



WHITE PAPER ON TASMAC-FREE TAMILNADU

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Foreword

To

Thiru M.K. Stalin

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

Vanakkam.

I write this with the most profound concern in the wake of the terrible hooch tragedies in Villupuram and Chengalpattu districts during the month of May 2023 that claimed 23 precious lives in these two incidents alone. These are not isolated incidents. Due to the patronage TASMAL receives from the State Government, the problem of alcohol addiction in Tamil Nadu is now taking on dire proportions. The fact that TASMAL has been unable to curb clandestine production of hooch and illicit liquor is brought out by the statement of the Former Tamil Nadu DGP Thiru Sylendra Babu, that 1,40,649 cases were registered in connection with spurious liquor in 2022 alone in Tamil Nadu¹.

Rampant and unchecked alcoholism is a matter of grave concern for our State, and reflective of a trend, which if not acted upon now, not only directly puts in danger the lives of our people mostly from the lower economic strata, but also threatens to disrupt the social, spiritual and cultural fabric of Tamil Nadu. In particular, the future of Tamil Nadu's youth is under threat of being washed away by the unholy rivers of alcohol that are flowing within the state.

Urgently evolving a systemic solution to the problem of easy availability of liquor, both permitted and illicit, would serve as the much needed panacea for all the alcohol related social evils we face.

This is hardly the first time this call for prohibition has come into public prominence, in fact it has been festering over the last several decades. While the official declared position of the State Government is to curtail alcohol and move towards prohibition, Tamil Nadu has only seen a continuous increase in the number and density of liquor stores contributing to increased dependence on the sin money generated through supplying alcohol to people through TASMAL. While multiple political parties have repeatedly called for prohibition in the past, there has been no concrete proposition or well thought-out strategy worked upon or suggested to make prohibition a reality.

Vested interests argue that attempts to limit alcohol consumption and sale in the state will have adverse effects on the state's exchequer, and that the state will not be able to fulfil its obligations to the people without alcohol revenue. I, and the Bharatiya Janata Party, firmly believe that such arguments only

¹ [India Today](#)

reinforce the need for urgent and decisive action as it exposes that the administration itself has come to believe its need to perpetuate, promote and enable this social evil, in the name of shoring up revenues. With this being the case, what else can political promises of prohibition and knee-jerk announcements towards the same be, but a farce.

Hence, the aim of this white paper is to comprehensively demonstrate that it is possible for the State to drastically scale down the number of alcohol shops, better regulate TASMAL and tap into new revenue sources to reduce the state exchequer's dependence on keeping its people addicted to alcohol. I present this white paper in good faith as a constructive contribution to the future of Tamil Nadu and request you to have this proposal examined by various health and economic experts empanelled by your government. In the meanwhile, we have also listed out certain immediate actionables that your government can implement to arrest the situation from deteriorating further. I am confident that you will find the roadmap set forth herein to be feasible and fully implementable.

I beseech you to rise above politics, and act on the merit of the suggestions in this white paper for the good of our people, who reposed their trust in you by electing you Chief Minister, and are hoping for urgent action on this issue.

Ever in the service of the nation,



K. Annamalai

State President- BJP Tamil Nadu

Executive Summary

Under the DMK Government led by Thiru M K Stalin, Tamil Nadu recently bore witness to the menace of illicit liquor in the state. While the twin hooch tragedies in Villupuram and Chengalpattu do provide cause for immediate concern, they were neither isolated incidents nor entirely unpreventable. This whitepaper puts the tragedies in context - in light of the Tamil Nadu Government's wavering liquor policies, the state's growing dependence on liquor for its revenues, corruption and maladministration in TASMAC, increasing presence of the political parties in the liquor industry, and the lack of any serious effort to put an end to the fatalities and socio-economic problems caused by alcohol consumption in the state. The objective of the whitepaper is to highlight the gravity of the liquor problem in Tamil Nadu and how the recent tragedies are but a grave reminder of how strict enforcement of prohibition is the only way forward.

