



Anti-Alcohol Movement in Karnataka: A Study in Reference to Chitradurga District

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ABSTRACT

Anti-alcohol movement in Karnataka often arise a response to the specific challenges and issues faced by women related to alcohol consumption. These movement typically highlight concerns such as domestic violence, health problems, economic problems, illicit distillery and it havocs, traffic accidents, increase in crime, and societal issues linked to excessive drinking. Anti alcohol movement in Karnataka was inspired by the many anti-alcohol movements in India. In this movement many NGOs, Matts and seers, marginalized women groups, social activists have involved. When asked whether this movement has been successful the answer is no. There are many reasons for this.

Though the anti alcohol movement in Karnataka was build on the initiative and participation of women a multitude of organization supported women to sustain the struggle for abolish on alcohol. The organizations ranged from regional, grass roots women units and issued based informal groups to political parties with different ideological orientations, priorities and political motivations. In India the prohibition of liquor has been influence by the thinking of Mahatma Gandhi, who viewed alcohol consumption more as a disease than a vice. Directive principles of state policy (Article-47) mentions that in particular the state shall endeavor to bring to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medical purposes of intoxicating to drinks and drugs which are injurious to health. Ruling governments are scrambling to ban. Behind this lies the question of profit and loss. There is correlation between alcohol and politics and most politicians have liquor shops and they are earning larger profit from liquor shops. Elections are being held under the influence of alcohol. There is no proper leadership and guidance behind this movement.

Keywords: Alcohol, Liquor, Matts, Domestic Violence, Marginalized Women Group, Prohibition

Introduction

In Karnataka rural women NGO's and religious institutions are fighting for prohibition of alcohol in the state. Prohibition of consumption of liquor and alcoholism are remedy for several problems of the state. Due to excessive consumption of liquor and alcohol ruined the life of marginalized group. The organization like Grameena Kooli KarmikaraSanghatane (daily wage labor union) Karnataka MadyapanaNishedaAndholan (KMNA) observed that the movement which started in 2016 has gotten stronger even as the government has continued to ignore them. This movement was targeted the strong nexus between the government and the mafia. Now days it is very amusing that not only the adults are into drinking but surprisingly teenagers or youngsters are already exposed to it and unfortunately become alcoholic in a very young age. Underage drinking is one of the major dilemmas which our society is presently facing. Drinking in an early age can possibly make the youngsters become alcoholic in the future and become addicted to drinking. According to seventh schedule of the constitution alcohol is a state subject i.e. state legislatures have right and responsibility to draft law regarding it, including the production, manufacture, possession, transport, purchase, and sale of intoxicating liquors. Thus laws regarding alcohol differ from state to state, falling in the whole spectrum between prohibition and private sale.

Meaning of alcohol

The chemical name of alcohol is ethanol. It is a depressant drug. Alcohol is an important chemical substance. Alcohol can be obtained from sugar and starch. The word alcoholism first used in the classical essay "Alcoholismuschronicus" (1849) by the Swedish physician Magnus Huss. He used it to indicate that when alcohol consumed in excess it become a disease.

Definition of Alcoholism

Johnson: Alcohol is a condition in which the individual has lost control over his alcohol intake in that he is constantly unable to refrain from drinking once he begins (Johnson, Elmer H. (1973) "Social problems of urban man" The Dorsey press, Homewood, Illinois.)

Mark Keller and Efron: Alcoholism is characterized by the repeated drinking of alcoholic beverage to an extent that exceeds customary use or compliance with the social customs of the community and that interferes with the drinker's health or his social or economic functioning (Keller, Mark and Vera, Efron (1945) the prevalence of alcoholism, Quarterly journal of studies on alcohol)

