very difficult for me to get more and more the money to buy alcohol from my family members” Baldev Rai, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara.

Thus from the above cases it is evident that the decision to ban alcohol has put the lives and health of the alcoholic person in more danger, as due to the sudden ban they were forced to eat other substances which might have been fatal to their lives. Also it has been witnessed in India that the efficacy of de-addiction programs have been low. One of the possible reasons could be the stigma and shame related to approaching the de-addiction center as the in majority of cases alcohol use in India is more than often stigmatised (Benegal 2005).

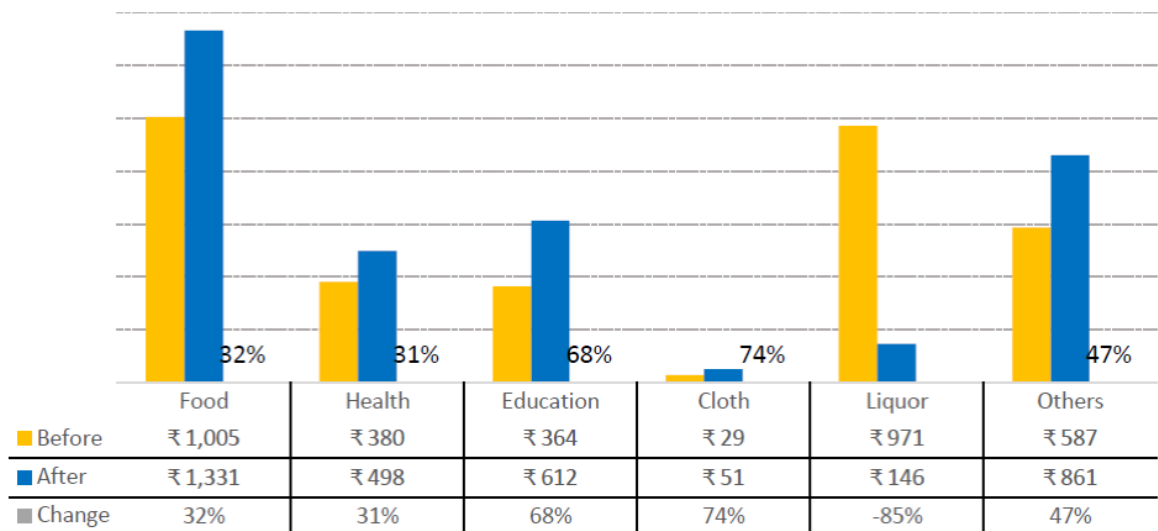
### 4.3 Effect of the liquor ban on the financial condition of the family

Since it was very clear from the beginning the biggest concerns of the Nitish government in bringing the ban on liquor was that, it was affecting the poorest families and they were loosing not only their health but also were being pushed under severe economic deprivation. After the ban was put in place the Nitish Kumar government tried to highlight that after the ban the poor people benefitted a lot as their financial condition had improved (livemint 2016).

A study was conducted by the Government of Bihar (2017: 32-33) in 2017 to assess the impact of alcohol prohibition on the lives of women and girls in rural Bihar. The report showed that before the ban the poor people spent significant part of their income on the alcohol and as result very little money was left for the basic needs like food, clothing etc. Besides there were other adverse economic consequences of drinking as after drinking many of the people missed work and in many occasions their productivity was lowered. Further the study showed that after the liquor ban, the household spending on food and other non-food items such as clothing, health and education has increased significantly, as people who earlier spent a significant part of their income on liquor, now reduced it drastically. And in fact this expenditure had now shifted to food and other non-food items.

Figure4.1

4.1



Source- Government of Bihar (2017: 33)

The study showed that before the ban the people used to spend Rs 1005 on food on a weekly basis. But after the ban the spending on food increased to 1,331 reflecting a change of 32%. Similarly the spending on non-food items such as health, education and clothing has also increased after the ban. The major change, which happened after the ban with regards to food was that many families started now consuming more vegetables and milk; the consumption of non-vegetarian food like meat, fish and egg also improved in many families. Further the report showed that 29% of the women reported more consumption of milk than before; likewise 57% of the women reported an increased consumption of vegetables; another 18% of the women reported increase in the consumption of meat and fish. (Government of Bihar 2017: 33- 36)

#### **4.3.1 On the Economic Side, the Liquor Ban evokes a Mixed Response**

During the field visit specially with reference to the *Mushars* and other lower castes, it was found that before the alcohol ban, across all lower caste groups, the continuous drinking not only deteriorated their health, as due to the daily drinking they very often skipped their food, but it also resulted in their financial impoverishment as the increased consumption of alcohol in many cases also rendered them unfit for next day's work, thus further reducing their earnings.

But on exploring the effect of the liquor ban on the financial condition of the family, especially of *Mushars*, evoked a mixed response. In some cases it led to some kind of improvement in their financial condition, but in other cases there was no major change in their financial condition. This can be primarily explained by the fact that due to the lack of any fixed job and employment opportunities, their lives were already in a state of perennial deprivation. Regardless of the alcohol ban their life remained the same. In most of cases these *Mushars* were in extreme poverty and were finding it hard to get even two square meals a day.

The discussion with the *Mushars* of the Sheetal tola of Ara, along with the former Ward Parshad of the area on liquor ban sprang a few surprises, as it helped to break some myths and misconceptions about the liquor ban. In the *Mushar* community in a number of families the women worked along with their male counterparts to ensure their daily living. and in the case if the man doesn't bring money for daily food expense, this loss to

some extent was filled by the women counterparts whose daily earning from rag picking ensured them the food at least for that day.

So in a way when the liquor was available the drinking habit of the male counterparts did not push the families in such a big financial crisis where they do not have the food also. This was seen in the case of woman whose name was Batashiya, who use to drink the country made liquor. She was a rag picker and use to roam around the entire town to collect the scrap. she earned around 50 to 100 rupees per day. The fact that she received very little support from his husband in running the family angered her very much. On this the wife and the husband had a heated argument between themselves in front of the researcher.

The Wife told that:

“My husband never gave me any money for running the family instead I from the work of rag picking somehow ran the family. If you really want to know about this then ask to my husband how much money he contributes for the running of the family” Batashiya , 50, Female , Mushar Locality Shetal Tola, Ara.

The husband replied ( in anger) and told that:

“You don’t be in any mistake that the family is running from your money.”

The Wife again hit back at the husband:

“If the family was not running from my money then whose from money it has been running”

The former Ward Parshad who was present during this interaction, supported the wife. He stated that many a times when the husband did not bring money, food was not cooked and the husband hardly got worried about these issues. The former Ward Parshad told that after the liquor ban their condition has improved as now both of them bring money home from their work and the family is now running happily and smoothly.

is.

One of the defining features of the Mushars in these locality was the lack of any permanent source of employment. Even if some of them get some work, it is mostly temporary. As a result these Mushars were living in extreme poverty and their condition



had become so worse that many of them didn't get two square meals daily. Thus for them even if they were drinking, the ban on liquor had hardly changed their lives. Two cases of daily wage labour of the Muashar locality of Jawahar tola in Ara tell the real story.

The first case is of person named Ganesh Ram who was a daily drinker. He too had become quite old and weak, but still somehow was earning his living. He narrated his condition about his drinking and said that:

“ I used to drink both Mahua and country made liquor before the ban, but after the ban I have totally stopped drinking as how can I think of drinking liquor when there is no food to eat. Now a days there is no means of earning and situation has become so worse that now we are living by picking the rag. From this I used to earn hardly 30 to 50 rupees daily which is well below the daily wages which I used to earn earlier. The liquor is still available after the ban but its available at very high prices. Even if I want to drink, I cannot drink because of high price.”

Ganesh Ram, 60 , Male, Jawahar Tola

Similarly another person named Rangeela Ram, who also belonged to this mushar locality expressed similar views regarding the alcohol ban.

“ Before then ban I used to drink daily but now I am not earning. There are no employment opportunities left after the sand ban so I have literally stopped drinking. I used to earn around 250 to 300 rupees per day by doing various kinds of labor like pulling rickshaw or carrying cement and bricks etc. Out of this earning I used to drink of about 100 rupees daily. I usually drank two packets of country made liquor which use to cost around 25 rupees per pouch, and rest of the money was used in buying some kind of snacks for drink. The biggest problem that people of this locality were facing was that the people here do not have enough food to eat as many people do not have any work. In my home for the past four day only one time the food was cooked, and I ate either only plain rice without any pulses and vegetables .i.e.” mar bhat” or chapattis with salt ‘noon roti” Rangeela Ram,65, Male, Jawahar Tola, Ara

Another case, which shows that the ban on the liquor has led to the improvement in the financial condition of the family, is of the person named Sumendra Sharma aged 42. He

belonged to the Badhai Caste which falls under the Extremely Backward class category in Bihar. He is resident of Ahirpurva Tola ward no 29 Ara and had studied till class ninth. He narrated the ill effects of drinking and how the liquor ban has helped their family.

‘ I had started drinking at a very early age just after his marriage. Before the liquor ban, I used to drink liquor of around hundred rupees on a daily basis and there were occasions when I used to drink thrice in a day. Even if I had no money than I borrowed it from other people. And on many occasion the liquor shop owner provided me the drink in advance with the promise that I would pay back. After the ban I was able to save the money as I had almost stopped drinking. And thus I was able to buy a new bicycle. Before the ban when I use to come to home after drinking, I destroyed things, threw utensils and also misbehaved with my children. Many times in my house food was not cooked as I came to the home without money after drinking. Even before the ban I used to bring non vegetarian food once or twice in a month and after the ban now we used to eat the non-vegetarian food in time of every fifteen days. One of the major benefits after the ban was that now I am more aware of things and I take care of the things in the house. Sumendra Sharma, 42, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara

Similarly another case of a bus driver named Vinod kumar which shows that the liquor ban helped to improve the financial condition of their family. He belong to the Bhagat(Mali) a most backward caste. His age was around 45 years and he had studied eighth class only. He drove the school bus of the D.A.V public school of Ara and earned around 8000 rupees per month. He also had three children, two boys and one girl and all of them were studyig in a English medium school. Besides his job as a school driver he also use to sell the flowers in the temple to earn some extra money for his family. These flowers came from the plant which he had planted in his small plot of land. His mother also got some family pension as her deceased hsband was a government employee.

‘ Before the ban I used to drink on a daily basis of fifty to sixty rupees. One of the major factor to continue drinking liquor was that it was widely available. I have a problem in getting a good sleep of six to eight hours, for this I also used to

drink. Whenever I used to drink then I used to get a sound sleep. But after the ban as now the liquor has been closed by the government itself, so I have almost stopped drinking as the liquor which is illegally available is very costly. After the ban, yes many things have changed, as earlier the money which I used to spent on the drinking, now I spend on buying some kinds of fruits, eggs and fish for my family members, due to which his respect has grown immensely in the family. It was not that I did not used to bring these things earlier, but the frequency has now changed. As for example before the ban I used to bring those only once in a month now I brings it almost on a daily basis. Vinod Kumar,45, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara.

#### **4.5 The effect of the liquor ban on the domestic violence in the family**

Alcohol the world over seems to facilitate aggressive behaviour and in the course of domestic violence as its acts as a disinhibitor (Zilberman and Blume 2005). And hence in such conditions where there was wide spread availability of alcohol as in Bihar, increased alcohol consumption also meant a lot of repercussion for the family, specially the women and children.

The two cases of the domestic violence which came to the fore during the researcher's field visit are worth mentioning. The first case was that of a woman named Sunita Devi who had a long history of facing physical and verbal violence as well as severe economic deprivation due to alcoholism of her husband . Her husband name was Suresh who belong to the badhai caste (carpenter caste). He was an educated person, being the first in the family to complete graduation. But due to incessant habit of drinking , he ruined his entire family life. His wife had to face very difficult time in raising her children as well as leading a normal and peaceful life.

“ I had first started drinking when I had went to Delhi in search of work long back during 1991-92. While I was working as a carpenter in Delhi, from then I got addicted into the habit of drinking liquor on a daily basis as my fellow co-workers had suggested him that to reduce the pain of hard labour and as well as to reduce the harmful affects of the dust particles inhaled during working could only be done by taking a dose of liquor daily. This situation of heavy drinking continued

for a quite six to seven of years, where I used to drink two to three times in a day. even after I came to Bihar this continued. In order to decrease the level of drinking, I had left the job of carpenter and joined school as a teacher. During this phase I had reduced my drinking habit quite considerably and I only drank on one or two occasion after getting salary at the end of the month. But I could not continue this school job for quite long, as I had to get operated for cataract. I did not have sufficient amount of money from teaching then, I again joined the profession of carpentry. I never gave my wife money, but I myself brought household and ration items of daily use and gave them to my wife. I drink only 15 to 25% what I used to earn, and the rest money I used to buy the daily household items. The biggest reason for not spending a large amount of money on the liquor, as I myself was educated and hence had realized the harm of drinking. My wife also persuaded me not to do so. I often took liquor in a limited amount and controlled manner and while being drunk I had never indulged in any act of violence. Whenever due to the heavy drinking I got high, unlike the other who became violent after drinking I did not become violent. I used to sings songs of Mohammad Rafi and Mukesh Kumar just for entertainment. I often had quarrels with my wife on the issue of liquor, as my wife had made it clear to me that liquor is strictly prohibited in this house. If I would drink liquor in the house then my wife would throw the liquor out of the house. During the fight while drunk I never beat my wife. But sometimes irrespective of being drunk or not being whenever my work got hampered or delayed, then out of anger I verbally abused my wife and sometimes I also used physical force on my wife. Drinking creates a state of high, where I lose all of my consciousness and in the process I often used to start shouting and abusing any person who came in my contact. During such occasions when my wife come in front of me and replied back to me, then I got further infuriated and which many a times ended in some kind of physical or verbal abuse of my wife.” Suresh, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara

Thus the starting point for the physical and verbal abuse in most of the cases was the moment when the wife either argued with him or when he refused to do any work. Likewise explaining this he said

“Whenever my wife replied in a negative tone or the thing which I wanted to be done, has not been done, or whenever due to my drinking habit she said that if I will come to home after drinking, then she told that she will not do any work, then out of anger I asked that why will you not do any work and in the pursuing argument I used to slap her and thus had to go outside the home hungry without eating” Suresh Suresh, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara

Also one of the main reason which led to some kind of abuse of his wife was the issue related to the money. The husband from the very beginning had made it clear that he never gave money in the hand of his wife but instead he bought all the necessary household items.

“There would be many such people who might be giving all the money to their wives, but I do not give as I have not made my wife the master of my house. The reason for this being that I never trusted my wife for keeping/ saving the money which I give to my wife. The entire women community is like that; they are incapable of keeping/saving the money. Whenever they will have money they would not keep it and instead they would spent the entire money. Whenever I asked/ needed money, then very often I did not get from my wife, as she often told me that the money which I gave has been spent. Also I remember that there was an incident when I required some money for buying nails, she did not give, as a result of which my work got affected..” Suresh, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara

The arguments over money often led to quarrels and tension in the family resulting in the wife not cooking food. After which he often went out of the house to eat some food. This happened on many occasions, but in this process the husband reminded that

“Children were often not left hungry as my wife arranged some food for them. This kind of situation of my wife not cooking food did not last for many days, as my wife after few days herself realized that my husband is hungry for many days, so she started cooking. My wife did not go to work outside instead she used to save some money which she often got from her ancestral home, which helped to feed the children.” Suresh, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola

The interview with Suresh and his wife revealed that the main reason for the fight/violence was mainly drinking of liquor as she often resisted this. Many a times she told him to stop coming home in drunk condition, but he never did so. Although many times he tried to hide his drinking from his wife by trying to behave normally, but very often he was caught by her.