Although several Governments have toyed with the idea of prohibition in the past, none of them have been successful in implementing it in the state. In fact, the concept of Prohibition has been in the political landscape of Tamil Nadu since 1937. However, over the past decade especially, it has been nothing more than an electoral gimmick. This has been largely due to the lack of a comprehensive liquor policy - one that takes into account not only the positive impact of having a ban in place but also one that establishes the necessary mechanisms to absorb the shocks triggered by the change in policy. The whitepaper has approached the concept of prohibition with a more pragmatic and holistic lens based on a thorough and meticulous study of several prohibition models, case studies, and best practices within and outside India.

This includes a secondary study of all the previous judicial committees and expert commissions constituted on prohibition, including A.P. Udayabhanu Committee, Miyabhoy Committee, Sivasubramaniam Committee, Thiruman Narayan Committee and Justice Tek Chand Committee. A majority of their recommendations revolve around phased prohibition, limiting the supply of alcohol in hotels, rationing to the public and strengthening enforcement.

While the various committee reports reveal a scientific approach towards prohibition, a closer look at the indigenous brews of the world and India, highlight how happiness and contentment is truly from within. Moderate and responsible alcohol consumption has always existed in our societies. Right from Handia, Zawalaidu, and Yu from India's North Eastern states, to the Mahua from Central India, to the Goan Feni and Tella from Andhra Pradesh, there are enough examples to show how India remains deeply rooted in tradition and cultural practices, how modern innovations have influenced the process, allowing for greater control, consistency, and quality.

Further, in the course of our study, we have carried out detailed case studies from Tamil Nadu that show the adverse effects of growing alcoholism in the state. Ranging from drunken driving to domestic violence and teenagers becoming addicts, liquor has ruined the social fabric of the state, with a threat of only deteriorating further in the future. It demands immediate course correction.

The whitepaper argues for the implementation of phased prohibition in Tamil Nadu with the aim of achieving 75% reduction in alcohol manufacturing and distribution over three years through a series of targeted measures. These measures include a mixture of direct interventions like limiting the quantity of liquor purchased by TASMAC over time, closure of bars, restricting the number of hours for sale, and indirect mechanisms like licensing restrictions, production quotas, and tax adjustments. While these measures are focused on the supply side, the whitepaper also recommends demand side interventions like creating more public awareness on the ill effects of alcohol consumption and rehabilitation of existing alcoholics.

Some of the immediate actionables listed in the paper include:

1. Declaring 45 days during the holy Tamil months of Karthigai and Margazhi as dry days,
2. Reducing the operational hours of TASMAC outlets to 2.00PM to 7.00PM,
3. Ensuring availability of light liquor such as 46 listed brands of beer, vis-a-vis, the more harmful hard liquor; and

4. Providing a Customer Identification Number (CIN) that enables monitoring of drinking patterns and identifying the most vulnerable groups that would serve as data to plan out the rehabilitation programmes.

The case for regulating the operations and functions of TASMAC is not just from the point of prohibition. The organisation has grown into a behemoth of corruption, mismanagement, and worker exploitation. There is enough and more evidence of how financial misappropriation is the mandate of the day in these outlets. Further, the nexus of politician-owned distilleries and TASMAC only complicates the regulation of alcohol supply in the state. To make any meaningful corrections, it is imperative to address the employee and labour issues at TASMAC, to nip the political nexus and to streamline its stock and distribution mechanisms. All of which is detailed in an exclusive section.

Further, the revenue from TASMAC is often used as a prop by political dispensations who lack the will to curtail liquor consumption in the state. This whitepaper tries to show how alcoholism burns a deep hole in the pocket of citizens and the state likewise. There are validated reports which suggest that anything in the range of 0.45 to 5.4% of the GDP could be the economic burden of alcohol on a country. This includes the private and public expenditure on alcohol-related ailments and economic costs such as alcohol-triggered absenteeism.

Nonetheless to mitigate the economic fallout of prohibition, the paper also presents the financially attractive and economically viable option of creating a ₹1 lakh crore toddy industry that has the potential to provide an alternative avenue for the state's revenue generation, employment opportunities for the affected TASMAC employees and income generation for farmers. The alternative avenues explore the latent economic potential for a state like Tamil Nadu which can easily leverage on its socio-historical and cultural landscape to develop tourism, on its industrial capacity to provide for futuristic sectors and on policies like 'One District One Product' which can augment local businesses on a massive scale. Further, a whole section is dedicated to augmenting farm incomes – including providing value additions, market linkages, promoting bio-fuels and farmer producer organisations – a sector which deserves more attention than it currently begets.

