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Liquor Selling Women in Dumka district of Jharkhand: A case study

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Abstract

The scene of women selling liquor has become a phenomenon in Dumka district for quite some time. Its causes and consequences raised serious concerns. This paper tries to understand the determinants of and deterrents to selling liquor and explore effective ways to regulate brewing and sale of liquor at public places. The study is based upon a fieldwork conducted in Dumka between 2017 and 2019 during which nearly 40 women were interviewed in six village markets. Dumka is a backward district in the state of Jharkhand with widespread poverty and poor human development indicators. We argue for a two-pronged strategy to tackle the issue of alcohol sale and abuse; first strategy should be a state-driven long term plan to address the more structural issues related to unemployment, irrigation, and so on; and the second strategy, is the regulation and control of alcohol production and consumption by the gram sabhas.

Keywords: *Hatia* (a village market), *Handi* (Rice beer) and *Parua* (Mahua), Prohibition, Adivasis, collective depression, epidemiology report, Agro-entrepreneurship

Statement of the problem

Consumption of alcohol has been a universal phenomenon across the civilisations since the known history of mankind. The tribes across India traditionally treat alcohol as a part of their material, spiritual and social existence. Traditionally fermented drinks are used as food and medicine, while on the religious aspect, liquor is offered as libation to God and spirits and drinking provides an occasion of communion and sharing during social gatherings and festivals; ‘drinking alone’, however, is treated as a taboo.

But, with the passage of time, consumption of alcohol has also assumed a stigma because quite a few people perceive it as immoral, the major cause of socio-economic backwardness and decimation of families. Nevertheless, it is the purpose of brewing, the time, place and pattern of consumption which determines the use or abuse of alcohol. Keeping this approach in mind we argue that the circumstances created by marginalisation and exploitation serve as a background to understand the desirability of alcohol consumption

in tribal societies. Since the association of alcohol with the tribes or *adivasis* in India is long, wide, and deep the issue deserves a careful treatment within the context.

The sight of women selling liquor beside roads, under trees and in weekly *hatia* (market) has become an inseparable part of the landscape of Dumka district. It is perplexing to see that only tribal women sell liquor. However, some non-tribal men sell toddy (palm wine), locally called *tadi*. It is important to note that these women undertake brewing and selling of liquor for livelihood and not for profit. Besides this, they cater to those low-income consumers who cannot afford costly Indian made foreign liquors (IMFL) or '*angrezi*'. Therefore, presumably, the problems and concerns related to liquor can be ascribed to some other aspects among which a few are mentioned here:

Deviation in the pattern and purpose of brewing and consumption of liquor

There is a serious deviation in the pattern and purpose of brewing and consumption of liquor from the traditional purposes. Sale and consumption of alcohol at public places has disturbed the culture of responsible drinking which was strictly confined to family and community as per traditions. Further, easy availability of cheap local liquor 'anytime anywhere' has induced untimely and irresponsible drinking outside family supervision leading to health hazards. This disturbs family peace, health, discipline, and work culture of the people (Manoj 2019).

Unregulated brewing and sale at public places

Brewing and selling of liquor as a livelihood activity looks reasonable. But unregulated brewing of liquor has tempted the brewers to adulterate and mix harmful ingredients to expedite brewing and to enhance intoxication, which results in health hazards for the consumers. Dr. Noel Kisku of Moholpahari Mission Hospital mentions that 'there are many cases of renal failure and ascites in the area, presumably resulting from adulterated local liquor'.

Alcohol abuse and subsequent liver disease is quite prevalent among the tribes of Jharkhand (Mitra *et al* 2017). The most common ailment observed among the patients is Ascites (53.7%). Alcohol abuse has become a slow poison, causing collateral damage destroying lives and families. 'Quite a few people have reportedly died prematurely of alcohol abuse coupled with inadequate nutrition' as mentioned by Dr. A.M. Soren, Dumka. Indulgence of youth in alcohol abuse is also a dangerous indicator of degressive posterity.

Reputation loss of the society

Widespread abuse of alcohol, anytime and anywhere, reflects badly upon the society. Women in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh cried out in despair that liquor decimated their families and the adivasi community (Thekaekara 2011). Adivasis have been stereotyped with an image of 'drunken adivasis', e.g., Koel Karo firing incident in 2001 (Begrich 2013). It is detrimental to building a progressive society.