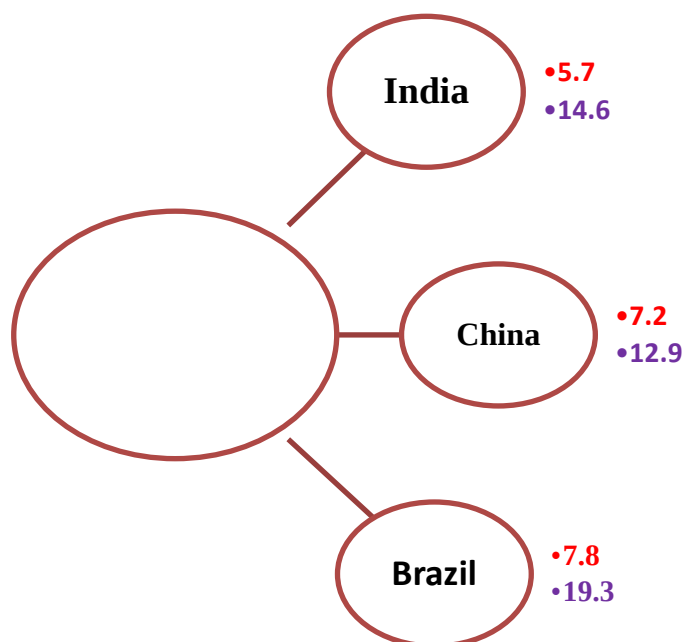
Clinbell: An alcoholic is one whose drinking interferes frequently continuously with any of his important life adjustments and interpersonal relationships. (Clinebell, Howard J, (1956) understanding and counselling the alcoholic, Abingdon press, New York).

Extent of Alcoholism:

Consumption of alcohol is wide spread in the world as well as in India. Alcohol has historically hold an important role in social engagement and bonding for many social drinking or moderate alcohol consumption for many is pleasurable. The global average consumption was 6.17 liters per person in (aged 15 years or older) 2018.

When we look at gender difference we see that in all countries men are more likely to drink than women. India is world's third largest market for alcoholic beverages after China and Russia with an estimated value of \$ 35 billion. One in seven in Indian in the 10-75 age groups use alcohol, a 2019 government survey found. WHO report (2018) said the per capita consumption of (pure) alcohol in India was reported 5.7 liters a year in 2016, up from 4.3 liters in 2010 and 2.4 liters in 2005.

Alcoholic consumption



Red-Total alcohol per capita (15+) consumption (in liters of pure alcohol)
Pink- Total alcohol per capita (15+) consumption, drinkers only (in liters of pure alcohol)
(2016)

Source-WHO- Global status report on alcohol and health-2018

In India about 160 million people consume alcohol. In Indian states liquor is banned in Manipur, Lakshadweep, Bihar, Gujarat, Mizoram, and Nagaland. According to the latest National Family Health Survey 5 report Arunachal Pradesh has the highest proportion of both men (53%) and women (24%) who drink alcohol. Lakshadweep and Gujarat are among the lowest alcohol consuming states in India. Rural India drinks more alcohol as compared to urban India. Alcohol consumption is more common in scheduled tribes than in any other caste/ tribe group. If we see religious wise alcohol consumption among Hindus is 20%, Muslims 5%, Christian 28%, Sikhs 23.5%, Buddhist /Neo Buddhist 24.5%, and Jains 5.9%, and others 47%.

Background of alcohol consumption in India

Alcoholic consumption had origin in ancient India. Indians were making beverage from malted barley in Sindh-Panjab region over 4000 years ago. In Indian subcontinent, the alcohol production comes from the Indus valley civilization. The people living in the province that comprises today's India and Pakistan, practiced both fermentation and distillation method of beverages using sweet and starchy items distillation vessels have been found in the Indus valley. In Rigveda scripture describes Indra, the king of Aryan gods who conquered North West India from the native Dravidian as addicted to alcohol. Indrani the wife of Indra taunts him for being alcoholic. The Kshatriya royalty was forbidden to drink grain based liquors as it's the drink of the common people. Instead they enjoyed mairaya, a wine made out of fruits and flowers. Soma or hoama is a vedic ritual drink had been consuming early Indians. Both Buddhism and Jainism discouraged the consumption of alcohol. Islam rulers of medieval India prohibited consumption of alcohol. Sikhism also banned consumption of intoxicants. Hindu philosopher Shankaracharya also discouraged the use of alcohol.