Subsequently, the whitepaper also deals with strengthening enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the phased prohibition is implemented both, in letter and in spirit. At present, the Prohibition and Excise Wing (PEW) of Tamil Nadu functions like a toothless enforcement agency, limiting itself to sporadic raids, and inefficient check-post interventions. Further, just like TASMACH, PEW too is riddled with corruption, dereliction in duty and an unhealthy politician-official nexus. All of which call for urgent reorganisation and strengthening of the PEW.

This whitepaper does not limit itself only to prohibition and the economic outfall of it. It details out model deaddiction programmes for dependents. This includes schematic programs with medical detoxification, behavioural therapy, rehabilitation strategy and even family counselling. The policy aspect also outlines the approximate cost of the rehabilitation program, while also accounting for a livelihood compensation to the families of the dependents and the setting up of decentralised centres across the state.

Drawing from global examples and scientific research, the penultimate section of the whitepaper brings out the distinction between home-brewed liquor such as toddy vis-a-vis light liquor such as beer and hard liquor. It primarily distinguishes the drinks on the basis of alcohol content, health-risks and the socio-cultural relevance. By promoting toddy and beer the government has at least a stop-gap measure to address the demand for hard liquor amongst dependents. Nonetheless, this only constitutes one of the multi-pronged strategies in curtailing liquor consumption in Tamil Nadu.

In the concluding section, this whitepaper rightfully takes the bull by its horns by questioning the loss to the state exchequer because of the unchecked and rampant corruption enabled by the current government. Tamil Nadu's infamous record on devising scientific methods of corruption proves to be a greater threat to the economy than the closing down of a few thousand liquor outlets. Further, enabling these agents of corruption with positions of power has only earned the ire and wrath of the state's citizens. This deadly cocktail of corruption, alcoholism and political scheming has to end for the state to truly prosper and thrive.

The objective of the whitepaper is to shed light on the urgent need for reforms in the liquor policy of the state. There cannot be a greater wake-up call to the administration than the recent tragedies spurred by the consumption of illicit liquor. We hope that the whitepaper meets its logical conclusion by getting translated into policy changes and implementation. In a span of three years, it is possible to wipe clean the tragic past of this decade and create a promising future for the next generation of the state's children.

I. Introduction

Given the present state of affairs, it would come as a surprise to many that Tamil Nadu, as a part of the erstwhile Madras Presidency, was the first state in India to implement the prohibition of liquor. In 1937, before Independence, the Government of the Madras Presidency led by Thiru C Rajagopalachari implemented a liquor ban in Salem district, which was then gradually expanded across the Presidency. It is noteworthy that the ban was initiated by the Indian National Congress, whom DMK is in alliance with to this day. This policy was upheld until 1971, when the DMK government led by Thiru Karunanidhi repealed the ban, and thereby started a downslide that has culminated in Tamil Nadu teeming with State-run liquor shops today.

From time to time, governments and political parties have tried to regulate the sale and distribution of alcohol, with the election plank of prohibition playing a key role in swinging many elections, only for the hopes of the people of Tamil Nadu to be dashed again and again, as governments repeatedly went back on their promises or implemented only half measures. Notably, the DMK itself has raised the issue at least seven times while in Opposition over the last decade. Former IAS officer and former Excise and Taxation Commissioner of Haryana Thiru Devasahayam noted that from private it had become '*arasanga sarayam*' (Government's liquor) in light of the State monopoly over the sale and distribution of liquor in the state. The penetration and influence of alcohol in Tamil society has increased to such an extent that even during the COVID-pandemic and lockdown, the sales did not decrease.