In dealing with the problem of alcohol abuse, this study observes that thus far there has been a skewed thrust on treating the symptoms rather than eliminating the causes. This

study considers such an approach to the issue of alcohol as a chronic myopia, reiterating the views of Prabhu (2010), and argues that this menace cannot be managed without a more systematic intervention to improve the living conditions of the people and their positive integration in the economy. It is, therefore, imperative to move beyond treating the symptoms to addressing the causes of alcohol abuse by initiating alternative employment opportunities and appropriate education.

It is time to impose social discipline by regulating and supervising brewing and sale of local liquor, especially in public places. However, by social discipline we do not mean yet another high-handed intervention by the state. We argue that brewing liquor for sale should be regulated and supervised through involving Gram Sabhas as envisaged in 4.m.i.iv of PESA Act, 1996. Village and community leadership should be sensitized about the issues and options and be involved in the development programmes as envisaged in PESA, 1996. Supporting community driven approach, recommendation of Dhebar Commission and suggestion of Dr B D Sharma have been mentioned. This case study attempts to discover: what compels or attracts the women to sell liquor at public places in Dumka district? The study also tries to understand why some women don't sell liquor and instead sell non-liquor items, such as, vegetables, livestock, bamboo baskets, sweets, *laddu*, *pakora*, etc. in the market for their livelihood? Finally, the study explores effective and feasible ways to regulate brewing and sale of liquor at public places.

The central concern of this study is unregulated brewing and selling of local liquor at public places, i.e., weekly markets, roadside, under trees; 'anywhere anytime' as a livelihood alternative. Brewing and consumption of liquor for personal use, during cultural rituals, marriages, community functions and festivals are not considered as concerns because these conform to the traditional pattern and purpose of brewing and consumption of liquor in the adivasi society.

Methodology of the study

Interview method was adopted using a questionnaire, comprising open as well as close-ended questions pertaining to respondent's occupation, education, income, and the reasons for selling or not selling liquor. Six village markets; Dumka, Kukurtopa, Kathikund, Balidih, Dasoray, and Bhurkunda were visited. These six village markets were selected on the basis of their comparatively bigger size operating since long time which sells variety of items, such as, vegetables, seasonal fruits, bamboo baskets, pork, goats, and country chicken. Other factors considered were poverty level (50%) and human development indicators like malnutrition (50%), water scarcity, and agricultural productivity in the area. The markets were located within convenient distance (20 Kms) from Dumka, the hometown of the researcher. The respondents, 40 women, were divided into two groups; first, the women who sold liquor at public places, and second, the women who sold non-liquor items, e.g., vegetables, bamboo baskets, livestock, sweets, etc. The researcher also had conversations with women who sold liquor near roadside and under trees on non-*hatia* days. He visited some liquor selling women in their villages to get some more insights and details.

This is a qualitative and exploratory case study. Recommendations have been presented based on the empirical data and observations during the fieldwork. However, there were some difficulties encountered during the fieldwork as the women did not reply freely in public places, especially when others were listening. They suspected the researcher to be a police authority or a government reporter. Therefore, some women asked, “Are you going to stop our selling?” The respondents were not comfortable to disclose their income. They also felt disturbed because the interview happened during their business hour. Besides this, they found ‘asking names’, culturally impudent and intrusive.

A brief background

Like any other tribes in India, the tribes in Dumka district also has been brewing liquor for consumption in the family and community during festivals, cultural rituals, marriages and for hospitality since ages. The region is endowed with *matkom* or mahua trees (*madhuca longifolia*). Rice is the staple grain and its customary use for brewing purpose is also noted in the folktales. According to the Santhal creation myth, *Lita godet*, an agent of God, taught *Pilchu* couple, the first human couple, the method of brewing liquor or rice-beer. After they made beer, the Pilchu couple first offered it to God as libation. After that when the couple consumed the beer, they gained enlightenment (Bodding 1938). Accordingly, the practice of offering liquor as libation to God and using it as a medium of communion, has become a tradition. Alcohol is consumed with respect and the broad spectrum of the use of alcohol among the Santhals reveals that it is “not spasmodic but ubiquitous, and not an individual but a corporate (collective) behaviour” (Panangatt2012).

But, in the last few years, unregulated brewing and irresponsible consumption of alcohol has raised serious concerns. Social workers, religious leaders and political leaders have tried hard to stop such widespread abuse of liquor at public places. The Government too imposed a partial prohibition in the area but nothing seems to have worked. The legendary Shibu Soren, referred with reverence as ‘Guruji’, started his social and political life trying to prohibit sale of liquor at public places during the 1970s. But unfortunately, it has spread ever since then instead of coming down.