The violence experienced by the women in the above case was not only limited to her physical and verbal abuse but it had also another dimension related to financial violence, which the women and children faced. This can be seen from the above case where the heavy drinking habit not only affected the health of the alcoholic but also led to the financial impoverishment of the family. Thus in the above case, Sunita Devi recalled

“Due to the drinking habit of my husband, the children often suffered as on many occasions he did not bring money for buying daily household items. My husband was so heavily addicted to drinking liquor that he can do anything for drinking. He very often use to sell the household items like utensils, for drinking and many a times he borrowed money from other people for drinking. Most of the times he use to drink of the whole earning, but sometimes he also brought some household items from his daily earning. His health also got worsened, and he now has cough and T.B as result of his drinking. Due to his drinking, my elder son had to leave his studies and had to work at a very young age. Whatever little piece of land was there also had been sold. And the money ‘from that land’ have been kept for the marriage of my daughter”.Sunita, 50, Female, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara “

She further told that post the liquor ban the instances of physical and verbal abuse has reduced as his husband had stopped drinking. .On the economic side, the ban on liquor has not to any significant improvement in their life.

The second case was that of a woman named Anita Devi who had a long history of facing physical and verbal violence as well as severe economic deprivation due to severe alcoholism of her husband . Her husband name was Mahesh, aged 65 year was educated till class tenth. She herself was not literate and could only sign..They had a huge family with ten members. They had a total of eight children including four sons and four

daughters, out of which they had married three daughters and two sons. The husband had managed alone the whole family with the earnings from his work of toy artist, who used to make and sell the toys of wood. He told that once even he got some prize from the Bihar and central government as well. During the early course of life he changed many profession as he proudly recollected that at the time when his father was alive he used to work as ticket collector in local cinema hall. At time he said that he never indulged in drinking and whatever he earned he brought and gave it into the hands of his father. But later on as he started working in the profession of carpentry, then he developed this habit of drinking. The wife often reported that

“Whenever my husband came in a drunken state to the home, he sometime due to the intoxication he used to throw stones at the people. Due to drinking my husband did not had fight with his neighbors, but very often after drinking he quarreled in the family itself. Like many times he had physically abused his me. Many times I also spoke against this. If I got beaten then would I speak against it, sometimes I spoke out of pain as he had thrashed me very badly by pulling my hair. Since my children were hungry I had no choice but to ask for money from him. ” Anita, 60, Female; Ahirpurwa; Ara

Here also the starting point of the fight between the couple was the arguments related to the money. The husband defended himself for beating his wife by saying that:

“ When a person comes home from work after a hard days toil and the wife at that time need to nicely talk to him to relax him but instead my wife use to ask me for money in a rude manner which infuriated me. Mahesh, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

The wife replied and told that:

“Since my children were hungry I had no choice but to ask for money from him.”

The husband again hit back and told that:

“if I would not have brought money by working then how the family could had been surviving for many years.” Mahesh, 65, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

Further the family members told that one of major ill effects of his drinking was the verbal abuse. The wife told that

“Earlier whenever my husband use to drink, then very often after coming to the home he sit outside the door of the house and start to sing and dance. Anita, 60, Female; Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

The Children also told that:

“ Even if after drinking, if our father went to bed to sleep but he will wake up in between and start the verbal abuse.”

The husband again told that

“I had no bad intention or ill will against them but I used to abuse my family members I did it for their benefit and wellbeing only”. Mahesh, Age 65 years, Sex: Male; Place: Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

The wife further told that his husband was so heavily drinking that once due to intoxication he had brunt and broken his leg. Due to which his work got affected as he had to leave his work for many days, but this was denied by the husband, who defended himself by saying that this thing has never happened that he has to leave his work due to drinking. But his family members told that this incident was true as due to his broken leg he had to sit at home for many days and thus his drinking habit had also resulted in financial hardships for the family, but in spite of all that he never stopped his drinking and sometimes for drinking he use to borrow money from the neighboring person, and many a times the liquor shop owner lended him liquor on credit. The wife told that:

“ Few days back my husband had borrowed fifty rupees from his neighbor telling that he needed money to buy the vegetables, but in reality he drunk the liquor of that money. Anita,: 60,Female; Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

The Husband again replied that :

“ If this thing is not correct then I will beat four times with my shoes” Mahesh, 65, Male; Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

In spite of the fact that due to his drinking habit, the family member many a times had to financial hardships he defended his drinking by saying that he used to drink silently and peacefully and also he took care of the fact that due to his drinking his family members did not suffer financially.



Thus after the liquor ban his wife said that the only major change which has happened is that as he now almost stopped drinking now. He didn't indulge in physical or verbal abuse and instead sits silently in the house. But regarding to economic side the ban on liquor has made no improvements to their family as their overall economic condition was already very low .. But the elder son who had also been into the habit of excessive drinking has immensely benefited from the ban as he has almost stopped drinking and also as a result is creating lesser nuisance in the family. Earlier, after drinking he used to create ruckus in the family, often shouting and hurling abuse to his wife and he had become such a problem that we have to shift him to the another place.

Thus in the above two cases although after the ban in both cases the physical and verbal abuse of the women and children in their families had come down but on the economic side the ban has led to no any significant financial improvement in their family life.

#### **4.6 The effect of ban on the crime and violence in the society**

One of the popular perception which had emerged regarding the alcohol in the Nitish regime was that due to the excise policy amendment in 2007 the alcohol availability increased very much which further led to increase in alcohol consumption. Thus as a result the crime and violence in the society has also increased. The data available from the Government of Bihar (2018), Police Department of Bihar about the crime statistics in Bihar of the last ten years shows that the number of cases of cognizable crimes have first time reduced in 2016 i.e. the year when the ban on alcohol was put in place. Similarly there was a significant reduction in the cases of murder, dacoity, robbery, burglary and theft in the year 2016 as compared to the pervious years. But the conundrum here is that how these cases have again increased in 2017, even when the ban on the liquor is still in operation. Could it be that the ban of liquor has led to increase in underground mafia, as it was seen on all other places where the ban on liquor was imposed<sup>4</sup>?

But from the field visit researcher found that that not only the domestic violence but the crime and violence in the society has generally taken a downwards turn after the implementation of ban. This was confirmed by the former ward Parshad of Sheetal Tola of Ara, who told that the before the ban the Mushars in his Tola due to widespread of availability of liquor used to drink very heavily and very often after drinking they used to

---

<sup>4</sup> Place like the United State of America were the crime and underground mafia during the period of Prohibition. 1920-1933

fight and verbally abuse each other. Further he reminded that the one major reason for the widespread availability of alcohol on this area was due to the fact that in the greed of earning money some of the mushars brought the country liquor, other addictive substance like the Ganja(Hemp) and Charas and started selling it this tola.

Amarnath, belonging to this Mushar tola, who was working in the Municipal corporation as a safai karamchari, informed the resaercher that,

‘Before the ban people in this Mushar tola used to start a fight on very trivial issue after drinking. It was very often seen that husband and wife start to fight among themselves. These fights among the Mushar couples was not limited to the four walls of the house, but very often these brawls and fight happened publicly These fights had very become a common scenario of this tola and due to which the other people who lived close to this mohalla had became very disturbed and in the evening time they very often avoided going from this road.’ Amarnath; Age: 45 years; Sex: Male, Place: Mushar locality in Sheetal Tola Ara

Table no, 4.1 Clumalative Crime Data of Bihar 2007- 2017

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Cognizab-le	118176	130693	133525	137572	147633	160271	184961	195024	195397	189681	236037
Murder	3619	3634	3652	3861	3423	3566	3441	3403	3178	2581	2803
Dacoity	1293	1259	1203	1297	1191	540	579	538	426	349	325
Robbery	2175	2236	2425	2909	2379	1266	1521	1600	1640	1410	1594
Burglary	3036	3172	2925	3191	3166	3758	4193	4674	4518	4511	4776
Theft	9489	9792	10313	11518	11809	17667	21490	22888	22461	22228	27029
Riots	8520	8775	8189	9199	7704	10871	11931	13566	13311	11617	11698
Kidnappi-ng	1689	1948	1956	2566	2226	4737	5506	6570	7127	7324	8972
Kid.for Ransom	385	396	335	411	251	70	70	62	58	37	42
Rape	746	875	804	1063	973	927	1128	1127	1041	1008	1198
Road Dacoity	257	252	247	287	224	191	240	264	175	169	165
Road Robbery	1296	1323	1430	1875	1310	1081	1281	1347	1195	1119	1286
Bank Dacoity	22	28	14	30	26	5	9	9	9	8	7
Bank Ro-bbery	18	15	15	27	8	6	3	5	5	3	3

Source: Crime Statistics, Bihar Police 2018

The former Ward Parshad told after the ban these fights and brawls have reduced significantly in this Mushar tola.

The Aagan badi Sevikas of ward number 29 and 33 of the Ara town, also told that there was a severe problem of alcoholism in the area as due to the widespread availability of alcohol the majority of the households and their families in their areas were affected by it and people were often found loitering in drunken condition in the streets. The sevikas also informed us that many of the women in their areas were facing violence by their partners

Muhamad Jaan-e-Alam resident of Aahirpurva Tola ward No 29 Ara, belonging to the Qureshi caste and a butcher(chik) by profession also shared his experience.

“ Before the ban I used to drink heavily as for example when I earned around 500 rupees in a day then I used to drink around 100 rupees of liquor in a day, after drinking he used to create a lot of nuisance. Before the ban the not only the domestic violence but also the violence in the society has increased and very often he said that the people indulged in eve teasing after drinking and the feudal elements had increased in the society who very often indulged in violence. The ban on the liquor has been a welcome step but this was not being fully implemented and he told that after the ban has increased the price of illegal liquor which is being sold in a hidden manner.” Muhamad Jaan-e-Alam,55 ,: Male., Aahirpurwa Tola, Ara

Further discussion with a lady also belonging to ward number 29 of Ara revealed that before the ban when liquor was freely available, told that majority of the people had been drinking and almost every house one can find a drinker and thus after drinking they used to create lot of nuisance, not only in their homes but also they very often indulged in verbal abuse but also sometimes these also led to some kind of brawls and fight on the roads of the locality.

“After the ban all these fights and brawls due to the liquor has been reduced significantly and now there is peace and harmony in this area. The women of this area are now very much anxious and worried about the fact that this ban of liquor should continue and not to be lifted while the drunkards of this area are

also very anxious and desperate and they want that they want that liquor ban to be lifted as soon as possible. I have a ration shop in my home and besides my home, in an another house which belonged to the Sundi caste, there the liquor was being sold openly. As a result of which many of the drunkards of that area used to assemble in front of my house and very often, after drinking they would swear and brawls and fights were a common occurrence. While such incidents were routine,I did not complain about my neighbour as I was scared of these drunkards. These drunkards had a clout over the local people of the area and as a result no one dared to speak against them. After the ban all these things have stopped, however they still are able to source alcohol from the border states such as in Buxar, which is close to Uttar Pradesh, and it is then being sold illegally, at higher costs. Although the liquor which is now being available has become very costly yet this has not stopped the poor people from drinking as they still are able to drink by sharing the cost of liquor among themselves.” Sarita, Age: around 45 years,Sex: Female, Place: Ahirpurva Tola, Ara

#### **4.7 Poverty, not Alcohol as the main source of all evil**

From the field the researcher found that the condition of the families was so bad that many of them were living in extreme poverty, in fact had reached to a point of destitution. As witnessed in the case of Mushars of Jawahar tola and Sheetal tola, who were landless and lived alongside roads on the land of the Bihar government in a temporary tent roof homes. Also both of these Mushar localities did not have any proper water, toilets and electricity supply. Besides this, these persons had no source of livelihood and many of them were on the brink of starvation as they could not afford even two square meals in a day. When asked, whether the ban has led to improvement in their lives most of them replied that biggest problem is that they have no food to eat as they have no work.

Similarly, another alcoholic person from Ahirpurwa tola of Ara , was also living in poverty and somehow managed to run his family of ten members from the small earnings from his work . In spite of the fact that he was heavy drinker but yet he defended his drinking by saying he was doing nothing wrong or illegal things like indulging in

gambling or other kind of unlawful activities. He drank only of very little amount that was left after spending his earning on the family. On this his wife also supported his stand that it was only because of his earning that she had been able to raise such a big family and she further expressed that she has been able to marry few of his children off, from his earnings. However, the person tried defending his drinking habit and said: “*I drink to forget the agony and pain of my life*”.

In the above case, even if the alcoholic person is exaggerating and trying to defend his drinking, but the fact remains that this is the dreadful reality of their lives and they continue to live in dreadful poverty in spite of toiling and labouring hard for their entire lives. Still living in a *kaccha* house with a thatched roof, he fails to build a *pucca* house, and only somehow manages to feed and clothe his family.

This brings us to the point that where it seems necessary to raise this question that why these people were living in abject poverty, was it the alcohol which made them poor as claimed by the Nitish Kumar, who said the people have been spending around Rs 10,000 crore, which is very large amount of money on the liquor and the ban on liquor will help them save this money and thus it will further improve the purchasing power the people (Livemint 2016). But from the field it emerged that the ban on alcohol has very little impact on their economic condition as most of these people were still struggling to get even two square meals of a day as these people don't have any fixed source of living. Thus it can be said that it the other way around which means that it is the poverty which is the bigger malaise which is afflicting the entire society more than alcohol and Nitish Kumar first need to find some solution to this problem first.

Moreover we all know that alcohol consumption has a class gradient of the alcohol consumption this has been confirmed by the National Family Health Survey NFHS-4 (2015-16) data, 35.4% of men and 0.6% of women in the highest wealth quintile drink alcohol, while 25.1% of men and 2.9% of women with lowest wealth index drink alcohol, thus it is important to note that it is not by default that the lower classes and people belonging to poorer sections of the society consumes more alcohol than upper class of the society. There must have been some reason that why the lower classes more than often took to drinking liquor as one of the possible reasons is that the liquor could possibly

have helped them to endure the painful life in poverty. This thing has been very aptly articulated in a quote by *George Benard Shaw* . “*To the poor man liquor is the chloroform that allows him to endure the painful operation of living*” (*George Benard Shaw 1931*)

The above quote was published in newspaper *The Milwaukee Sentinel* ( 09/03/1931) in the article titled ‘Give man Liquor or a substitute is Shaw’s advice’. In this article George Bernard Shaw beautifully captures the helpless condition of the poor people who, he tells that they had very often taken to drinking so that they can forget the agony and pain of their life in poverty. Further he said that Sobriety is condition, which is not negative and on the contrary he tells that sobriety is an active, positive and enjoyable condition. This can only be achieved when the people are free from the negative and painful life of poverty. Further he gave the example of America and England stating that in spite of their tall claims about their progress and prosperity, there also is awful amount of poverty which is there in these countries and he added that liquor helps to maintain the status quo in the society as the alcoholic person and their families are most of time busy in managing or dealing with the ill effects of drinking. He was writing this at the time when prohibition in America was in operation and he had praised the prohibition and said that it was wonderful experiment but he warned that the liquor should be substituted by something otherwise it would create a dangerous situation for the existing governments. Thus in the end he had suggested that world can get rid of the problem of the alcoholism by getting rid of the problem of poverty and cruelty. Thus what George Bernard shaw had said about the problem of alcoholism holds true also in the case of Bihar as it one of the poorest state in India with the lowest per capita income. (Government of India 2017). Thus in this context of Bihar, Tiwari (2017 107-108) sees the problem of alcohol as viscous cycle in which the poor classes get trapped, which results not only in their financial impoverishment but also the women of these poor household had to bear the brunt violence and thus halting their progress in the society. Further she claimed the nexus between the liquor mafia, the feudal elements and the state helps them to sustain this business in which the poor classes are not only exploited by giving them minimal wages but the liquor also wipes off the little bit of earning which they make and thus helping the ruling classes to sustain their rule.