A. Timeline Of Developments With Respect To Prohibition

1. 1937 - Prohibition was first implemented in Salem, and was gradually expanded throughout the whole of the Madras Presidency.
2. 1952 - Thiru C Rajagopalachari continued with the prohibition in the Madras Presidency, after winning the 1952 elections.
3. 1971 - Former CM Thiru M Karunanidhi lifted the pre-independence era prohibition on liquor.
4. 1983 - Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) was established for the sale of liquor, by the former CM Thiru MG Ramachandran. Wholesale vending of Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) was brought under State control.
5. 2003 - Former CM Selvi J Jayalithaa's Government passed an amendment to the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937 making TASMAC the sole retail vendor.
6. 2015 - Thiru M Karunanidhi and Thiru MK Stalin promised the prohibition of liquor in the 2016 Assembly Election campaign.
7. 2016 - Tmt Kanimozhi, the then Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, assured if DMK is voted to power in the 2016 Assembly Elections, all the distillers associated with DMK would be shut down.
8. 2016 - Former CM Selvi J Jayalithaa announced the implementation of prohibition in a phased manner if AIADMK was voted to power.
9. 2016 - DMK promised complete prohibition of liquor in the Assembly election manifesto.
10. 2020 - The then Leader of Opposition Thiru MK Stalin and his son Thiru Udhayanidhi Stalin observed black flag protest against the opening of liquor shops in lockdown.

11. 2021 - DMK promised the prohibition of alcohol in a phased manner and setting up of de-addiction centres.
12. 2022 - TASMAL attained the highest revenue collection in the history of TN.
13. 2023 - DMK Govt introduced special licence for serving liquor in marriage halls, stadiums and house functions and backtracked after backlash from the public.
14. 2023 - Madras HC issued a stay order on the Government Order that allowed the serving of liquor to guests at national or international conferences, convention centres, and sports events.
15. 2023 - The DMK government, under the leadership of Thiru M K Stalin set a target of Rs. 50,000 crore revenue to be achieved through TASMAL.

B. Present Situation

Ever since the DMK Government assumed power in 2021, Chief Minister Thiru MK Stalin and other elected DMK representatives, including Member of Parliament Tmt Kanimozhi and Thiru Udhayanidhi Stalin, have not uttered a single word about the prohibition of liquor.

On the other hand, the revenue from the sale of liquor has been skyrocketing. Total liquor sales in 2022-2023 has touched ₹44,098.56 crore compared to last year's figure of ₹36,050.65 crore, registering a whopping 22.3% increase in total revenue. This is the record-breaking and the highest annual revenue of the TASMAL in the history of Tamil Nadu.

In March 2023, Finance Secretary Thiru N Muruganandam said ₹50,000 crore in revenue is expected through TASMAL sale during 2023-24. He said ₹12,000 crore is expected through excise duty and ₹38,000 crore through VAT.²

² [TNIE](#)