Delving deeper, this study also tries to unravel the other side of the story which deserves serious thinking and planning. A prolonged poverty (HDI, BPL, malnutrition), unemployment, idleness, helplessness, indebtedness, land alienation, and marginalization of the people had debilitating impact on their behaviour pattern leading to ‘collective depression’ and ‘social suffering’ (Begrich 2013) and pushing them to indulgence and ‘escape mind-set’ (Neufeld *et al* 2005). Therefore, any attempt to eliminate alcohol abuse necessitates creating a progressive alternative through employment generation, providing irrigational facilities, ensuring appropriate education and revival of nature and environment. It is essential to promote the potential for the people and of the people lest they should continue to live in the state of hopelessness.

Review of Literature

The available literature on alcohol usage among adivasis in India corroborates that the use of liquor among tribes of India had been a social, religious, and cultural phenomenon. Traditionally, liquor among the tribes had been treated as food, medicine, communion or sharing, and libation to God.

Jha (2018), in the Mahua Story, has presented a detailed practice and tradition of *mahua*, a native liquor among the tribes of central India, especially the Gonds (Koyatur). It was a major cash crop. The boiled mahua flower has enormous nutritional value. The adivasis also make *mahua latta* – balls of boiled and crushed flowers. They offer mahua liquor to their deities. According to their mythology, their ancestor, Koya Pen was born under a Koya (Mahua) tree. They treat mahua as sacred; “*Iruk Pungarananthai*” (Mahua flower is immortal). Drinking mahua is a social affair. “*Irukjodtakai. Todtakai jab chhupkepetehain*”, Mahua brings people together. It creates trouble when people drink in secrecy. Nareshwari Kunjam, a Sarpanch, Khairkheda panchayat, said that mahua is to be consumed to rest the body. According to the Gondi elders – they could drink but could not sell it or create drunken ruckus. Maksudan, a Gondi, said that he would drink mahua with respect; “The elders practised controlled consumption. If you cannot do that, it’s a slippery slope”.

Begrich (2013) describes complex and contradictory roles of alcohol among the tribes of Jharkhand. Adivasis are generally stereotyped either as drunkards or as joy-loving noble savages. The socio-cultural acceptance of alcohol makes adivasis vulnerable to be viewed as “drunken adivasis”. He narrates an incident of firing on adivasis who were revolting against the construction of the Koel-Karo hydro-electric dam in the year 2001. Five people died and thirty-six were injured in the firing. The police personnel attached drunkenness to their protest. Begrich (2013) also referred to a “false notion” reported by University of Bombay School of Economics & Sociology (1950) that the low caste Hindus had a much greater proportion of addicts than the high caste. Such superfluous notions revealed caste bias ignoring the impact of socio-economic marginalization.

This study describes the difference between manufacturing of alcohol for profit and manufacturing it for livelihood. Begrich (2013) mentioned that the Excise officers generally spared the rural vendors of country liquor on the ground of livelihood. But they tried to ensure: i) purity; liquor should be unadulterated and ii) its production should not be expedited with the help of chemicals. A study team headed by Justice Tek Chand (1964) stated that liquors were not associated with any impropriety or immorality in tribal communities. However, the empirical evidence poses an inherent conflict concerning alcohol among the adivasis, i.e. brewing and sale of liquor for livelihood versus socio-economic ruin caused by alcohol abuse. This study triggers a challenge – could the adivasis restore their capability of responsible drinking and thereby ward off the clichéd image of “drunken adivasis”?

Thekaekara (2011) provides a historical account of how dominant society had used alcohol to enslave and destroy the indigenous communities they invaded. The local rice beer, *Di-ang* or *Handia* in Jharkhand is nutritious, fermented brew, drunk with a ritual ceremony by the community, given to children, women, and old people. It did not have high alcohol con-

tent. Drinking this brew alone is culturally a taboo. It is a cooling drink and helps keep many people alive during the annual starvation cycle. The adivasis brew liquor also from the mahua flower. The boiled mahua flower provides nutrients at the peak of summer when the grain stocks are low. But afterwards, unfortunately, the circumstances changed. She heard women in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh cried out in despair that liquor decimated their families and the adivasi community. Saturday arguments turned ugly, and women were resigned to the weekly Saturday night violence. For women it was a matter of life and death. The men died of drinking while family starved; often faced with stark poverty and malnutrition.