Thus it has become clear that Nitish Kumar has to first address the structural problems of poverty and unemployment first, if he sincerely want to improve the health and well-being of the people of Bihar.

**Conclusion:**

Although the Ban on liquor was politically motivated but it had also led to some improvement in the problems related to alcohol use like the liver, heart and accident cases have come down. But the sudden ban on liquor had also produced many complications for the severe alcoholics who were resorting to the use of other substance and many had consequently fallen seriously ill. Majority of the community members had no knowledge of the De-addiction center which was opened in the district hospital to treat the addicts after the ban. The De-addiction center too reported very low occupancy as many people felt difficulty in approaching the center. On the financial side some improvement was reported in some cases where due to alcohol ban they were able to save some money but overall due to the lack of any permanent source of employment many were living in extreme poverty where they could not afford even two square meals a day. Similarly due to the ban the families also reported that domestic as well crime and violence in the society has taken a downward turn. But overall the ban has not made any drastic improvement in the lives of people as the low socio-economic condition and widespread poverty still made the lives of the people very miserable.

## **Chapter 5-Multiple Perspectives on the ban of Liquor: A view from women and lower castes**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The emergence of alcoholism in Bihar, especially during the tenure of Nitish Kumar, who has been referred as the champion of women right, was very startling revelation. It was the women who have played a decisive role in making the demand for alcohol ban in the public domain. The issue of alcoholism has directly affected the daily lives of the women and especially those belonging to the lower castes/classes of the society. These women have been instrumental in making the problem of Alcoholism as a popular grass root movement across the state. Nitish Kumar had the reputation of becoming the champion of rights of women and girls. After coming to the power he had very carefully created a separate women constituency by launching a number of schemes such as Bicycle, SHGs JEEVIKA, and also 50% reservation of seats in the Panchayat.

The first section of the chapter succinctly explores the pertinent role of women organizations in campaigning against alcoholism. It simultaneously delineates queries of whether the above-mentioned women oriented programs launched by the state government had helped in the social mobility of women in the campaign against alcoholism across the state. Or whether this campaign had actually challenged the existing patriarchal strangle hold or if it has led to the socio economic and political awakening of women. In the light of the above queries, this section brings in the analysis of the information gathered through the interviews of three women's rights leaders from All India Progressive Women Association (AIPWA), which is the women's arm of the CPI-ML. One of the reasons to focus on the leaders of APWA is that it played a profound role in highlighting the problem of alcoholism and making it a political issue of Bihar. The organization basically perceives the problem of alcohol as a form of viscous cycle in which the poor classes get trapped. This resulted not only in their financial impoverishment but also the women of these poor household had to bear the brunt of violence and thus halting their progress in the society (Tiwari 2017:107).

The next part of the chapter attempts to apprehend the impact of the ban on alcohol among the lower castes. Alcohol consumption had a clear caste and class gradient and



since the growth of alcoholism in Bihar it has severely impacted the financial as well the emotional wellbeing of the lower caste people. With the help of cases from lower castes of Musahars, Chamar, Pasi, and Sundi caste, the chapter tries to highlight the difficulties and the problems faced by these lower castes after the alcohol ban was put in place. It also attempts to explore whether their condition has improved or further deteriorated after the alcohol ban. Finally, it discusses the legacy or the notion of prohibition. Why the states are very much fascinated by the idea of prohibition even if it means loss of revenue and criminalization of drinking classes.

## **5.2 The Road to Resistance: A case study of struggle against alcoholism for women's rights**

When we see history of movement against alcoholism, women have always been at the forefront of the struggle. In India, during the freedom struggle, the movement against liquor was an important part of the civil disobedience movement. This helped to bring the women in active public domain, and many women participated in boycotting and picketing of liquor shops organized by the Congress at that time (Tschurenev and Tine 2014: 7). Fahey and Minan (2005:500) have argued that Gandhi's temperance campaign had helped to mobilize women, who initially may not have understood the relevance of nationalistic politics, but they had joined the movement as they had suffered at the hands of their husbands and father who got drunk.

Even after the independence, the country again witnessed a popular movement against alcohol in Andhra Pradesh in 1990, where many women from lower caste backgrounds organized themselves to fight against the country liquor called Arrack 'National Literacy Mission' prepared the ground for the rural women's political articulation in Andhra Pradesh. Further, as this movement progressed it was successful in making the demand of total prohibition as a political agenda of the state which led to complete ban in the year 1995 (Tschurenev and Tine 2014: 7). Thus the calls for prohibition of liquor have very often dovetailed into women's movements. There is no doubt that such movements lend agency to women as they speak out against the men in their families. In fact, prohibition movements have often been characterized as 'anti-patriarchal'. But we have to see in the long run that whether these movements have brought about any major changes in the

lives of women vis-à-vis in terms of greater access to resources, and also in terms of greater involvement in decision-making process.

This phenomenon was again witnessed in Bihar where women were once more seen at the forefront in the fight against alcohol. They were instrumental in making the problem of liquor as an important political issue in the state. This demand came from women group as their daily lives were at stake due to widespread alcoholism prevalent in the region. Apart from increase in the crime and violence as well as the domestic violence in the society the most pressing cause for the women was the loss of finances as their husbands spent most of the earnings on drinking. This was a major and an important concern for them as alcohol was now available not only through the increased number of licensed shops but also liquor was illegally available widely in neighboring grocery shops, tea stalls and local *dhabas* (local hotels) as well.

This widespread growth of liquor shops was a common scene in entire Bihar. The women lives were getting affected by this rampant growth of liquor business in the state Hence women on their own came out to protest against this menace of alcoholism. In many cases they were aided by the radical left parties and their women organization who, from the very beginning, had strongly criticized the government for the widespread growth of liquor business in Bihar (The Hindustan Times 13/12/ 2012). In the following part we will analyse the role played by the different actors in this movement against the alcohol and whether this had any impact on the lives of women and did it help in challenging the existing patriarchal stranglehold.

### **5.3 Role Played by Women's Organisations in the movement against Alcoholism**

#### **5.3.1 A perspective from the leaders of the movement**

From discussions with AIPWA leaders, Indu Singh and Saroj Choubey, we came to know about the changes made by Nitish Kumar in the excise policy that had resulted in the doubling of the existing liquor shops. Not only were the shops opened in residential areas but also near schools, and religious monuments as well. They also told that to counter the wanton growth of alcoholism they launched many campaigns against liquor in Siwan, and Arrah districts. Further Saroj Choubey in her interview said that A.I.P.W.A from the very beginning made this issue of alcoholism as a burning question and linked with the

issue of women security and safety as the cases of eve teasing and rapes had increased considerably. She recalled that in fact they had launched an aggressive campaigns and destroyed liquor shops in Siwan. In Arrah, they launched many protests in various parts of Ara District like Bin tola, Jawahar tola. The Bin Tola protest was quite a successful one as close to 1000 people especially lower caste women from Bin tola and Ujiyar tola had assembled and *gheared* (surrounded) the DM'S office as two persons belonging to Bin(Malah Caste), an extremely backward caste had died due to drinking in 2012. Besides,, the CPI-ML had given call of Bihar *bandh* (Shut Down) post the spurious liquor deaths in Aanith, a place in Ara, to press the alcohol ban in Bihar. She said that the demand to ban the alcohol had come from the ground especially from the women. Giving examples, she stated that when she had gone to Fatuha to unionize the midday meal workers, they said that what they need the most was to launch a campaign against the alcoholism as they were getting abused and exploited by their husbands and their daily lives were being affected due to the alcoholism. Hence their party had also made this as their agenda.

But when we carefully examine the policies and schemes of Nitish Kumar towards the women, we find that he had tried to carefully build a constituency of women voters, who in fact voted him back to power for second and third term in Bihar. AIPWA leader Saroj Chaubey confirmed this, She recalled that during the first term Nitish Kumar government had undertaken a lot of populist steps, like the bicycle scheme for the school girls for wooing the women supporters. The scheme for setting up Self-help groups (SHGs) called JEEVIKA was one such step.

According to Saroj Chaubey these schemes had fulfilled the purpose for which they were launched as the Nitish returned to the power for the second term with a resounding majority. People stood in line in huge numbers to vote for JD(U). She said that

“the people thought that their girls were being able to study because of the Nitish Kumar as he has provided cycle to them. But after the protests, for the third time when the Nitish went to the women to ask for the votes, this time the tables had been turned upside down as those women had earlier voted Nitish to power were breathing fire for Nitish Kumar. In a lot of big seminars/programs he had to face stiff opposition from

the women groups. Plus they also got feedback from the below through the JEEVIKA that the alcoholism had become a big problem and if the government listen to this demand and bans the liquor then Nitish will get the support of women again for the third time.” (Saroj Chaubey; 55 years; Kadam Kua, Patna)

Nitish’s second flagship scheme was JEEVIKAa SHG scheme. It mainly focuses on grass-root empowerment of women through micro finance initiatives. The main purpose of this program was to reach out to the poor women in the state. The government of Bihar launched an ambitious Project of JEEVIKA, which is a state supported livelihood initiative funded by the World Bank. Launched in September 2007 for the most deprived and socially excluded rural women based on the saving-led SHGs.<sup>5</sup> Kumar (2015) states that JEEVIKA are nothing but World Bank funded micro financing program which has been projected as means of providing agency to the poor women thus empowering them. Tiwari (2014:106) suggests that the JEEVIKA was based on the conceptual framework based on the participatory and the capability approaches to the development. SHGs were believed to act as catalyst by helping to collect their savings, thus trying to infuse a sense of individual and collective capacity building which might help these poorest and socially deprived women (Tiwari 2014 :106).

JEEVIKA SHGs were to act as a functional agency by providing the opportunity structure and institutional environment for the effective deployment of women agency. This is done by the agency of the rural *didis* (elder sisters) who are very instrumental in building of individual and collective agencies enabling them to take control over their lives as well as ownership of the productive resources for securing a better livelihood. The range of activities in which these *Didis* employ their agencies are manifold, like the articulation of their voice against the social concerns such as alcoholism, poor social services schemes, teacher absenteeism and irregularities in mid-day meals in schools. Their role is not only limited to the articulation of their voice on these social concerns but also taking effective action to correct these problems (Tiwari 2014 :109).

---

<sup>5</sup> Projects : Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project - “JEEVIKA” | The World Bank [WWW Document], n.d. URL <http://projects.worldbank.org/P090764/bihar-rural-livelihoods-project-jeevika?lang=en&tab=overview> (accessed 11.14.17).

In view of the above mentioned goal of the scheme it would be significant to see whether it played any role in the improvement of the social and economic lives of the women in Bihar as it is publicised to have played an important role in building the movement against the liquor across the state and in particular in challenging the patriarchy.

However, when we carefully analyse this scheme, we find that although the state initiatives such as the JEEVIKA do provide some agency to the women to operate within the framework of patriarchy. But in actual terms it continues to maintain the binary between the social position of men and women, as it never challenge the existing patriarchal set up.

AIWA leader Saroj Chaubey agreed that state sponsored programs like Jeevika had a limited empowering scope. She revealed that:

“The JEEVIKA initiatives are being mostly formed among the women of the rural areas and there is no doubt that government has deliberately opened this to break our struggle and so that they can implement their own policies. These groups do micro financing and they take the money from the women and further when they require money for some work they get the loans in return at cheap rates. So in a way they are providing immediate help to the women. Also earlier the JEEVIKA and the SHGs were separate and now they are being merged and the government is also merging many kind of schemes into it, like now the building of toilets are also being done through these groups. So these groups are providing many kinds of immediate benefits, thus these groups have also become a medium for their mobility as through these groups the women get the opportunity to come out. However the benefits that these groups provide are limited to financial field only, and they are not leading to any substantial improvement in the overall socio economic conditions of the women in Bihar.” (Saroj Chaubey, 55 years, Kadam Kua, Patna)

Another A.I.P.W.A leader Indu Singh went a step further wherein she totally rejects the transformational agency of JEEVIKA:

“These schemes are nothing but the ploy of vote bank politics through which the government want to reach among the women. It was not due to the campaign of JEEVIKA that the ban on alcoholism happened. In addition to our organization

who worked for fighting against alcoholism, it was the women from villages who on their own came out with brooms and sticks in their hands against widespread alcoholism in their areas. The women raised their voice as their daily lives were getting affected due to alcoholism” (Indu Singh, 45 years, Female, Ara)

Reflecting on JEEVIKA she stated:

“No major change can be seen in the life of the women. However one thing that has changed is that earlier the women in the villages did not get loans easily in times of need as in the villages most of the time money lending is controlled by the feudal lords. This has changed now with coming of JEEVIKA, as now they can get some kind of immediate help from it when they are in need of money. But there is question mark on the work of JEEVIKA also because there are many instances of loans not being sanctioned and there are many cases of mishandling of the money as well.” (Indu Singh, 45 years, Female, Ara)

She was saying this as she had herself has been in the committee which was constituted to check the irregularities of the functioning of the JEEVIKA. Further she also questions and critiques the politics behind the introduction of JEEVIKA scheme by saying that:

“JEEVIKA has become a tool by which they have created a network to enter in the domain of the women groups, so that they can ask vote from them. I do not understand the reason behind why this scheme is only introduced among women. Do they feel that women are illiterate and so they do not have understanding of politics? Also one needs to know that in which localities these financial groups are operating. If one carefully examines this then one would know that these financial groups are only operating in the localities of the poor and Dalits. I feel that the government has done this deliberately, as in Bihar usually these groups have lack of education and can be seen as easy targets to be convinced through such schemes. JEEVIKA in Bihar has become a campaigning tool for Nitish Kumar to enter among the people in villages and towns. Wherever our organization has a strong presence, there has been some resistance against JEEVIKA, as we make the women aware of the equal and dignified life. It is not often that the women who go to JEEVIKA in dire needs of money give vote to the

ruling party. They in fact give vote to us often.” (Indu Singh, 45 years, Female, Ara)

Another CPI-ML leader, Satyadev Parshad who was also the ward parshad of Jawahar Tola Ara also expressed his views on the role played by the JEEVIKA in the campaign against. He said that:

“Whenever the government starts any kind of program or campaign, it is done with their own purpose in mind. Basically these are based on the principle of networking and marketing. These government programs never imagine the freedom of women from fear and restrictions outside the boundaries of existing patriarchal system. If we talk only about the Marxist theories and if we do not pay attention to the daily problems of the people then no person would listen to us. These organizations like the World Bank give funding to these kinds of program so that the women do not raise their voice against the continuing oppression and existing status quo of the society. While living with the people these JEEVIKA *didi* have to listen to the daily problem of the people. But when people started dying due the liquor, then they had to speak and raise their voice against this. Neither this was their intention nor it is anywhere written in their manifesto that these people would fight against the alcoholism.” (Satyadev Parshad, age 45, Male, Jawahar Tola, Ara).

Thus from the above discussion and interviews it is clear that the state interventions through schemes such as JEEVIKA are meant to appease the women by providing them some immediate financial help. But when it comes to challenging the patriarchy or the existing social order these programs fall apart.

Moving towards understanding Nitish Kumar’s decision to ban the alcohol, it seems that it was guided by his apprehension of losing the women constituency which he had carefully built over the years through an array of schemes that particularly targeted the women. For him, the decision on the prohibition on liquor was not an easy thing to make, as in order to boost the state revenue he himself during his first tenure had actually liberalized the excise policy in 2007. It not only increased the number of liquor shops but

also the revenue from the liquor sale had also jumped from Rs 500 crore in 2005 to Rs 4,000 crore in 2014-15 (Singh and Tiwari 2018).