History of alcohol movement in India

In British India many Indian temperance activists agitated for prohibition of alcohol. In 1856 the British colonial government consolidates excise law to control the liquor business in India. The intention of the British government was to consolidate more revenue from liquor. In the beginning the government tries to project the excise law was beneficiary for the Indians and it was implemented for control the drinking habit of the people. The educated Indians were soon identified these liquor law as another tool of extracting revenue from Indians. During the 1880's and 1990's the temperance movement was organized. Social reformers and writers of Bengal and other part of India were participated and create awareness through their writings. Along with the writings, the proverbs of the 19th century also highlighted the adversity of the women caused by the liquor consumption. One of these proverbs disclosed the peoples' perception of drinking. One of such proverb was:

"Diyonagobhagabati Amay matalpati/ matal e amarbarobhoi" (Dear goddess bhagabati do not give me a drunkard husband I am afraid of drunkards).

Social reformer and Brahmo Samaj activist Keshab Chandra Sen claimed that all the family members of the alcoholics had to suffer from hunger because the earning member of the family had spent all their earning money on drinks. Some of the British and American women's organization came to India and started their branches to protect the Indian women from the evil impact of the drunkenness. Among all the temperance organization led by the women Marry Campbell was the first women who started missionary work from 1880.

Mahatma Gandhi was leading in the temperance movement. The temperance movement gained strength mainly through peaceful picketing and boycott of venders and excise officials and appeal to contractors not to bid the liquor sales, sometimes even by cutting off of palm trees from which toddy was tapped. During Quit India Movement most notably the liquor stores were all set ablaze. Gandhi firmly believed that alcohol ruins one physically, morally, intellectually and economically. He opinioned the liquor trade was a colonial imposition that made the rich Europeans richer while making the poor Indians poorer. (smashing the liquor machine, pg-197)

Anti arrack/liquor movement started in Dubagunta, a remote village of Potti Sriramalu-Nallur district of Andhra Pradesh by August 1992. The anti arrack movement was a collective women movement against production and sale of arrack. It became a biggest agitation lead by women as a collective against the state and its agencies. The national literacy movement was launched an agitation on January 1990 against consumption of liquor in Andhra Pradesh. The state national literacy campaigns led to women getting together and discussing their problems and began a movement that forced the state and private agencies to bring complete prohibition against country liquor in 1990. As protest fanned out across the state, the women tool on the murky and powerful crime political nexus behind the production of arrack, which was major source of revenue for the state government. The women began to destroying ingredients used to concoct arrack at home. The movement was led by leaders like Vardheneni Rosanna, mobilizes people over 10,000 from 300 villages and gained political traction from parties like the left political parties and Bharatiya Janata Party. The women convince the government to bring about a total prohibition of liquor in their state. Banning the sale of arrack became a major election issue. By November 1992 the anti arrack agitation had spread to a large number of districts in Andhra Pradesh. Then the chief minister K. Vijaya Bhasker Reddy banned the sale of arrack from October 1st 1992, everybody predicted that it would lead to the development of an illegal arrack trade. Unscrupulous dealers continue to sell arrack and spurious liquor in the state. Later on the national commission for women, with the support of Mahilahaat had conducted a meeting of the women's group to share their experience and continue struggle for removing arrack from locales. The first national workshop on anti liquor movement was organized.

Alcoholic Movement in Karnataka

Alcohol consumption in Karnataka was practiced from ancient period. Several opinions are there on consumption practice of kannadigas. Manu smriti and yajnavalkya smriti consider drinking liquor (sura) was a great sin and forbidden to Brahmin, Jains and Veerashaivas. Manasollasa describe the method of brewing intoxicant. Adikavi Pampa mentions that liquors like kakkara, goudi, madhvi, lava and krishnasura. Alcohol consumption in Karnataka was banned first time by Tippu sultan in 1782 amid opposition from his minister Mir Sadiq saying that "people's peaceful life is more important than revenue collection. He went to extent of saying "A total prohibition is very near to my heart."