In 1974, the Central Government had reviewed the excise policy in the tribal areas and formulated a new policy wherein the recommendation of the Dhebar Commission was accepted with some new elements: i) Commercial vending of liquor in the tribal areas should be stopped, ii) The tribal people should be allowed to prepare their traditional drinks for personal use, iii) Vending of liquor in the non-tribal enclaves, wherever necessary, may be done only through government shops, iv) The management of all excise matters at the village level in the tribal areas should be entrusted to the village community (Sharma 1990). Although it was not a full prohibition, it had restricted exploitative liquor contractors. Some of these recommendations were later incorporated in PESA Act, 1996.

Prabhu (2010) argues that alcohol policy in India very often took a moral stand rather than a scientific or an economic approach towards understanding and dealing with the problem of alcoholism. He refers to the findings of a survey (Neufeld *et al* 2005) that historically marginalized communities (ST& SC) were significantly more likely to report regular abuse of alcohol. Prabhu (*ibid*) says that regulation of alcohol could ensure responsible drinking among the tribes.

Manoj (2019) gives an emotional account of how Wayanad's (Kerela) adivasis had become bonded to bottle. There was a time when the evening of the tribal hamlets was so vibrant, singing and dancing. But later it had transformed into drunken brawls, shouts and curses, shrieks of women, and husband-wife squabbles. Landlessness and outmigration for labour to neighbouring ginger and coffee estates had created a situation for their alcohol addiction as described by M. Balan, a social activist. Impact of alcohol addiction was catastrophic; reduced life expectancy, rise in child marriages and teenage pregnancies, and dropouts from schools. Although Wayanad had emerged as a tourist destination, the adivasi community looked excluded. Mitra *et al* (2017) presents an epidemiological status of Dumka district, particularly Alcoholic Liver Disease (ALD). Bhave (2011), a scholar and an activist, in an interview with NDTV referred to M.K. Gandhi that he didn't look at liquor as a moral or ethical problem but as an economic problem.

Rahman (2004) contributes to the understanding of alcohol prohibition in India. He examines the causes and effects of prohibition policy in Indian states over 1957-2001 and the political economy of prohibition. Sareen and Lord (2020) present an accountability analysis to contextualise minor forest product (MFP) governance within the larger regional political economy with reference to the use of Mahua among the Ho tribe of Jharkhand and access to it as MFP.

After going through the literature on use and abuse of alcohol among the adivasis in India, two contradictory pictures emerge; first, use of alcohol among the adivasis in India had been a revered tradition; social, cultural, and religious. It was a means of family and community celebration. Second, the abuse of alcohol among the adivasis had become a decimating phenomenon, a menace. It has revealed catastrophic impacts on their health, economy, culture, and social life. The educated few have benefitted from the mainstream development of the country. But plausibly, poverty, unemployment, low agricultural productivity, and marginalisation of the most rural adivasis, continues to push them to alcohol abuse.

Significance of the study

This study attempts to give a multi-dimensional perspective and insight into the factors of alcohol use and abuse among the tribes. It points out that shift in focus from treating the symptoms to addressing the causes of alcohol abuse is imperative to solve the problems resulting from selling liquor in public places. The Government must frame effective policies not only to reform the pattern of alcohol consumption but also to address the factors contributing to alcohol abuse. The findings of this study offer new perspectives to Governments and other agencies (NGOs, civil societies, social activists, etc.) to usher in innovative alternative income generating activities (IGAs), such as, cash crops, agro-entrepreneurship, etc. to wean the women off selling liquor in public places.

Discussing the findings

The researcher met two groups of women; one who sold liquor and the other who sold items other than liquor. About 40 women across six different village markets were interviewed. The responses to the questionnaire have been presented below. The determinants of and deterrents to selling liquor have been enumerated and explained.

Table No.1.Determinants of and deterrents to selling liquor

| Factors | Determinants of selling liquor (No. of sellers: 25) | Deterrents to selling liquor (No. of sellers: 15) |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Income opportunities | No other affordable alternative. (25) Proportion of annual income from liquor: 35% Average total annual income: Rs.54,000 | Yes. Have alternatives. Family cooperation (15) Proportion of annual income from non-liquor items: 25%. Average total annual income: Rs.62,000 |
| 2. Land, water | Inadequate, scarce (30) | Have suitable land (10) |
| 3. Family support for selling liquor | Yes. Cooperation. (22) | No approval (12) |
| 4. Sub-community/ associational ethics on liquor selling | Yes Approval (23) No objection Acceptance | No approval (7) |
| 5. Market | Ready liquor market, Negligible risk, quick return (25) | Essential commodity, reasonable profit, also for consumption at home (15) |
| 6. Literacy: class10 &above | NIL out of 25 | 5 out of 15 |