But this move has not gone well with the women consistency which he had carefully built over the years. So in his run off for the third term as Chief Ministership, the promise for the alcohol ban was an desperate move to preserve his women constituency . It was just a well calculated political move; the decision to ban alcohol never had a public health rationale. (Singh and Tiwari 2018)

This fact was also confirmed by the A.I.P.W.A leader Saroj Chaubey who told their party had been demanding the ban on liquor from a very long time as it was affecting the poor and the marginalized sections of the society the most. But she also said that the problem of alcoholism was such that whenever we raised this issue our support base increased and it got appreciation from most of the people and the people often said that they have raised a very genuine issue. Thus it became quite evident that Nitish too jumped on this plank to earn the sympathy of the voters.

A.I.P.W.A leader Indu Singh also heavily criticized the Nitish government for “working as a Public Relation agency” which leave no opportunity for doing its advertisement exercise. In reality the government does very little. But it never hesitates in making claim that it was entirely their effort due to which the alcohol was banned”. She said that very often the government does things to gain cheap popularity, citing example of the recent human chain which the Bihar government formed in support of the alcohol ban in which small children were used. “What the Nitish Government is doing in the name of alcohol ban and removal of dowry system is just a publicity stunt” she said as she questioned the intention of these moves. Adding to this she said, “it is well known fact that taking dowry is a crime and from a long time and there also exist a law against dowry system”.

Indu Singh again heavily came on the government for running away from the real issues of women like providing sufficient employment opportunities to them. Even those women who are associated or working in the government programs and schemes like the JEEVIKA, ASHA, Aganbadi Sevika etc are facing a very tough time as the workload on them is very high and their salary is not fixed and they are paid low and irregular wages.



After having interaction and discussion with the Aagan badi Sevikas of ward number 29 and 33 of the Ara town the researcher came to know that these sevikas who work on a meager salary were given orders from their supervisors of the Child Development Project officials (CDPO) to take out a Prabhat Pheri (rally) in support of the prohibition of liquor ban. This was done after the alcohol ban decision became operational. Although Aagan badi sevikas were in support of the alcohol ban but they complained that neither the government had given any monetary help nor any logistical support for taking out the rally. However, despite all these shortcomings they had taken out a rally in their respective wards with the help of school children. Initially, the government of Bihar planned to partially ban alcohol and assumed that this will lead to the people movements banning the entire alcohol industry. However, the assumption went wrong. The government banned country made liquor in Bihar on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and just after few days, on April 5<sup>th</sup>, a full ban was imposed. No people movement was recorded in that period (Government of Bihar 2015).

Coming to the issue of alcoholism the local AIPWA leader Indu singh reminded that:

“Due to the increase in the availability of liquor especially in the residential areas had put the women safety and security, in the dock as these shops were located on the main road. Often girls had to bear the problem of eve teasing from the drunkards. Apart from that, the day-to-day abuse and violence of women in their homes had also increased. Besides their financial condition had also become worse as the people often consumed their whole earning on the liquor, leaving almost nothing for the household expenses. As women groups were facing the brunt of the growth of the alcoholism in the area, they came in our support of district campaign against the liquor. They demanded for the closure of the existing liquor shops as this was ruining their family. (Indu Singh, 45 years, Female, Ara)

On the question that after the ban the violence against women has taken a downward turn, she said-

There is no direct relation between the liquor and the violence against women, liquor can only be partially blamed for the violence against women, but the main

reason behind the violence is the patriarchal mindset of the people. I think post ban there is not much change in the domestic violence against women. I can recall a recent case of gang rape of women in the village of Pawna stands testimony to the fact that the violence against the women had not decreased. I don't believe the factual claims of decrease in the number of cases of women in thanas (police stations) post ban is false many of the cases are often not reported by the people and thus many instances of violence do not come to the light. In the name of liquor ban the government is only arresting the poor and the dalits, while for the rich people liquor is being delivered to their homes. ” Indu Singh; Age: 45 years; Sex: Female; Place: Ara

AIPWA leader Saroj Chaubey further added that the government has failed to implement the ban on the alcohol.

“What is happening in reality is that now the liquor is being delivered to the homes, a parallel system has developed through which the liquor is being delivered from door to door”.

She told that the liquor was only unavailable for the first two months after the ban and after that it started becoming available. Though she did not have any data, she claimed through her experience and observations that there is no major change in the situation of violence against women. In her view, what has changed is only the perception of people towards alcohol, such as, after the ban the people do not drink openly in the public. Furthermore, in reality the oppression and exploitation of the poor and the marginalized sections in the name of the prohibition has increased.

#### **5.4 Women's struggle against alcoholism: A community perspective**

“After the liquor ban the condition has become worse. When the liquor was not banned it was much better as the people behaved in purchased at the government rates. But after the ban as the liquor price has increased, whatever they earn they spend all on drinking. Further, even after doing so if they could not afford the liquor, they come to the home to ask money from us. When they did not get the

money from us they sell the utensils to get the money for drinking and in this process they very often create ruckus inside the family and indulge in beating us”.

The above statement was of a woman who was standing close to us during discussion with group of women in Bin Tola, Ara. It is here that in 2012 the women of the area launched a very strong movement as they had become helpless due to the menace of alcoholism. It is quite important to note that the prohibition law had made no difference to the lives of the women in this area. In fact illegal trade of alcohol had increased the price of the liquor, thus further making their condition worse than it was before the liquor ban

As discussed earlier, the anti-liquor campaign from the very beginning have been known to the people for providing a platform to the women for their entry into the public sphere. But even after this there has been no overall improvement in the lives of these women as the existing patriarchal, feudal and caste based networks and framework continue to impose its influence on the lives of these women. The case of a woman, Sonia Devi, bears testimony to this fact. She launched an aggressive campaign with the help of A.I.P.WA and the C.P.I - M.L party workers against the existing liquor shops in locality of Bin Tola of Ara district, despite of limited resources she had. But in spite of her all tireless efforts after sometime she had to give up her fight as she buckled under the pressure of the powerful liquor mafias. She further described the condition as:

“After a few days of the protest the condition became as it was before the protest and the liquor was being available in sufficient amount, and also as these liquor Mafias were very powerful so for the second time when they again started selling the liquor and thus fearing for lives as we are very weak and oppressed people we decided not to speak against them and let continue their sale” (Sonia Devi,50 , Female,Bin Tola , Ara Town)

Women specially belonging to the Mallah caste and those from the Ujjiyyar tola went to the protest. All the people who went for the protest belong to the poor, marginalized, and backward caste of the society. The people from the backward caste were fighting against alcoholism as their lives were getting affected and they had no option left but to protest against this. Sonia Devi said that people from the lower caste often get beaten up and

they are mostly put inside the jail in the name of various crime and violence and also for consuming the addictive substances; but the people of the higher caste never go to the jail as the administration is also scared of them. There is nobody to listen to the grievances of the lower caste. In her own words:

“It is the lower caste people who fought for the ban on liquor but it is quite surprising that their names are missing. Instead these lower caste people are getting beaten and are also being put in the jails in the pretext of doing violence, but at the same time the upper caste people are roaming scott free” Sonia Devi.,:50; : Female; Bin Tola , Ara Town

Lal Mohan, CPIML party worker, also confirmed this fact that in this campaign against alcoholism, most of the people who participated belonged to the backward and schedule caste and majority were women.

According to Sonia Devi, now the situation is such that the women are now feeling helpless as their husbands now openly say that they will drink because they earn the money and no one can stop them as they have a right to do anything. Further she said that husbands are not worried about running the family, they are only busy in drinking. She lamented on the fact that due to all this the women are suffering as they have to run their family as well as bring up their children by juggling menial jobs. Devi has expressing her anguish on the situation said:

“After the liquor ban the situation had become so worse that it seems that the devil has come out the coffin again” ( sarab bandi hone se esa ho gaya hain ki mano gada bhoot ukhad gaya hain) Sonia Devi :50,Female, Bin Tola Ara

Munni Devi\* further explained that the biggest problem of this area is the lack of employment, because of which many people very often go to another state for the search of jobs. Most of the people of this area either sell fish or they do other hard labor, and the situation is so worse now that they do any kind of low paid labor work. She also recalled that when the liquor was not banned, the most of the people of this area were also involved in the illegal selling of liquor at their homes, as this was an easy and quick way of making money. Moreover, she said that before the ban in 2012 when they had taken out the protest rally against the alcoholism they had also demanded the government

should provide some job opportunities to women as liquor had made them financially weak and destroyed their family lives. She mentioned that though JEEVIKA scheme is operational in her area, the JEEVIKA people did not help them in the campaign against alcoholism. Further, she also complained that the JEEVIKA representatives had collected money from them and after some times run away with all of it.

### **5.5 A Case of a Mid Day Meal Worker**

There is another story of anti-liquor struggle which also showed that although anti-liquor movement had given an agency to the women, but this did not result in breaking the hold of patriarchy. This was evident in the case of Mona Devi, who belonged to Paswan caste, a Maha-Dalit caste. Mona worked as a cook in mid-day meal scheme in Fatuha. She told that they were forced to work upto ten hours a day and even in some cases they were forced to clean the bathroom and toilets of the school. So she decided to protest against this inhuman treatment. She started raising her voice and very soon she had launched a campaign for the increase in their payment as they worked on a meager salary of Rs 1000 per month. She further told that as the result in the assembly elections of 2015 the Bihar government had decided to raise their salary by 250 rupees. These women cooks who mostly belonged to lower castes were doubly hit as their husbands abused them due to the widespread alcoholism. She also accepted the fact that her husband used to drink and abuse her physically and verbally. When Sona decided to go outside and form the association, he however did not stop her, as her father in law had been local leader of this area.

She recalled that how she decided to come out of the four walls of house to form association of the women mid-day meal workers to protest against all these kind of problem which they were facing. Initially she was very hesitant, but the existing problem of low payment of salary and also of alcoholism had made their life hell. So she was in a fix and she felt that she had to do something as these problems were affecting their daily life. She came to know from a close neighbour about a woman named Saroj who promised that she would help them to overcome these problems. She also had given them a promise that she will remain with them till her last breath. She also recalled that it was due to the Saroj's encouragement that in spite of being illiterate she managed the courage

to start the fight against these problems of low payment of salary and alcoholism. She remembered how Saroj had told her that it was high time that people came out and stood for their cause and fought. She made her secretary of the mid-day meal worker association of Fatuha. Initially they managed to bring around 70 to 80 women cooks to join the mid-day meal workers association. They not only pressed for their immediate demand like the increment in their salary but broadened its scope to include issues like alcoholism

She added that after the ban, the problem of alcoholism is reduced in a sense, as now people do not drink openly in the streets and markets. and as a result violence has also decreased, but at the same time the illegal liquor continues to be sold as it is coming from Jharkhand. Also she stated that after the ban they found that people who are drinking liquor are only being caught under the prohibition law, while those selling the illegal liquor are not caught, as the police very often takes money and leaves them.

The practice of differential patriarchy also came to fore in this case as the association which she had made mostly belonged to the lower castes,

“In spite of the fact that problem of alcoholism was affecting all the women groups, the women from the upper caste didn’t joined the anti-liquor campaign. It is often the case that the women from upper caste do not go outside their homes, or to protest against the alcoholism or any other problems or works. I was very hesitant in coming out on the streets but after the encouragement I got from the AIPWA leader Saroj Chaubey, it help to break the initial fear of facing the outside world. I became the part of this association and soon realized the importance of it. Now I actively do the works of the association as I feel very good about it. Whenever I face any kind of problem I ask help from my husband.”

From the above story it became quite clear that anti-liquor campaigns may have given a voice to women with little education and to some extent improved their participation in decision-making processes, however, such movements do not imagine women’s freedoms outside the framework of the patriarchal family or women inhabiting roles other than mothers, wives and caregivers. So the empowering potential of anti-alcohol movements is at best, limited.

## 5.6 Alcoholism through the Lenses of Lower Caste

### 5.6.1 Drinking: Part and Parcel of Lower Caste Culture

When we look at the history of drinking in India, we find that since the ancient times drinking was common among the people of India. The people here, very often, produced and consumed toddy (taari) palm wine, rice beer, and other alcoholic drinks. Though in some religion like Hinduism we do find the mention of use of various forms of drink, but others like Islam it was strictly prohibited. But during the time of Mughal rule we do find depiction of usage of drink in the court of Mughal rulers. But despite the common prevalence of drinking culture across all religions, all the major religions had condemned the use of alcoholic drinks. (Tschurenev and Tine 2014: 4)

David Hardiman in his seminal study on peasant drinking patterns in South Gujarat shows that drinking was part and parcel of lives of low caste people of rural southern Gujarat. In a famous quote he showed the importance of traditional drinks in the lives of these low caste people. (Hardiman n.d cited in, Tschurenev and Tine 2014; pp 4-7)

*‘What wine is to a Frenchman ..., and beer to the German or Englishman’, the liquor contractor A.M. Dalal testified in 1923 in front of the Bombay excise committee, ‘toddy is to a poor husbandman, a Bhil, a seafaring Kharwa, a Koli and a hardworking labourer.’* (Hardiman n.d cited in, Tschurenev and Tine 2014 :4-5)

Tschurenev and Tine (2014:4-7) mentions that Hardiman in his study had tried to show the cultural and medicinal importance of the traditional drinks that people of brewed at that time. For example, he showed that Toddy, i.e., the fermented juice from certain kinds of palm trees, helps in the digestion of foods and this can also be used as a substitute for both food and water in times of economic hardship. While drink was most important as a mark of friendship and an expression of solidarity, tribal religion also included drink offerings in acts of worship. Hardiman further shows in his study that in the lower caste culture the traditional homemade ‘toddy’ and the darui .i.e. the country liquor were seen as important markers of hospitality. These were often served and consumed in the feast, celebration and even in panchayat meetings. His study also showed that the practice of drinking in South Gujarat was not only confined to the Adivasi peasants but also the Parsis people in south Gujarat who were the liquor contractors during the colonial period,

were also very fond of drinking the toddy and country liquor. Thus when arguing ‘that drink was alien to Indian culture’. Hardiman concludes, the middle class social reformers who started to advocate temperance and prohibition from the mid-nineteenth century onwards ‘confused their own élite values with Indian culture as a whole’. (Tschurenv and Tine 2014: 4-7)

Fahey & David (2005: 495) had argued that Gandhi’s belief that the culture of drinking was alien to the Indians reflected his family and caste tradition as he belonged to vaishya or bania caste that neither ate meat nor drank alcohol. The possible reason for this could be the fact that at that time, caste mainly decided the drinking practices for the followers of the Hinduism. The top most caste in the hierarchy, the Brahmins, and the third placed castes the Vaisya or Bania (merchant) caste neither drank alcohol nor ate meat. The drinking was not a fashion among the elites. But on the contrary it was a fashion among a substantial number of poor Indians.