Nellore anti arrack movement inspired many states of India to organize anti liquor movement. At that time the anti liquor movement was formed in Belthangadi taluk of South Canara and Thirthahalli taluk of Shivamogga district. Dharmadhikari of Dharmastala Sri Veerendra Hegde embarked a program of de-addiction through a new project named janajagruthivedike. It provides the plot form for the eradication of alcoholism. This vedike has conducted 1784 de-addiction camps that helped over 1, 46000 Alcoholics to be liberate from alcoholism. Several de-addiction centers can be seen today in Karnataka.

Karnataka made a maiden effort to ban the arrack sale and manufacture in 1998, when J. H. Patel was chief minister of Karnataka. However the government dropped the move fearing that such a decision might end in flourishing of illegal arrack trade. On July 1 2007, JDS and BJP coalition government took a bold decision to ban arrack in the aftermath of demand from several women's groups and mutts. With the ban on arrack, widely perceived as poor man's drink, Karnataka joined the other Southern states Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala which have also implemented a similar measure.

In Karnataka the anti liquor movement took a formal shape in 2016. Thousands of women gathered in Northern district of Raichur on October 2, 2016 under the banner of Karnataka MadyapanaNishedhaAndholana. Women went to government offices across the state and demanded the removal of alcohol. Under the leadership of social activist Abhaykumar, lakhs of women were started satyagraha for 71 days in Raichur and other 17 districts for complete prohibition of alcohol. At the same time KMNA discuss and aware on social and political issues along with labor unions, farmers cooperatives and women cooperatives. The satyagraha that started on February 20, 2018 and concluded on May 1, 2018, just before the Karnataka state assembly election. However the issue did not make it to the political campaign of any party either in 2018 or in this election. The movement gathered momentum in January 2019, when thousands of women marched from Chitradurga to Bangalore the capital city of Karnataka (approximately a distance of 200 km). Sarayi Beda ShikshanaBeku (we want no liquor but education) is the slogan of the movement. Nearly 4000 women entered the state capital by walking for 11 days. The women from various districts from North Karnataka launched the padayatra for demanding a total ban on production, sale and consumption of liquor in the state. It has been an arduous journey for those rural women, who have survived on spore's meals, taken shelter in open grounds.

This movement proposed some demands. They want grama sabhas to be given power to permit liquor sale in their respective jurisdiction. They want the state to take strict action for any violations under article 47 of the constitution. They want to implement new stringent laws to stop illegal liquor sale and they demand to improve the rehabilitation mechanism for people battling the problem. The movement was organized by collective called GRAKOOS(Grameena Coolie KarmikSanghatane). The collective launched the protest after some women approached them for help in reforming their drunkard husbands and sons. The movements got support from other civil society organizations, students and social activists. Freedom fighter H S Doreswamy and theater person Arundhati Nag came out in support of the protesting women. Social activist Prasanna also support to this movement. The protestors waited for five hours to meet the chief minister, who sent his representatives to the protest spot. A five member team of anti liquor campaign went to meet the chief minister but they came back empty handed.

CONCLUSION

It is tragedy that our governments and political parties are not following the ideals of our elders who fought for freedom. Mahatma Gandhi did not see the dream of an independent India without prohibition of alcohol in India. Gandhi states that "if I was appointed dictator for one hour for all India the first I would do would be to close without compensation all the liquor shops, destroy all the toddy palms, (prohibition at any cost, 1960). India is a pluralistic country; the government makes the policy by balancing. Alcoholic consumption found in some community by culture, there is no contradiction in some society. Rural women group through their agitation; they oppose the consumption, sale and manufacturing of alcohol. Women movement need more support guidance and cooperation. This movement should take the form of a pressure group. This movement is not only the struggle of women, but the movement of all common people, marginalized group and depressed group.

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