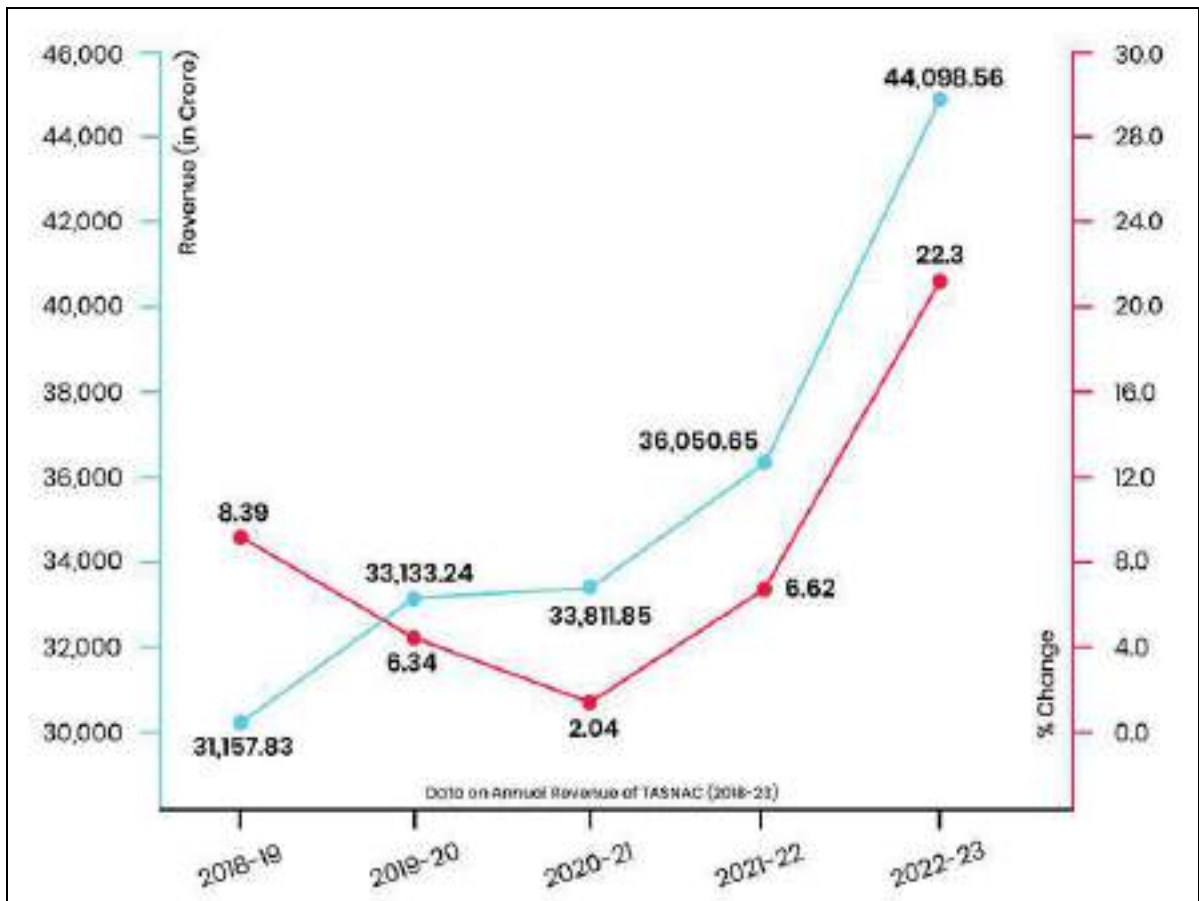


Chart 1: Data on Annual Revenue of TASMAL (2018-23)

Ever since the DMK assumed power in 2021, there has been a rising trend of crimes due to alcohol consumption and sale of illicit liquor in the state. Recently, there has been a recurring trend of illicit liquor sale, consumption and deaths in the state. Tragically, the situation has already claimed the lives of 23 men.

The illicit liquor sale and consumption can be attributed to the exorbitant prices at which liquor is being sold through TASMAL outlets and the alleged targeted collections mandated by the Former Minister of Prohibition Thiru Senthil Balaji in all the TASMAL outlets in the state. Earlier in 2022, the TASMAL management had suspended 580 staff for selling liquor at a high price.

Recently, there were multiple allegations by the TASMAL employees on the price hike of liquor by ₹10 and they complained against the Former Minister of Prohibition Thiru Senthil Balaji for taking

a targeted monthly commission of ₹50,000 from each TASMAL outlet.³ Political analysts also believe that Thiru Senthil Balaji allegedly pays a major share of the commission to the DMK first family.

Not only does TASMAL promote alcoholism, but as a government entity, it is further mired in lack of transparency in finances, poor wage structure for its employees, and squalid working and service conditions. TASMAL outlets are infamous for faulty billing, overcharging and also for adulteration of alcohol. In raids carried out by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, unaccounted cash has been seized from outlets in the range of ₹60,000 to ₹3,00,000 per outlet⁴.