More over a study conducted in 1951 by the sociologist from Bombay university about the drinking practices of South Gujarat village had found that 80% of people coming from the lower caste, untouchable and tribal families drank alcohol while it was quite surprising to find that 59% of the Muslim families also drank alcohol and 7.5 percent in high caste families also drank alcohol. Another interesting fact to note was that some Sudra and Dalit subcaste were hereditary producers of alcoholic drink.(Fahey & David 2005: 495)

Till the present day it is well known fact that the consumption of liquor among the lower caste is quite high as compared to the higher castes. The data from the National Health Family Survey {2015-16} clearly shows this fact. The percentage of men who consume liquor in Scheduled Caste is 36.3%, while in Scheduled Tribe is much higher i.e. 41.3%, in the other backward classes it is 28.5%, and in other that is higher castes it is much lower. i.e. 21.1%. Similarly, the percentage of women who consume liquor in Scheduled Caste is 0.9%, while in Scheduled Tribe is much higher i.e. 6.5%, in the other backward classes it is 0.7%, and in other that is higher castes it is 0.5% (See Table A & B)



Table 5.1: Use of Alcohol(Women) National Health Family Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16,

Caste/Tribe	Percentage of women who drink alcohol	Number of Women	Percentage of women who drink alcohol almost every day	Percentage of women who drink alcohol about once a week	Percentage of women who drink alcohol less than once a week	Total	Number of Women
Scheduled caste	0.9	1,42,611	19.7	30.8	49.5	100.0	1,262
Scheduled tribe	6.5	64,132	17.9	41.4	40.5	100.0	4,147
Other backward class	0.7	3,03,910	21.1	29.5	49.5	100.0	2,251
Other	0.5	1,84,542	8.3	25.0	66.7	100.0	948
Don't Know	1.5	4,492	20.3	32.6	47.1	100.0	66

Table no: 5.2 Use of Alcohol(Men) National Health Family Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16

Caste/Tribe	Percentage of men who drink alcohol	Number of men	Percentage of men who drink alcohol almost every day	Percentage of men who drink alcohol about once a week	Percentage of men who drink alcohol less than once a week	Total	Number of men
Scheduled caste	36.3	20,498	13.0	42.0	45.0	100.0	7,443
Scheduled tribe	41.3	9,310	15.9	43.8	40.2	100.0	3,775
Other backward class	28.5	45,116	10.6	40.0	49.4	100.0	12,879
Other	21.1	28,296	9.2	38.6	52.2	100.0	5,979
Don't Know	26.0	371	12.0	44.9	43.0	100.0	96

Also regarding the class gradient of the alcohol consumption this has been confirmed by the NFHS-4 (2015-16) data where 35.4% of men and 0.6% of women in the highest

wealth quintile drink alcohol, while 25.1% of men and 2.9% of women with lowest wealth index drink alcohol. Alcohol usage is more in educationally deprived populations: 40% men and 2.6% women with no education v/s 24.3% men and 0.6% of women with highest level education

The data from latest rounds of NFHS corroborates the findings from the literature review. Drinking is most prevalent among lower caste men while the higher castes either don't drink or drink in their private spaces and seldom come to the eye of survey agency or any government. Also it indicates that drinking among upper caste is a private affairs where drinking among lower castes is a matter of public discourse.

### **5.7 Impact of the liquor Ban on Lower Caste Groups**

From the above data it is quite evident that alcohol consumption has a caste and class gradient and the worst people to hit by the problem of alcoholism also come from the lower strata of the society. What has happened after the liquor ban that the drinking which was a culture as much as a necessity of the lives of these lower castes has been criminalized in the eyes of the law. It is quite clear that among these lower caste groups as, for example, many like the chamar caste, the nature of their work is such that they are required to deal with the skin of dead and decayed animal and hence they are prone to continue their drink in order to continue their working. Also for those castes like the Pasi and the Sundi, whose traditional occupation has been associated with liquor, the ban on liquor spelt a doom for their fortunes.

The case of Musahars belonging mahadalit caste of the society who have been seen traditionally as a liquor brewing community the ban on liquor has also not improved their condition much. The majority of these people are landless and they are at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy.

#### **5.7.1 Case of Musahars : The Harsh Reality**

As far as the Musahars are concerned they account for a smaller portion of the total Scheduled caste (SC) in the state of Bihar. Among the traditional liquor brewing communities, along with the dhangars and pasi, the Mushars also are known for brewing

the traditional liquor specially Mahua<sup>6</sup>. When we see these musahars community closely we find that liquor was very closely associated with their lives. When we see the impact of alcohol ban on these communities, then we have to look in to various complexities keeping in mind the living realities of this caste, and not judge them according to the popular Hindu morality. As Kancha Iiah (2007:18) argues, according to popular hindu morality an ideal hindu women is supposed to not drink and smoke even if the man is heavy drunkard or chain smoker. On the contrary he says that in the lower caste cultures no one talks badly of women who drinks or smokes, and very often women are found to be drinking along with the men. This phenomenon was observed in the musahar communities which the researcher visited during his field visit in Ara. These Musahars communities were mainly concentrated in the Jawahar tola and Sheetal tola localities of Ara.

The biggest problem that these musahar were facing is the lack of employment opportunities. This should be read with the fact that after the ban their condition has not improved much. In the Jawahar tola which houses around 70 to 75 families of musahars , the conditions after the liquor ban was not so rosy , as most of these people were in dire needs of employment, as after the recent ban on the extraction of the sand they had lost all their employment opportunities

### **5.7.2 The impact of Alcohol ban on Musahars**

After the ban became operational musahar communities have always been on the radar of police authorities. This phenomenon was witnessed in the musahar localities of Ara, as police was always on the look for the persons of these communities who were involved in selling of liquor. A local person, named Krishna, told that in his knowledge only one person from this locality has been arrested under the prohibition act. Further, he said that after the ban people are not drinking much as they cannot afford the expensive liquor now in the market. He stressed that the police left no stone unturned in harassing them in the name of prohibition as they very often in the evening time come in this locality for doing enquiry about the liquor. This process has further created an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the community. Similarly, another person named Suresh Kumar Ram,

---

<sup>6</sup> A drink made from the flowers of the *Bassia latifolia* a large deciduous tree

who was a heavy drinker, and also used to sell liquor in this locality, was arrested after the ban. He was also a Tuberculosis (T.B.) patient. The former Ward Parshad of the Sheetal tola also confirmed this fact. When he came out of the jail his health had worsened and blood was coming from his mouth.

Further the musahars of this area were not involved in the traditional occupation of liquor brewing. A local person named Krishna had told that in the urban areas this phenomenon of brewing liquor/mahua is not practiced by the musahars, but he said this phenomenon is seen in the rural areas where musahars do make liquor from mahua by mixing it with jaggery, a material derived from sugarcane. He also said that the people belonging to the yadav caste were mostly involved in the business of mahua. He said although the musahars of his area do not make any mahua but they bring mahua from outside to sell it. Before the ban, those people who brought mahua from the outside, now they are supplying it to the different areas and since selling mahua was illegal many people were often caught during the sale of the mahua.

Another person named Kunwar was interviewed in order to know the effect of ban. He worked at the bus stand and also was literate enough to only be able to write his name. He said that in reality there is no ban on the liquor. What it has done is to only increase the price of liquor. Now the liquor is available at a price which is twenty times higher than the original price. Further he raised question over the liquor ban and said that police is only catching those who are drinking liquor. Even if they at all catch those who are selling liquor, they leave them in one day. Further he stressed on the point that in reality the liquor ban will not happen till the time they put those who are selling liquor behind the bars for 15 to 20 years. He felt very angry that in the name of liquor ban the poor are only suffering, as now the available liquor is priced very high impacting those who still haven't been able to give up their habit of drinking.

The other people from other areas too voiced similar views about the ban. They said after the liquor ban those persons who earlier used to drink they now remain inside their homes, due to the fear of the police that might come to catch them. According to them, in reality liquor ban has not happened, as liquor is still available illegally everywhere and in the rural areas it is being sold in open. On the question of Mahua he told that mahua is

not available here but in the villages it is available. They named a village Pipariya where mahua is available and people very often visit there from towns like theirs to drink mahua.

While discussing the issue of mahua production in the area with the Ward Parshad, it was found that the popular understanding that the illegal production of mahua is only done by the mushars is not true. The musahars do not possess the capacity and power socially and economically to produce mahua at such large scale. The dominant caste groups who were economically sound like the Yadavs and to some extent the rich people belonging to the Paswan community were in the business of Mahua. According to the ward parshad the people belonging to the Musahar community might be working as a labourer in the making of mahua liquor, but these dominant caste groups would obviously make the entire capital investment. He further said that maybe some musahars might be making small amount of mahua by themselves, but these people would not be able to make mahua on a large scale to make a business out of it.

Liquor ban has become a tool of harassment for the musahars communities. Although liquor consumption is quite common in these communities but the perception that these communities are involved in the business of Mahua is not true as the musahars only make a small amount of Mahua, and the entire business of Mahua is run by the dominant caste.

### **5.7.3 A Case of a Dalit individual from Chamar community.**

Though the researcher has already discussed the case of Ram Ayodhya Ram aged 65, in the fourth chapter with regard to the health problems he faced due to alcohol consumption, it seems to be significant to discuss his experience also in order to understand the impact of liquor ban on the lower caste. Ram, aged 65, belongs to a chamar community - Scheduled Caste (SC). He lives in the Mirachak locality of Ara. He is uneducated and has four children, two are boys and the rest are girls. He managed to marry one of his sons and one of his daughters. His work was to extract the leather from the dead animals, which were thrown in the nearby places and rivers.

He told that one of the main reason behind his drinking was that the nature of his work as he had to deal with the decayed bodies of the dead animals. To continue his work he had to drink frequently otherwise it is impossible to work. He drinks country made liquor as

it was widely and openly available before the ban. He called the country liquor with a special name “*dom chap*”. Since these country liquors are consumed only by lower caste people the name “*dom chap*” is coined. Dom is the lowest in the caste hierarchy.

He was eldest member of the family hence no one questioned him for his drinking. Also on this question that whether after the drinking he indulged in some kind of violence or not, he told that whenever he came home after drinking he used to go to sleep silently without doing any kind of fight. Also outside the house he did not indulge any kind of fight with others as he thought that his caste status made him helpless as he was very afraid. He also told that even if someone beat him, he will very silently accept that punishment.

“whom will I fight with, even if some people would beat me, then also I will quietly face it and I would do nothing against”

#### **5.7.4 A Case of a Pasi (The *Toddy Tapping Community*)**

Paasi caste practices toddy extraction as caste based occupation. Alcohol ban for this caste was detrimental to their occupation. It is not that the alcohol was banned for the first time in Bihar. In 1938 when congress had formed the provincial government in Bihar, toddy (drink extracted from the palm tree) was put under the ban and the toddy sellers faced a lot of harassment. They had to constantly climb the palm tree to bring down the pots and show it to the police officers for the checking of *niro* (pot containing toddy) for alcohol content (Colvard 2014:195). But after the independence due to the vote bank compulsion of the contemporary power politics, and to appease the pasai community who account for the sizeable vote bank of the Lalu's party, which was at time in coalition with Nitish Kumar, Taadi was kept out of the ban (Tewary and Raman 2016). Another important point is that Patna High Court in a judgement that lifted the ban, shared its apprehension about the government's decision to keep the taadi out of the ban, as it had failed to recognize that in many areas the practice of adulteration of toddy with the alcohol and other substances may also prove harmful to people's health. (Shailish Kumar Sinha vs The State Of Bihar & Ors, 30/09/2016 Patna High Court Judgement)

In spite of the fact that toddy was kept out of the liquor ban the traditional toddy tapping community had to face a lot of difficulties during initial period of the ban. The police

frequently came to harass and destroy their toddy. This was confirmed during the field visits of the researcher. Sonu Kumar aged 24; belongs to the Pasi caste, the community which sells the drink of palm. He is resident of Ahirpurva Tola, ward no 29, Ara. His father was involved in the profession of Toddy tapping. Sharing his experience he said,

“After the liquor ban our business had also been affected to a great extent. In the initial days of the ban the officials had come to our place and told us to stop the business of selling Toddy. But the entire Pasi community got mobilized against this and we undertook a rally/ protest demonstration to press for our demands of the right to sell the Toddy, as this was our traditional occupation. If the government would stop us from selling Toddy , then how would we earn our living. The administration after the ban initially had troubled us a lot and the police very often came and destroyed our Toddy and also put us behind the bars. But after the protest now the things have changed and we are allowed to sell the toddy in the open.” Sonu kumar,24, male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara ,

On this question whether they also were involved in some kind of adulteration of the toddy, he said that:

“We did not do this but toddy sellers of the other areas do it. Also those person who would directly take out Toddy from the trees never do this, but other person who used to buy toddy from the other people , were involved in the adulteration of toddy with some kind of pills called ‘mandus’. My father used to earn around ten to twenty thousand rupees in a season of toddy, which only last for few months and rest of the time they use to work as laborer”. Sonu kumar

Commenting on whether the business of the toddy had been affected due to the ban, he said that:

“After the ban the police used to come very often to the place where we used to sell the toddy and they used to destroy our toddy pots and many of the toddy sellers of this area were also put behind bars by the police. Now we find no fear of police with regard to Toddy selling as there is no decline in the rate of our customers.” Sonu Kumar, 24, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola Ara.

Although Toddy was not banned due to the compulsions of the vote bank politics, but on the ground the harassment of the Pasi communities continued in the name of the implementation of Prohibition law.

#### **5.7.5 A Case of a Sundi Caste**

This is a story of a person named Jeet Kumar who belonged to the Sundi caste(OBC). He is resident of Ahirpurva Tola ward no 29 Ara. He used to work in the liquor shop for the last ten to the fifteen years and he told that he joined this profession since he belonged to the Sundi caste, as this caste are traditionally known to be involved in the business of addictive substances like hemp, cannabis and alcohol. This caste is found across other states like Uttar Pradesh His view on the impact of alcohol ban on his profession is as follows:

“Due the liquor ban I lost my source of livelihood. Many people who were associated with this profession have been left in the lurch and they have nowhere to go. If the government had decided to close this thing then it should have also made some alternative arrangements for those who were associated with this profession. My age is forty-five now, and I was working for a long period of time in this profession. Now I would hardly get any other work.” Jeet Kumar, 45, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

He also questioned this decision of the Bihar government of banning the liquor:

“Why are the other states also not banning the alcohol as the problems related with alcoholism are also prevalent there? How come these other states are managing and dealing with it? After the ban now the liquor is available in each and every street more than before. Now not only the people who were directly working in this profession has become unemployed, but also those who were indirectly dependant on it, have also lost their jobs like for example those persons who used to sell street food near the liquor shop.” Jeet Kumar, 45, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara



When asked about the impact of ban on drinking habits of the people he said :

“Although I used to drink, but in a controlled manner, that too after the work. Never I became addicted to it. Those people, who are involved in this profession, do not do heavy drinking because if they themselves were drunk heavily then how would they be able to run their business. Although I am critical of the liquor ban yet I feel that it has helped the people belonging to lower sections of the society. But I also feel that the nature of work of the communities such as mushars, doms and also the people engaged in laborious jobs like rickshaw pullers is such that drinking becomes inevitable during their job situation and also to relax their body. For example a dom cannot go inside the gutter to clean the shit unless and until he is drunk. It is almost impossible for such people to quit drinking and survive in their job conditions. Hence even after the ban they have no choice but to continue drinking through illegal means.” Jeet Kumar, 45, Male, Ahirpurwa Tola, Ara

The Alcohol ban has spelt a doom on the future of communities like the Sundi, who were traditionally involved in the business of liquor. These people complain that since their source of living has been taken away, the government has not provided them any alternate source of livelihood. They also complained that although the ban has not stopped the illegal sale of liquor but has only given push to drinking through illegal sources, as those lower caste who do menial jobs and hard labor still continue their drinking.

### **5.8 The Bihar Prohibition Act 2016: A Draconian Law**

Prohibition laws all over the world have always been regressive but when we compare the alcohol prohibition law of Bihar of 1938 which came during the tenure of the Provincial government formed by the Congress under the Government of India Act 1935, with the present law i.e. the Bihar Prohibition Act 2016, we find that the earlier law was much more liberal and progressive. Singh (2016) mentions that the Prohibition law by the provincial government of Bihar was not so regressive as the punishments were balanced with the social needs.