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Discussion I

As shown in the above table, the interviews revealed some determinants of and deterrents to selling liquor. Most of the liquor selling women expressed that they resorted to brewing and selling liquor because they did not find alternative affordable gainful income opportunities. However, women selling vegetables, bamboo baskets, *pakora* and sweets, goats, pigs, poultry, etc. said that they had chosen alternative income generating activities (IGAs) because some had land near river or had private wells. Mahali women had a tradition of making baskets. Some women reported that they found non-liquor IGAs, such as, vegetables, laddoos and *pakora*, pigs, goats, etc. reasonably profitable and used it for household consumption as well.

The most liquor selling women belonged to BPL category. They sold liquor to supplement their low income. Their average net weekly income was Rs.450/- (Rs.20,000/- annual) which constituted nearly 35% of their total average annual income of Rs.54,000/-. But their body language expressed 'guilt' and 'compulsion' for the occupation because they were aware of the associated abuse and evils. They did it as an act of economic expediency – 'no other choice' situation. Some expressed it even without being asked, "How else do we feed our children?" (*Arbankhangidracekatemasulea?*).

Local liquor has a ready market. The turnover or return on investment is quick. Some earned a gross income of Rs.600/- with an investment of Rs.250/- in a week, including in a weekly market in around four hours. They possessed traditional skill (*forte*) for brewing *handi* (rice beer) and *parua* (mahua) since ages. The raw materials, mainly rice, *ranu*, mahua and jaggery (*gud*) were readily available locally. The women said that the risk involved in brewing liquor was negligible in comparison to those involved in goat farming, piggery, growing vegetables, etc. The investment in one production cycle was affordable, approximately at Rs.300/-. The production time of liquor was much short, 3-4 days. The profit margin was nearly 60%. The by-products were fodder for their livestock.

Some women said that their household's land holding was too small (dispersed landholding of half acre to one acre) to survive only by agriculture. Brewing liquor did not really require land while horticulture and other farming activities required sizable land, water, and care. It is important to note that the women brew liquor in addition to their mainstay agricultural economic activities which produces a meagre harvest.

The profile of the liquor selling women indicated that they were either illiterate or school dropouts. Inference may be drawn that they could not think of anything beyond it. On the other hand, selling liquor was considered below the status of a woman who had studied beyond class 10. Some women who sold non-liquor items said that their husbands/family did not like them to sell liquor. The liquor selling women were inherently exposed to the passes of drinking male customers.

In contrast, for some households, selling liquor in *hatia* looked like a family business with reasonably well-defined division of labour; mother managed front counter, measured and sold liquor, adult daughter or daughter-in-law served the clients and collected empty bottles, children aged 10-12 collected glasses and washed them and the father oversaw the operation

from a little distance and marketed his family's liquor. The male members helped their ladies carry the load of liquor to *hatia*, sometime in bicycles. Their entrepreneurial temperament looked matching the best in any trade.

However, it was not always a happy family affair. Selling liquor, either in public places or at home, became a cause of family discord: i) husbands suspected their wives because they interacted with many drinking men, ii) some husbands drank excessively because liquor was available for free at home, which further reduced their contribution to the family, and iii) the family environment became unfavourable for the school going and growing up children.

Within the tribal community some people influenced by some social and religious ideologies have abandoned alcohol consumption. For instance, 'Saphahor' (following Hindu religion) sub-community do not touch liquor. The Christians among the tribes discourage selling liquor. Some SHG women have resolved not to trade in liquor.

Discussion II

As a participant observer, the researcher also tasted some local liquor. Most of the liquor in the markets tasted adulterated and smelled foul. Reportedly, quite a few brewers added urea or some capsule to ferment it faster. Such liquor was called 'Chalani' or 'Chalti', which means purity has been compromised for cost-effectiveness, quite an open secret! It was difficult to find pure mahua liquor; they mixed jaggery, *gud* into it. Good or unadulterated ones were prepared for personal consumption. They were available sometimes, but only at their homes on premium.