This could be due the fact that the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi saw the prohibition at that time as a moral project. The punishments for the offences were much milder in the prohibition act of 1938 when compared to the prohibition act of 2016. For example, in the prohibition law of 1938, the punishment for consumption, possession, sale was either six months imprisonment or a fine of one thousand rupees or both, and in the case of manufacturing the intoxicants the punishment was slightly greater i.e. either one year imprisonment or two thousand rupees fine or both. Also the 1938 law required that besides all the official, each and every citizen to inform about the consumption, sale, manufacturing of liquor or intoxicating substance to a Magistrate or to a Prohibition authority or to an officer of the Police as soon as such tapping or manufacture shall have come to his knowledge. (Government of Bihar Province, 1938)

But after the independence we see that the nanny state<sup>7</sup> had grown so much powerful that it resorted to the use of brute punitive measures to create deterrence among the people against the consumption of liquor. The best example of use of this kind of harsh punitive measure is the Bihar Prohibition Act of 2016. The Hindu (2016) also raised question on this worrying trend where the nanny state is trying to police and discipline its citizens from doing or consuming things which it considers would be harmful to them. Further Singh (2016) also shed light on the draconian nature of the Bihar Prohibition Act 2016 and mentioned that the High Court of Patna has quashed the notification which put ban on alcohol stating that the punishment the prescribed in the Bihar Prohibition Act of 2016, are very harsh, unreasonable and draconian and such punishments cannot be justified in a civilised society. Moreover what is more surprising is that under this law from the starting even before the conviction the accused is presumed to be guilty and they have to prove their innocence. And if the accused fails to prove their innocence then they are liable to get a very harsh punishment such as imprisonment up to 10 years, or huge fine, or confiscation of their entire property.

Therefore we find that there are many stringent provision in the Bihar Prohibition Act of 2016.. For example, the mere consumption of liquor can land a person into imprisonment of not less than five years with a minimum fine of a lakh rupee. And in the case of

---

<sup>7</sup> A government that tries to give too much advice or make too many laws about how people should live their lives, especially about eating smoking or drinking alcohol.

creating nuisance or violence after drinking a term not less than ten years, which may extend to imprisonment for life and with fine. An another contentious provision under this act was the penalty for possession or knowledge of possession of intoxicant. In this case if a person who has the knowledge of possession of intoxicants and if he fails to provide the information regarding that to the nearest excise officer or the police officer, then; he shall be punished (Government of Bihar 2016:14-15)

The worst provision in this law is the provisions of collective fine in case of that a particular village or town or any have been repeatedly violating any of the provisions of this Act. The collector may impose a collective fine on that area. ( Government of Bihar: 22-23)

It therefore appears that this provision can be used to criminalize any particular community or groups. This has been the case as there have been many instances reported where persons belonging to a particular community especially the mahadalits and the mushars have been targeted. The example of the Dewan Pokhar village in Bhagalpur where show cause notices have been given to the five families all belonging to the Mahadalit caste for repeatedly breaking the prohibition law and now they face a collective fine of one lakh rupees. Their crime was that they were engaged in their traditional occupation of Toddy tapping.(Tewary and Roman 2016).

Similarly there are a half a dozen villages in Bihar that are facing the prospect of collective fine. These include two villages in Patna, and another two villages in Bhagalpur, and a village each in Munger and Siwan. (Kumar 2016)

The draconian nature of this prohibition law has been satirically captured by the eminent cartoonist E.P Unny . (Indian Express, dated: 3th June 2018)



Liberation (2017) mentioned another story of two Mahadalits of Jehanabad who were convicted and sentenced to the five years of rigorous imprisonment for having just drunk a dose of toddy. This brings out a very cruel and draconian nature of the Prohibition law in Bihar. This was first conviction under the prohibition law of 2016. . These two people, besides the five year imprisonment, were imposed a fine of Rs one lakh, failing to pay the fine they would have to spend six years in jail. What this punishment has done to the already poor and oppressed family of these convicted Mushars, who somehow managed to run their family by plying thelas (cycle-carts) that it had pushed them into the brink of starvation and deep debt? Further the report quoted the famous quote of the activist priest of El Salvador's Oscar Romero "Justice is like a snake , it only bites the barefoot." to suggest how grave injustice was meted out to these lower castes through the prohibition law.

Thus the Bihar Prohibition Act 2016 has been termed draconian law due to its very harsh and stringent provisions which have impacted the oppressed and the marginalized sections of the society.

This fact was also confirmed during the researcher's interaction and discussion with the police officers at the town thana of Ara. They were so pre-occupied with the cases related to the prohibition that they are not able to give enough time to the other cases. They further highlighted that they were facing shortage of manpower as after the ban their work load had increased significantly, as they have to ensure the prohibition and thus constantly had to check the black marketing and illegal smuggling of the alcohol.

The ugly and cruel face of the draconian prohibition bill which imposes a heavy fine Rs 1,00,000 and imprisonment up to five years for the illegal possession of liquor came to the fore, when we analyzed the social profile of the people who were arrested under this provision. It became clear that majority of people who were arrested under this provision came from the lower castes and the minorities, specially Yadavs and Muslims accounting for than half of the arrest in the area covered under the town thana of Ara. A very heart rendering story of a vegetable seller is worthwhile mentioning. He was arrested for drinking the banned country liquor/ mahua from one the rural blocks. After being brought to the thana, he was repeatedly pleading guilty and was praying in front of the police officers to leave him as this was his first time and he was feeling very humiliated that for the his first time mistake in his life he would be put under jail. But the police officers made fun of him and told him that why did he not remember all this before drinking. He informed that he had only drunk mahua of only fifty rupees, after selling his vegetable.

In fact one of the prominent women leaders had termed this law as a Black law, as in the name of the prohibition the oppression and exploitation of the poor and the marginalized sections has increased. She claimed that more than the 44,000 people are behind bars under this prohibition act. Their party has passed a resolution against this new excise policy and said that this 'Black Law' needs to be changed as in the name of banning the liquor the poor and marginalized sections of the society especially the musahars are being targeted and their homes were searched very often and they were arrested and put behind the bars under this law. She also highlighted the fact the people belonging to the musahar

caste were facing the same condition all over the state and she gave the example of the Punpun block of Patna where the children and women belonging to the Musahars caste were arrested under the prohibition act. She told that these people don't have any kind of job and hence they make and sell liquor to earn some money. But instead of providing them some kind of employment they were being arrested and put inside the jails under the Liquor prohibition act.

Another women leader involved in the alcohol ban movement raised question on the fact that the liquor barons/mafias are not being arrested and they are being left scot-free. Instead, only those poor persons who are drinking are being put behind the bars. She said that drinking liquor is not a crime, but it is a bad habit and she said that the government had done very little to get them out of this habit.

=With regard to the social profile of the groups which have been severely affected by the alcoholism the study conducted by the Indian express reveals a very stark picture of the reality. The report suggests that these lower caste groups have paid a disproportionate price for the marginal benefit which according to the government might have allured due to the liquor ban. (Indian Express 2018). According to the report a large number of persons who are involved in the illegal ferrying of liquor belonged to the vulnerable sections of the society. Most of them who were involved in the illegal ferrying of liquor were widows and children. The report said that the youth between the age group of 15 to 18 are easily lured into this as these children want to buy smart phone and they are paid 300 to 500 rupees to hide and carry liquor in their school bags from the interstate border town such as Sahebganj and Godda district of Jharkhand which have their border with Bihar and also from Balia district of U.P. The most startling revelation was that these children mostly belonged to the SC and EBC Also 20 to 25% of the children who were caught in the charges of ferrying illegal liquor are send to the eleven remand homes of the state.

Also a report which was published in the Indian express dated 28 may 2018 highlights a fact that the weaker and marginalized of the society were facing the brunt of the liquor prohibition act. The report highlight the fact that out of the 8 central , 32 district and 17 sub jails across Bihar the person belonging to S.C, .S.T, and O.B.C were the highest who

were put into the jails. Their numbers also by far outstrips their share in the state population. For example, the SC account for 27.1% of the arrest while their share in the state population is just 16%. Similarly the ST, make up 6.8% of the arrest under the Liquor prohibition act while their share in the state population is just only 1.3%. Lastly the O.B.C which account for 25% of the Bihar population but the numbers of O.B.C person behind the bar under this act is around 34.4%. Similarly in the Gaya circle around 30% of those arrested were from SC which is double their state representation, also in Motihari around 15% of those arrested were from ST, which is ten times above in their share in the state population. The top three jail circle which account for 67.13% of the arrest under the prohibition are the Motihari Gaya and Patna. (Table No:5.3) Title : Caste Wise Break up Arrests Under Prohibition law.

<b>MOTIHARI</b> (Motihari Central Jail, Chapra, Siwan, Gopalganj and Bettiah Sub-jails)	<b>GAYA</b> (Gaya Central Jail, Aurangabad, Nawada, Jehanabad District Jails, Sherghati, Daudnagar and Gaya sub-jails)	<b>PATNA</b> (Buer Central Jail, Phulwari Sharif, Bihar Sharif, and Hajipur District Jails, Barh, Patna City, Hilsa, Danapur and Masaurahi Sub-Jails)
Total 24,672	Total 25,002	Total 32,501
Gen 2,845(11.5%)	Gen 3,376 (13.5%)	Gen 5,233(16.1%)
OBC 8,691(35.2%)	OBC 8,926(35.7%)	OBC 11,473 (35.3%)
EBC 3,917 (15.8%)	EBC 4,550(18.2%)	EBC 5,980 (18.4%)
SC 5,541(22.4%)	SC 7,550(30.2%)	SC 8,840 (27.2%)
ST 3,678(14.9%)	ST 600(2.4%)	ST 975(3%)

Source: The Indian Express(29/05/2018)

## 5.9 The idea of Prohibition and its legacy

Gandhi during the course of Indian National movement had once argued about the liquor that:

“Drinking was like a disease and the sufferer must be protected against himself. It is not coercion to give him treatment for his own good nor is it coercion for the state to save its people from the disease of drink by driving it out” (Gandhi cited in Colvard 2014:178 ).

In particular Gandhi’s insistence on the need for prohibition was also linked to his belief that it was largely India’s poor who were mostly affected by the consumption of liquor. He argued that drinking stood second only to untouchability as the greatest scourge that the nation needs to address. Further it is interesting to note that the paternalism shown by the Gandhi toward the poor, who according to him lacked any agency and they had to be protected from themselves. (Fahey and Manian 2005:489-490). Fahey and Manian (2005:495) have argued that Gandhi’s apposition to drinking in this sense was at least broadly guided by the socio-religious basis of drinking in India.

Fahey and Manian (2005:495) mentions that in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Gandhi, the prohibition had become a major agenda of the national movement as Gandhi had given the logic by boycotting liquor they would deny the revenue to the British and thus would help the cause of the freedom movement.

Thus temperance was tied to the national movement as during the Civil Disobedience movement there was an effort on the part of the Congress leaders to link nationalism with prohibition and to ensure this many thousands of Congress volunteers used the national flag during the movements, of picketing of shops, and even during the visit to the homes of drunkard’s house. Thus temperance had started becoming a symbol of nationalism while drinking was started to be considered as a ‘sinful’ and pro-empire/anti-Indian behavior. (Colvard 2014:179)

It is important to note that the debates surrounding alcohol in colonial India reveal what Ranjit Guha calls real tension between force and consent and which later shaped the nature and character of Indian nationalism (Guha n.d Cited in Colvard, 2014:173). This



binary always persisted among the two dissecting groups of the congress nationalist who under the legacy of Gandhi forced its prohibitionist agenda on the other group of drinkers that is mainly comprised of the lower caste. There was a conflict between the C Rajagopalchari an ardent advocate of prohibition and Ambedkar who said that a large segment of the Indian population i.e. majority of backward classes which comprised the main drinking classes of time were opposed to the idea of prohibition. The drinkers were very often forced to decide whether to support the nation or continue their habits, and thus being treated as a threat to the national movement. Drinking became a symbol of not only personal degradation but also of an anti-Indian behavior. (Colvard 2014: 176)

The apparent tension between the Congress Nationalist and the drinkers has been very well captured by the writer Premchand, in the short story ‘Maiku’. In this story there is an instance when a drinker named Maiku was approaching a toddy shop. On his way he is met by a Congress sevak (volunteer) who, offers him the advice that he should quit drinking as drinking of toddy is forbidden in his religion ( Colvard 2014:176 ). On hearing this Maiku became very angry on the Congress Sevak and he was very upset with the fact that who was he to impose the tenets of religion on him and he could not control himself from slapping the Congress sevak. But soon he realized the mistake and he felt very guilty that he has beaten a congress sevak, who was espousing for his cause, as he had realized that the drinking destroys the family of a person. Nevertheless, this story highlights the apparent tension between the congress workers and the drinkers, who were very often morally forced and pressurized the drinkers on religious grounds to give up drinking. (Colvard 2014:176). Thus it had become quite clear that Prohibition in India carried a much great moral weight/ force.

Constituent assembly debates on prohibition: Jaipal Singh Munda an adivasi from Chotanagpur plateau of south Bihar had made a very timely intervention when the prohibition provision was debated in the constituent assembly (Guha 2007). His timely intervention helped to change the discourse on the prohibition which up till now has been overshadowed by the prohibitionist legacy of Gandhi which loomed large over the other members of the constituent assembly who were debating on the issue of prohibition. He in his spirited speech tried to overcome the prohibitionist legacy of Gandhi, by putting emphasis on the drinking culture of the lower caste specially Adivasis and he reminded

that drinking was so inextricably linked to the cultures of the lower caste and it was impossible for them to live without drinking. During the constituent assembly debate he said:

“Prohibition as an interference with the religious rights of the most ancient people in the country now as for alcohol was part of their festival, their rituals, indeed their lifestyle itself. In West Bengal it would be impossible for paddy to be transplanted if the santhal does not get his rice bear these ill-clad men have to worked knee deep in water throughout the day in drenching rain and in mud. What is it in the rice bear that keeps them alive, I wish the medical authorities in this country would carry out research in their laboratories to find out what it is that rice bears contains, of which the Adivasis need so much and which keep them protected against all manner of diseases,”. (Guha 2007: 116)

However, as the money from liquor has become an important source of revenue for the government from the time of the British government, even after the independence, it was finally decided to keep this in the prohibition clause under the directive principles of the state policy (Colvard 2014: 189).

Thus prohibition when it is imposed is seen as a sacrifice by a state government of revenue gains, to address the problems caused by alcohol. Even after independence many states tried to implement prohibition. States like Andhra Pradesh and Haryana were one of them, but due to illegal trade and loss of revenue they had to soon give up the prohibitionist agenda.

### **5.10 Conclusion:**

The movement which led to ban on the alcohol in Bihar was result of the struggle of women who, on many occasions, had come out of their own and in some cases they were helped the left parties and their women organization. Although the movement for the ban gave the women the chance to speak against the violence by their husbands, but when it came to the matters of giving equal share and access in case of property rights and decision making the movement or the government schemes like JEEVIKA fail short to the expectation. By only launching populist movement would improve their position of

women in society is doing lip service to the cause. Moreover, the ban on liquor seems to be a ploy to distract from the core issues like land reforms, improvement in education and health sector. Nitish kumar needs to address these core issues first so that the women and lower caste could improve their socio economic condition in the state.

Since Nitish Kumar took the decision to ban the liquor in a short period of time to appease his political constituency, it didn't lead to any drastic improvements in the lives of the women and lower caste groups. Instead, the recent data of the jail shows that majority of people who had been put behind the bar under the prohibition act are from these lower castes. Thus it would be apt to say that lower castes have paid a disproportionate price for the marginal benefit that may have allured them due to the ban on liquor.

## **Chapter 6 - Discussion and Conclusion**

### **6.1 The Public health and other concerns that led to the Bihar government policy of banning alcohol in Bihar.**

It was not that the liquor was not available in the state of Bihar before Nitish Kumar came to power in Bihar but the number of liquor shops was not very high at that time. As soon as the Nitish Kumar came to power in 2005, in order to boost the state revenue, he amended the excise policy in 2007 and as result the number of liquor shops doubled all over in Bihar. Although revenue enhancement was the prime objectives of the revised excise policy, the other objective of this revised policy was to check the availability of illicit and substandard liquor which posed a threat to the health of the people by the increased network of licensed liquor shops. On the contrary, what happened after the implementation of this revised excise policy was that under the grab of these liquor shops the illegal trade of liquor prospered under the liquor mafias due to the political patronage. Thus making the situation more worse. As shown in Chapter one after the amendment of the excise not only the number of licensed shops increased but also under the garb of these license shops the illegal trade of illicit liquor also increased, Now almost every panchyat in Bihar had one licensed liquor shop, and it was an open fact that behind each one of these license shop there was two to three illegal shops which were also in operation (Madhu 2013)

It is very interesting to note how the state used alcohol as a tool/means to meet its end i.e. to sustain its rule. It used the legitimate concerns of the people to strengthen itself. This means that the ill effects of alcohol on people health was used by the state government to first maximize its revenue, and at the same time, maintain the status quo in the society, as the problem liquor is just like a viscous cycle in which the poor classes get trapped. It results not only in their financial impoverishment, but also the women of these poor household had to bear the brunt of the violent men, hindering their progress in the society. The nexus between the liquor mafia, the feudal elements and the state helps them to sustain this business in which the poor classes are not only exploited by giving them subsistence wages but the liquor also wipes off the little bit of earning which they make (Tiwari 2017).

Not only the increased availability of liquor facilitated the widespread growth of alcoholism in the state but also this had some serious repercussion on the lives of the women and the lower caste groups who were worst hit by the problem of alcoholism. With the passage of time, the problem of alcoholism started assuming mammoth proportions of mortality as the number of people dying due to the drinking of illicit liquor across the state had also started increasing. This left the people, especially the women, with no other option but to come out against this liquor problem and as a result many voices of protest against the liquor started coming along the different parts of the state.

Thus for the second time again, while banning alcohol, the state very astutely used its power to meet its end, i.e. is to further sustain its rule by bringing in prohibition. It appropriated the legitimate concerns of the people, which the increased alcohol consumption was posing to the health and the family life of the people, in general by saying that the excise policy of 2007 had some negative fallout. The increasing number of liquor shops, intended to increase the revenue, had hit the poorest people the most. But in reality, it was quite clear that Nitish Kumar had taken the decision to ban the liquor to appease the women constituency which he had carefully built over the years. It is very apt to call the problem of alcoholism as construed by the state, which is also evident in the then Bihar Government's World Bank driven growth policies. Instead of solving the core problems of poverty and unemployment, the government used the liquor revenue to launch only those pro-women program which helped them to further its agenda.

## **6.2 The change in public health indicators of alcoholism post the ban on alcohol**

The easy and widespread availability of alcohol facilitated the growth of alcoholism across all parts of the state. The emergence of alcoholism has not only put the people's health in danger but also it had seriously affected the lives of the women and their family life. Also, the increased supply of liquor had not only put the women's health and safety in the dock, but had pushed them into the severe economic deprivation. Not only the mortality and morbidity but the intangible loss in terms of social implications which the increased alcohol consumption brought to lives of the vulnerable sections of the society was irreparable

The ban on liquor was politically motivated but it had also led to some improvement in the problems related to alcohol use. For example, the liver, heart and accident cases have come down. However, the sudden ban on liquor had also produced many complications for the severe alcoholics who were resorting to the use of other substance and many had consequently fallen seriously ill. Majority of the community members had no knowledge of the De-addiction center which was opened in the district hospital to treat the addicts after the ban. The De-addiction center too reported very low occupancy as many people felt difficulty in approaching the center. - Alcoholic Anonymous (AA) group had reported the that biggest problem related to alcoholism was social acceptance of it as a disease. They work in that direction in making the alcoholic person understand that they are suffering from a disease. These kind of efforts were like a drop in the ocean as AA was only operational in Patna and the members themselves accepted the fact that it was very difficult for the poor addicts to continue their de-addiction program as owing to paucity of money and time as these lower classes have to face daily issues of survival first. This points to the need of an alternative approach in dealing with alcohol related problems so that people voluntarily move towards quitting alcohol.

Economic impact of the alcohol ban on the people evoked a mixed response from the respondents. On the financial side some improvement was reported in some cases where due to alcohol ban they were able to save some money. However, on the other hand, due to the lack of any permanent source of employment many were living in extreme poverty where they could not afford even two square meals a day. Similarly, due to the ban the families also reported that domestic as well crime and violence in the society has taken a downward turn. However the data from Bihar police shows that the crime and violence in the society after taking a downward spiral in 2016, the year when ban was put in place, had again taken an upward turn in 2017 . This indicated that the underground mafia had increased their operation after the ban. Nevertheless overall the ban has not made any drastic improvement in the lives of people as the low socio-economic condition and widespread poverty still made the lives of the people very miserable.

### **6.3 The responses of different social groups towards the problem of alcoholism and on the alcohol ban**

Women groups were instrumental in making the problem of Alcoholism as a popular grass root movement across the state. Although the Nitish Kumar had the history of becoming the champion of the rights of women and girls, as after coming to the power he had very carefully created a separate women constituency by launching a number of schemes such as Bicycle, SHGs JEEVIKA, and also reservation of 50% seats in the panchayat. But this time with regard to the liquor problem Nitish found himself at receiving end as during his first term he himself had liberalised the liquor trade in order to boost the revenue of the state. But due to this decision he had to face some collateral damage as the women groups who had earlier praised him, now started rising fingers at him and many of them came out on their own to protest against menace of alcoholism. These women were aided by the radical left parties and their women organization who from day one had put the government in the dock for the widespread growth of liquor business in Bihar.

The movement against liquor in India has historically given the women a chance to enter in the public sphere, but the movement in Bihar was seen to remain restricted to concerns around home economy and domestic abuse. Most importantly, it did not enable women to come together as a group to challenge larger patriarchal structures. Thus the movement for the ban gave the women the chance to speak against the oppression faced by them from their husbands in the family, but when it came to the matters of giving equal share and access in case of property rights and decision making the movement or the government schemes like JEEVIKA fall short of the expectation. Moreover, the state interventions through schemes are meant to appease the women by providing them some immediate financial help. When it comes to challenging the patriarchy or the existing social order these programs fail to address the structural issues. The foundational ideals of these program does not allows them to do so since these program are being funded by the organizations like World Bank.

The study revealed that there is no direct link between violence on women and the use of alcohol, as the violence on women is largely a reflection of strong patriarchal mindset of the people. Although this movement has given a voice to women with little education and

influence to participate in decision-making processes, in the longer run it did not succeed in imagining women's freedoms outside the framework of the patriarchal family. So the empowering potential of anti-alcohol movements is at best limited.

The damage was not only limited to the women but it also had some serious repercussion among the lower castes as we know that alcohol consumption had a clear caste and class gradient. Since the growth of alcoholism in Bihar, it has severely impacted the financial as well the emotional well being of these lower caste people. Due to the liquor ban, drinking which was a culture as much as a necessity of the lives of these lower castes has been criminalized in the eyes of the law. In many of the cases related to the lower caste groups the nature of the work is such that they are required to deal with the skin of dead and decayed animal and hence they are prone to drink in order to continue their working. Also for castes like the Pasi and the Sundi, whose traditional occupation has been associated with liquor, for these communities the ban on liquor spelt a doom for their fortunes. Also the liquor ban clearly highlights the coercive nature of the nanny state, to police and discipline its own people, who are seen as a threat to the progress and stability of the state. As it happens with any law the worst people to be hit are the lower strata of the society as aptly captured by this quot by Oscar Romero "Justice is like a snake it only bites the barefoot."(Oscar Romero)

This could be the fact the law was made assuming every one is equal, but in the actual social realm the operation/implementation of law is governed by the social realities of the society. This was witnessed in the way the land reforms acts never could achieve its set goals as it had ignored the social realities of class and caste of those in power (Kaviraj; 2000). The social position of these lower caste/class groups who are devoid of the any means of the ownership of the sources of production makes them more vulnerable to the abuse of law. Prohibition law has been used as the brute force of law to create a reign of terror among these lower caste groups who paid a very heavy price for their drinking. The recent data of the jails shows that majority of people who had been put behind the bar under the prohibition act are from lower castes. And thus, it would be apt to say that these lower castes have paid a disproportionate price for the marginal benefit that may have accrued to them due to the ban on liquor.



The comprehensive analysis of liquor ban reflects the poor state of decision making in public policy, in particular Bihar. Bihar, as an Empowered Action Group (EAG) state, has always been facing the crisis in revenue collection. Political decisions and economic factors are interlinked in developing and implementing public policy. The political governance of the state used liquor as one of the most important means for revenue increment so the economic crisis of revenue generation was coupled by the factor of political high handedness. The political logic behind the decision was that increasing the number of outlets would propel more revenue. The same political logic had paved way for state economy management. For example, it is found from the literature that the revenue earned from excise department was used as cross financing for other sectors and repaying the external debts (Kumar 2015). However the political decision was not made in accordance to the administrative efficiency with regards to the distribution and regulates the liquor shops. Both illegal and legal outlets were spiked within two three years. The lack of political farsightedness could not assess the capacity of administrative efficiency and impact in the society due to the enhancement in liquor consumption.

The discontent in the society eventually came out, especially in the lower rung of the society. Women, as usual, were the immediate victims because of spike in domestic violence and loss of finances. This had become an outcry which government had to look at. Hence again political intervention came in the form of a second- time re-amendment of the excise policy. It was then the situation of the state which Nitish Kumar government had to swallow to pacify the public anger by introducing prohibition. In turn, prohibition gave a moral edge to the Nitish-led government which was infact again a political decision.

The decision of liquor ban might have negative consequences for the state revenue sources, but it has tremendous political mileage. The analogy between the political decision and public policy amendments reflect that the economy is always primary concern for politics to deal with public policy. However, the political decision are always often short sightedness and driven by the short term goals. Hence the so-called public policy often becomes the cause of public outrage. The case of liquor ban in Bihar points out the same flaws of making public policy.

Therefore overall the study findings show that there is a need of allocative policy over regulatory policy in dealing with alcohol and other substance abuse. It points to an urgent need to develop a mechanism so that the revenue generated from the liquor sales can be used for the prevention and treatment of problems related to alcohol.

## **Bibilography:**

- ‘Sarabh Ke Khilaf Andolan Ka Anubhav’ “Aadhi Zameen”, publication, Samkalin, Patna, October-December 2012
- A Study on Liberalizing Liquor Trade in India, 2014. . Centre for Public Policy Research
- Alcohol and Interpersonal Violence WHO 2005
- Alcohol Marketing and Regulatory Policy Environment in India Report 2013 Public Health Foundation of India
- Alcohol, Gender & Drinking Problems WHO 2005
- Angrosino, M. V. (2005). Recontextualising observation: Ethnography, pedagogy and prospects for a progressive political agenda. In N. Denzin, & S. Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 729-746). California: Sage
- Babor, T. (2010). *Alcohol: no ordinary commodity: research and public policy*. Oxford University Press.
- Bapat, V & Bhanot, D, 2016. Multiplier Effect of Self-help Groups, *Economic and Political weekly*, pp.82-88
- Basheer K, ‘The Alcohol Economy’ The Buisness Line, 08/12/ 2013
- Benegal, V., 2005. India: alcohol and public health. *Addiction*, 100(8), pp.1051-1056.
- Benegal, V., 2005. India: alcohol and public health. *Addiction*, 100(8), pp.1051-1056
- Benegal, V., 2005. India: alcohol and public health. *Addiction*, 100(8), pp.1051-1056.
- Bharty M , 2014, ‘Intersubjectivity to consensus? Engendering Rural Local Governance in Bihar’ in ‘*Traversing Bihar, the Politics of development and Social justice*’ edited by Manish K. Jha and Pushpendra, publication , Orient Black swan, ,p,p 179
- Bharty M , 2014, ‘Intersubjectivity to consensus? Engendering Rural Local Governance in Bihar’ in ‘*Traversing Bihar, the Politics of development and Social justice*’ edited by Manish K. Jha and Pushpendra, publication , Orient Black swan, ,p,p 179
- Bihar emerging as brewery hub, The Economic Times 16/01/2012
- Bihar govt announces new excise policy – Oneindia [29/06/2007], URL <https://www.oneindia.com/2007/06/29/bihar-govt-announces-new-excise-policy-1183097226.html> (accessed 11.6.17).

*Bihar Industrial Incentive Policy-2011*

[www.dcmsme.gov.in/Policies/National%20%20Policies/27.%20Bihar.pdf](http://www.dcmsme.gov.in/Policies/National%20%20Policies/27.%20Bihar.pdf)

Bihar Liquor Ban.pdf [30/09/2016], . Google Docs. URL [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzXilfcxe7yudWJORHBDYzJqZDA/view?usp=embed\\_facebook](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzXilfcxe7yudWJORHBDYzJqZDA/view?usp=embed_facebook) (accessed 10.31.17).

Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016, Government of Bihar 2<sup>nd</sup> October URL: <http://excise.bih.nic.in/Acts/Bihar-Prohibition-and-Excise-Act-2016.pdf> accessed on 05/07/2018

Bihar's classic double standards on Excise Policy [28/11/2012],. URL <http://www.bihartimes.in/Newsbihar/2012/Nov/newsbihar28Nov1.html> (accessed 11. 6.17).

Bihar's Prohibition crackdown :Two years later, OBC, EBC, SC, ST face the brunt; The Indian Express (dated 28/5/2018)

Bihar's Alcohol Ban Good Intentions, Impractical Policy EPW 2017

Business today article in 16th February 2014 issue by Sarika Malhotra titled 'Hitting the bottle'.<http://businesstoday.intoday.in/story/bihar-liquor-policy-change-2014/1/202611.html>

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge

Collinson S (ed) (2003) *Power, Livelihoods and Conflict: Case Studies in Political Economy Analysis for Humanitarian Action*. Humanitarian Policy Group Report No 13, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), London. Available from: <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/241.pdf>

Colvard, Robert E. "'Drunkards Beware!': Prohibition and Nationalist Politics in the 1930s'." *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia: Intoxicating Affairs*. London: Routledge (2014): 173-200.