In the vicinity of the liquor selling area, generally, there thrived sellers of mixtures, *dalmut*, *chanachur*, a variety of *chakhna*, the starter; omelette, pork curry dry, chicken curry dry, fish fry, etc. They were regular vendors. Market-visit of quite a few people, usually culminated in visiting the liquor section. It looked quite a happy-jolly area; amicable, peaceful, and non-judgemental. There was no shouting or fighting, except at times, some were seen excessively drunk and lying down. Some looked engaged in some important deliberations while drinking. This section appeared to be a convenient, low-cost, time-saving neutral place to discuss important matters. Although the drinkers were mostly men, a few women drinkers also looked enjoying and out-letting emotions in their own groups. People exchanged news and pleasantries. No wonder, it was popularly called 'ananda bazar', meaning market of joy. Young people and college boys entered the section watchfully.

It was curious to observe that no non-tribal woman was seen selling liquor in the market while customers included people from all communities. Interestingly, liquor looked quite religion, caste and class agnostic. The *Manjhi*, Headman of the village collected Rs.2/- per seller in Kukurtopahatia against a receipt. Some older women (55+) were seen selling one or two country chickens and ducks. Some sold pigeons in Kathikund *hatia*. A few tribal women sold *pakora*, *chop* (snacks) and *atta-laddoo* (sweet). Generally, a male member helped in preparing the items. One of the shops was very busy. The seller woman divulged her income (Rs.600/- net per *hatia* day) only after being assured that it was a research survey.

Solutions emerging from the study

The aforesaid references reveal that total prohibition has not been effective. Therefore, what cannot be prohibited should be regulated and supervised. The following recommendations are intended to stop abuse of alcohol, i.e., irresponsible drinking, adulteration, and restoration the traditional culture of consuming liquor with respect. These recommendations have some resonance of the suggestions given to the Tribal Affairs Ministry in 1974 by Dr. B. D. Sharma, the then Commissioner of the ST & SC and Dhebar Commission.

First, for an effective and a sustainable elimination of alcohol abuse, organized facilities and facilitation should be provided to alternative gainful employment or livelihood, such as, goat farming, piggery, poultry, horticulture, floriculture, apiculture, spices, cash crops, artisan products, basket making, pickle making, tailoring, carpentry, minor forest products, etc. For example, Anna Hazare in Ralegaon Siddi and Popat Rao Pawar in Ahmednagar effectively mobilized the villagers for water harvesting and afforestation in coordination with NGOs and the local administration. After that alcohol abuse in the areas had reduced drastically;

Second, vocational education/training, especially in indigenous income generating activities, should be introduced in every Block;

Third, Government and NGOs should give thrust to promoting Agro-entrepreneurship. Self Help Groups Promoting Institutions (SHPI) should not only help people form Self-help Groups (SHGs) and Co-operative (credit) societies, but also work with them till the maturity of IGAs. Systematic support by agencies in promoting IGAs among SHGs is essential (Planning Commission, GoI, 2001). For instance, initiative for '*Chappal*', slippers making by SHGs in Balidih village failed soon after its grand exhibition in Hijla mela because it looked like only 'one-time support' by the agency. Systematic support and marketing were not sustained;

Fourth, brewing liquor for sale should be regulated and supervised involving Gram Sabha as envisaged in 4. (m). (i) & (iv) of PESA Act, 1996. Adulterators of liquor should be penalised and punished. For instance, sale of local liquor and beer in annual *Wangala*, 'The 100 Drums Festival', Meghalaya in November and at 'Hornbill festival', Kohima, Nagaland in December, is done under the regulation and supervision of the local administrations;

Fifth, regular sale and consumption of liquor at public places (outside home, community places and licensed shops/areas) should be prohibited, especially 'anywhere anytime' in open market-places, roadsides, under trees, etc. [4.(m).(i) & (iv) of PESA Act, 1996]; and

Sixth, village leadership / Gram Sabha should be sensitized about the issues and options and be involved in the development programmes as envisaged in the PESA Act, 1996.

Concluding remarks

Man created alcohol for his use. But balance and appropriateness of time, place, purpose and quantity determine the use or abuse of a thing. It is urgent to make determined and effective endeavours to eliminate the causes of alcohol abuse. This study unfolds that unemployment which manifested as poverty, was the root cause of many problems, including alcohol

abuse. Creating opportunities for alternative gainful livelihood or employment could wean the women off selling liquor ‘anytime anywhere’ at public places. It is high time that the Government, the leaders, civil societies, NGOs, and Gram Sabha acted in co-ordination to tame this Frankenstein’s beverage. Until then, the challenge: to celebrate alcohol and to eliminate alcohol abuse, shall continue.

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