Department of Registration, Excise & Prohibition Notification 21/12/2015, Government of Bihar

Department of Finance , 2007-08, Bihar Economic Survey, Government of Bihar

Department of Finance , 2015-16, Bihar Economic Survey Government of Bihar

Department of Police 2018 Cumulative Crime data of the Bihar for the years 2001-2017 Government of Bihar URL <http://biharpolice.bih.nic.in/menuhome/CDA.htm> Accessed on 05/07/2018

- Department of Registration, 07/06/2007 Excise & Prohibition Notification Government of Bihar
- Department of Registration, 21/12/2015 Excise & Prohibition Notification. Government of Bihar
- Department of Registration, Excise & Prohibition Notification 07/06/2007. Government of Bihar
- Department of Social Welfare (2017)*Impact Assessment of Total Prohibition on Lives of Women and Girls in Rural Bihar*, Gender Resource Centre, Women Development Corporation, Government of Bihar
- Doshi, V., 2016. 'The government has just saved my life': weeping in Bihar as Indian state goes dry. *The Guardian*.
- Doyal, L. and Pennell, I., 1979. *The political economy of health*. Pluto Press.
- Dubey B Hindustan Times, 2017 More druggies than alcoholics at Bihar liquor de-addiction centres, 6<sup>th</sup> April URL <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/more-druggies-than-alcoholics-at-bihar-liquor-de-addiction-centres/story-ujtKo8GB7r> Accessed on :05/07/2017
- Editorial 1996 Prohibition No Supportive Measures, *Economic and Political Weekly*
- Fahey, David M., and Padma Manian. "Poverty and Purification: The Politics of Gandhi's Campaign for Prohibition." *Historian* 67, no. 3 (2005): 489-506.
- Fahey, David M., and Padma Manian. "Poverty and Purification: The Politics of Gandhi's Campaign for Prohibition." *Historian* 67, no. 3 (2005): 489-506.
- Galab, S., Rao, N.C., 2003. Women's Self-Help Groups, Poverty Alleviation and Empowerment. *Economic and Political Weekly* 38, 1274–1283.
- Give man Liquor or a substitute is Shaw's advice*, *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, New York(08/03/1931)
- Global status report on alcohol and health, 2011 World Health Organization
- Ground Zero: Bihar | After ban, in a state of low spirits - *The Hindu*[13/08/2016], URL <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/After-ban-in-a-state-of-low-spirits/article14568181.ece> (accessed 11.12.17).
- Guha, Ramachandra. 2007 *India after Gandhi: The history of the world's largest democracy*. Pan Macmillan,
- Hart, J.T., 2006. *The political economy of health care: a clinical perspective*.
- How does one deal with drink? , 20 th sep 2015 . . *Economic and Political Weekly*

- Illiah K 1992 Andhra Pradesh's Anti-Liquor Movement , Economic and political Weekly
- Illiah, K., 1996. Why I Am Not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy. *Culture and Political Economy, Samya, Calcutta.*
- Impact Assessment of Total Prohibition on Lives of Women and Girls in Rural Bihar, Gender Resource Centre, Women Development Corporation, Department of Social Welfare, Government of Bihar, 2017
- Impact Assessment of Total Prohibition on Lives of Women and Girls in Rural Bihar, Gender Resource Centre, Women Development Corporation, Department of Social Welfare, Government of Bihar, 2017
- Jha, G 2015 No alcohol in Bihar rule will brew trouble for Nitish Kumar Daily O 22/12/2015 URL <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/bihar-nitish-kumar-liquor-ban-policy-rjd-> Accessed on 04/07/2018
- Jha, S.N., 1970. Caste in Bihar Politics. *Economic and Political Weekly*, pp.341-344.
- Jonathan Pattenden (2010) A neoliberalisation of civil society? Self-help groups and the labouring class poor in rural South India, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37:3485-512, DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2010.494372
- Kumar 2016, *Bihar cracks down with collective fines, confiscations for prohibition violations* The Hindustan Times 13<sup>th</sup> August
- Kumar A (2015), Hindustan times “Will ban liquor if I retain in Power : Nitish Kumar” July 10<sup>th</sup>
- Kleinman A , Good B , Eisenberg L & Desjarlais R(1995) *World Mental Health : Problem and Priorities in Low-Income Countries.* . Oxford University Press.
- Keller M (1958) “Alcoholism: Nature and Extent of the Problem” ,The Annals of the
- Kumar Awanish 2015 Where is Caste in Development?, 2015. . Economic and Political Weekly,
- Kumar S & Prakash N January 2016 Good Intentions, Impractical Policy Bihar's Alcohol Ban Economic and political Weekly
- Kumar, A., 2013. Nitish Kumar's Honourable Exit: A brief history of caste politics. *Economic and Political Weekly.*
- Kumar, P. (Ed.), 2015. Unveiling Women’s Leadership: Identity and meaning of leadership in India, 1st ed. 2015 edition. ed. Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire ; New York, NY.

Liquor ban not political goal, but to bring social change: Nitish Kumar, Livemint (10/09/2016) URL  
<https://www.livemint.com/Politics/N8xjVoW8kESeodg31n7lGI/Liquor-ban>  
accessed on 05/07/2018

Liquor Mafiosi assets seizure soon, says DGP'' The Hindustan Times dated 15/12 /2012

Madhu, Poorna Sharab bandhi lagu karo, in Aadhi Jamin , Publication , Samkalin , Patna, January- March 2013, pp 18-19

Malhotra, A. and Mohan, A., 2000. National policies to meet the challenge of substance abuse: Programmes and implementation. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 42(4), p.370.

Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation 03/08/2017 *Per Capita Income'* Government of India

Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation 03/08/2017 *Per Capita Income'* Government of India

Mithlesh 22/12/2012, 'Sharab ka kala Karobar' Prabhat khabar, Patna.

*Mr Churchill* in Patna (Or, Mr Nitish Kumar) The Telegraph 28/08/2016)

*Mr Churchill* in Patna (Or, Mr Nitish Kumar) The Telegraph 28/08/2016)

No words to thank: Poor women celebrate Bihar liquor ban [02/04/ 2016]  
<http://www.hindustantimes.com/>. URL <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/no-words-to-thank-poor-women-celebrate-bihar-liquor-ban/story-TyhPs9FaqRxXwhGNCA6ZQP.html> (accessed 11.8.17).

Of populism and prohibition, 2016. . The Hindu.

Of populism and prohibition, 2016. . The Hindu.20<sup>th</sup> April URL:  
<file:///C:/Users/DELL/Zotero/storage/ZYFAZCDU/article14246059.html>  
Accessed on: 05/07/2018

Oppn bandh, protests on Dec 15'' The Hindustan Times a dated 13/12 /2012

Opposition bandh, protest on Dec 15, 2012, The Hindustan Times 13<sup>th</sup> December.

Organization, W.H., Asia, R.O. for S.-E., 2006. Burden and socio-economic impact of alcohol: the bangalore study.

Palmer D, Patra J , Bhatia M , Mishra S 2016 Risk of Intimate Partner Violence and Alcohol Use, Economic and political Weekly

Panickar V 2015 State-Sponsored Alcoholism in Kerala , Economic and political Weekly

- Patel Aakar 2016 , *Prohibition: A Failed Idea*, Deccan Chronicle, 10<sup>th</sup> April, URL: <https://www.deccanchronicle.com/opinion/op-ed/100416/prohibition-a-fa>  
Accessed on :05/06/2018
- Patton, MQ. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *HSR: Health Services Research*, 34 (5), 1189-1208.
- Planning Commission, 2011 *Indian Human Development Report 2011* Institute of Applied Manpower Research ,Government of India
- Prasad, R., 2009. Alcohol use on the rise in India. *The Lancet*, 373(9657), pp.17-18.
- Projects : Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project - “JEEViKA” | The World Bank [WWW Document], n.d. URL <http://projects.worldbank.org/P090764/bihar-rural-livelihoods-project-jeevika?lang=en&tab=overview> (accessed 11.14.17).
- Projects : Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project - “JEEViKA” | The World Bank [WWW Document], n.d. URL <http://projects.worldbank.org/P090764/bihar-rural-livelihoods-project-jeevika?lang=en&tab=overview> (accessed 11.14.17).
- Pushpendra & Jha K Manish 2014 *Traversing Bihar ; The Politics of Development and Social Justice* 1<sup>st</sup> ed 2014 Orient BlackSwan New Delhi
- Rajya Sabha TV, n.d. The Big Picture – Bihar to ban alcohol from April 1, 2016: Has prohibition worked anywhere?
- Regulation & Legislation | Alcohol Web India [WWW Document], n.d. URL <https://www.alcoholwebindia.in/content/regulation-legislation> (accessed 11.9.17).
- Sarabandhi ka asar: 50% ghatate Liver or Dil ke Marij, Prabhat Khabar, (29/09/2017) URL; <https://www.prabhatkhabar.com/news/patna/bihar-patna-today-the-ef>  
Accessed on :05/07/29018
- Self-help Groups Revolution: What Next?, 2015. . Economic and Political Weekly,
- Shailesh Kumar Sinha vs The State Of Bihar & Ors , 30/09/2016 Patna High Court Judgement
- Shailesh Kumar Sinha vs The State Of Bihar & Ors on 30 September, 2016
- Singh S & Tiwari R The Indian Express, 2018, ‘Why Nitish says no to liquor’ 30<sup>TH</sup> May
- Singh Santosh 2016 ‘Patna HC scraps Bihar liquor ban, Nitish Kumar plans a counter’ The Indian Express 1st October.
- Singh, G., 2016. Do not drink, you are in Bihar [07/04/2016]. Tribune india News Service. URL <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/do-not-drink-you-are-in-bihar/218655.html> (accessed 11.20.17).



- Singh, Gursharan. Do Not Drink, You are in Bihar, The Tribune, 07/04/2016.
- Smith, J. A. (2005). Semi-structured interviewing and qualitative analysis. In J. Smith, R. Harre, & L. Langenhove, *Rethinking Methods in Psychology* (pp. 9-26). London: Sage.
- Stone, A. and Harpham, E.J., 1982. *The political economy of public policy* (Vol. 10). SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
- Tewary and Raman 2016 ,Ground Zero: Bihar | After ban, in a state of low spirits - The Hindu[13/08/2016], URL <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/After-ban-in-a-state-of-low-spirits/article14568181.ece> (accessed 11.12.17).
- The Bihar Prohibition Act, 1938, Government of Bihar Province , URL: <http://www.bareactslive.com/JH/JHR218.HTM> Accessed on : 05/07/2018
- Tiwari Meera, “Social inclusion : Perspectives from top-down and bottom-up Approaches in Rural and Urban Bihar”in ‘*Traversing Bihar, the Politics of development and Social justice*’ edited by Manish K.Jha & Pushpendra, Publication , Orient Black swan, 2014 ,p,p 106
- Tiwari Meera, “Social inclusion : Perspectives from top-down and bottom-up Approaches in Rural and Urban Bihar”in ‘*Traversing Bihar, the Politics of development and Social justice*’ edited by Manish K.Jha & Pushpendra, Publication , Orient Black swan, 2014 ,p,p 106
- Tiwari, M , ‘Kala Kanoon nahi, Sharab Mukti ka Intjaam Karo’, ‘Aadhi Jamin’ 2017 pp 107-108
- Tschurennev, Jana, and Harald Fischer-Tiné. "Introduction: Indian anomalies?—Drink and drugs in the land of Gandhi." In *A History of Alcohol and Drugs in Modern South Asia*, pp. 17-42. Routledge, 2014.
- Turshen, M., 1989. *The politics of public health* (pp. 219-241). New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Two Mahadalits Convicted Under Draconian Prohibition Law in Bihar, 2017, Liberation, August Delhi 110092,
- Vyasulu V 1998 On Prohibition Dangers of a Blanket Solution, Economic and political Weekly
- Widows & elderly Jailed,Children picked up for ferrying liquor ;The Indian Express (dated 29/5/2018)
- Will ban liquor if I retain power in Bihar, says Nitish Kumar | india | Hindustan times[10/07/2015], URL <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/will-ban-liquor-if->

i-retain-power-in-bihar-says-nitish-kumar/story-Yxs9j1v3p1mAWwLPir6alK.html (accessed 11.13.17).

Willig, C. (2010). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.

Zilberman, M.L., Blume, S.B., 2005. Domestic violence, alcohol and substance abuse. *Revista Brasileira de Psiquiatria* 27, s51–s55. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1516-44462005000600004>

Kleinman A , Good B , Eisenberg L & Desjarlais R(1995) *World Mental Health : Problem and Priorities in Low-Income Countries*. . Oxford University Press.

Keller M (1958) ‘‘Alcoholism: Nature and Extent of the Problem’’ ,The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social science

Lewis J (1956) ‘‘ Alcoholism’’ , The American Journal of Nursing,

Morse & Flavin (1992) ‘‘The Definition of Alcoholism’’ JAMA

Chalke H (1974) ‘‘Alcoholism : A Major Public Health Problem’’, Journal of Alcoholism

Global status report on alcohol and health( 2014), World Health Organisation.

Park & Prak (2011) ‘‘Preventive and Social Medicine’’ Banarsidas Bhanot Publications

## Annexure I

### Liquor Shop Owner-

1. When did you obtained the first liquor shop license?
2. What was the licensing fees at that time?
3. How many shops was owned by you till the time of ban?
4. When did you received the present license?
5. What is the present licensing fees?
6. In your opinion has the liquor shops increased in your area?
7. What is your opinion about the organization which has campaigned against liquor ban in this area?
8. How it has affected your business?
9. In your opinion has the crime and violence in society increased or decreased after ban? (open ended)
10. In your opinion why has the government banned liquor in Bihar?

### Ward Member/Sarpanch

1. When was the first shop opened in your area or area nearest you?
2. At the time of ban how many shops were operational in your area?
3. Do you have any relative who owns a liquor shop?
4. Do you consume alcohol?
5. In your opinion has the crime and violence in society increased or decreased after ban? (open ended)
6. What is your opinion about the organization which has campaigned against liquor ban in this area?
7. In your opinion why has the government banned liquor in Bihar?

### Doctor/PHC

1. General problems due to alcohol in this area? (type, magnitude, nature etc)
2. What is the extent of mortality due to alcoholism in this area?
3. After the ban what is the effect in your opinion on the following?
  - a. Intimate Partner Violence (domestic violence)
  - b. Crime/violence in society
  - c. Alcohol related mortality
  - d. Any particular morbidity specifically relating to alcoholism
4. What is your opinion about the organization which has campaigned against liquor ban in this area?
5. In your opinion why has the government banned liquor in Bihar?

Organization- (Socio-economic profile of respondent and other major members of the organization)

1. When was the first shop opened in your area or area nearest you?
2. At the time of ban how many shops were operational in your area?
3. Do you have any relative who owns a liquor shop?
4. In your opinion has the liquor shops increased in your area?
5. In your opinion what was the role of PHC doctor and ward member in campaigning for alcohol ban?
6. What are the forms difficulties you had to face from the liquor shop owner?
7. Do you received any kind of support from the government in this campaign?
8. What were the methods and tools used in this campaign?
9. After the ban what is the effect in your opinion on the following?
  - a. Intimate Partner Violence (domestic violence)
  - b. Crime/violence in society

General Public-

1. Do you consume alcohol?
2. What are the alternatives you use now? (other items)
3. In your opinion is drinking a social stigma?
- 4.

### **Alcoholics**

1. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?
2. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?
3. How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?
4. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?
5. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?
6. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?
7. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?
8. Have you had at least 12 drinks of any kind of alcoholic beverage in any 1 year?

9. What is your main reason for not drinking?
10. Have you had at least one drink of beer, wine, or liquor during the past year?
11. What is your main reason for not drinking in the past year?
12. How old were you when you quit drinking?
13. On average, how often do you drink alcoholic beverages (i.e., beer, wine, or liquor)?
14. On days that you drink, about how many drinks do you usually have?
15. In how many of the past 12 months did you have at least 1 drink of any alcoholic beverage?
16. During the past 12 months, on about how many days did you have nine or more (five or more) drinks of any alcoholic beverage?
17. Do you now drink more, less, or about the same as you did a year ago?
18. Do you now consider yourself a light, moderate, or heavy drinker?

## **Table 2 – How to ask about domestic violence**

---

“Stress can cause a lot of physical and psychological problems. Have you been under stress lately?”

“How do you and your partner handle conflicts? Does anyone ever get hurt? Who?”

“We know that many women who have complaints similar to yours are experiencing difficulties at home. Have you experienced problems at home?”

“Physical fighting is a problem in some of the families we see. Have you ever been hit by your partner?”

“Have you ever been forced to perform sexual acts that are uncomfortable for you?”

“Does your partner abuse drugs or alcohol? Does he get violent when he takes drugs or alcohol?”

“Are you worried about your drinking? What about medications prescribed by doctors? What about illicit drugs?”

---

*Adapted from: Meyer B, Smith-Dejulio K. Diagnosis and management of domestic violence. Group Health Cooperative Medical Forum. 1994;8:8-11.*

*Schraiber LB, d'Oliveira AF. Violence against women and Brazilian health care policies: a proposal for integrated care in primary care services. Int J Gynaecol Obstet. 2002;78 Suppl 1:S21-25.*