Earlier the DMK Minister Thiru Palanivel Thiagarajan said that there are various irregularities in TASMAL. He claimed that though there is a large liquor sale in Tamil Nadu compared to other states, the relative revenue is lower. He also highlighted the social cost of alcoholism, domestic abuse, absenteeism, lack of productivity, accidents and the impact on the public health system. He also emphasised for even more transparency, regularisation and digitisation of sales and revenue from TASMAL.⁵

TASMAL sources its liquor from 11 Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) manufacturing units, 7 beer breweries, and 1 winery. One of the biggest challenges for a complete prohibition of liquor in the state is that some of the eleven companies that supply IMFL brands to TASMAL are politically-connected. These include Elite Distilleries run by DMK MP Thiru S. Jagathratchagan, SNJ Distilleries run by Thiru S.N. Jeyaraman, who is said to be close to the DMK's first family; KALS Distilleries of Thiru S. Vasudevan, said to be close to Kalaingar TV's Thiru Sharad Reddy and Golden Vats, whose owners are reportedly close to DMK MP Thiru T.R. Baalu.

³ [Samayam](#)

⁴ [Frontline, July 2022](#)

⁵ [News Minute](#)

It is pertinent to note that Tmt Kanimozhi promised in 2016 that DMK-run distilleries and breweries would be closed if DMK was voted to power again⁶. But the promise is yet to see the light of day.

C. Worrisome Trend

Globally, empirical data and studies show that alcohol has been associated with violent crimes and domestic violence. The findings indicate that individuals who are under the influence of alcohol are prone to aggressive behaviour and are more likely to commit violent crimes. Various studies conducted across many countries evidently reveal that there is a strong connection between alcohol consumption and domestic abuse and crimes against women in a family.

According to the findings of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) in 2019-21, there is a worrisome trend of alcohol consumption among adults, particularly men aged 15 and above. The survey reveals that a significant 25.4% of men in this age group are prone to consuming alcohol. A significant number of cases involving physical, emotional, and sexual violence against women are linked to husbands who are under the influence of alcohol. In Tamil Nadu, about 40% of women have reported experiencing spousal violence of this nature.

Alcohol-related problems that primarily affect men can subject women to significant stress, leading to an ongoing cycle of harmful consequences. Women often find themselves trapped in a relentless loop of violence, financial insecurity, and the risk of widowhood. Alcohol abuse increases the likelihood of domestic violence, exposing women to physical, emotional, and psychological harm within their households. Additionally, excessive spending on alcohol creates financial strain, leaving women and their families economically vulnerable. Moreover, alcohol-related incidents and accidents put women at risk of losing their partners or becoming widowed, resulting in emotional distress and potential economic hardships.

⁶ [Deccan Chronicle](#)

Addressing the impact of male-centric alcohol-related problems on women is crucial to breaking this harmful cycle. It requires comprehensive interventions, support systems, awareness programs, counselling services, legal protection, and economic empowerment initiatives. By addressing the root causes of alcohol abuse and providing necessary support, women can regain control over their lives, leading to a safer and more secure future for themselves and their families.

Seemingly stray incidents all across Tamil Nadu, when seen from a macro perspective, only point to the growing problem of alcoholism. In February 2021, a sub-inspector was killed by a man who was under the influence of alcohol in Thoothukudi. In March 2022, an incident of Chengalpattu Government school girls in school uniform consuming liquor in a moving bus shocked the public and this reveals how liquor is rampantly available in Tamil Nadu without any regulation to even children below the age of 18. Numerous instances have occurred where individuals under the influence of alcohol engaged in damaging public infrastructure. In August 2022, an intoxicated man shattered the front glass of a Tamil Nadu Government bus in Nilgiris district over the delayed departure of the bus.

Tamil Nadu continues to see a spate of horrors because of drunk driving. Just between 2018 and 2022, 1,108 road accidents had occurred because of the driver being under the influence of alcohol; in which 262 were killed⁷. The Director General of Police had informed the Madras High Court that 4.22 lakh cases of drunk driving were registered in the state between 2019 and 2022. Despite the social costs of rising alcoholism in the state, nothing much has been done to curb the sale and distribution of liquor.

D. Public Support

As per a LokNiti-CSDS survey conducted in 2016, 82% of respondents wanted a total prohibition on the sale and consumption of liquor in Tamil Nadu in either an immediate or phased manner.⁸ In

⁷ [The Hindu, June 2022](#)

⁸ [LokNiti-CSDS, 2016](#)

contrast, only 5% of respondents wanted no prohibition whatsoever. Interestingly, the survey showed that both men and women were equally likely to support prohibition.

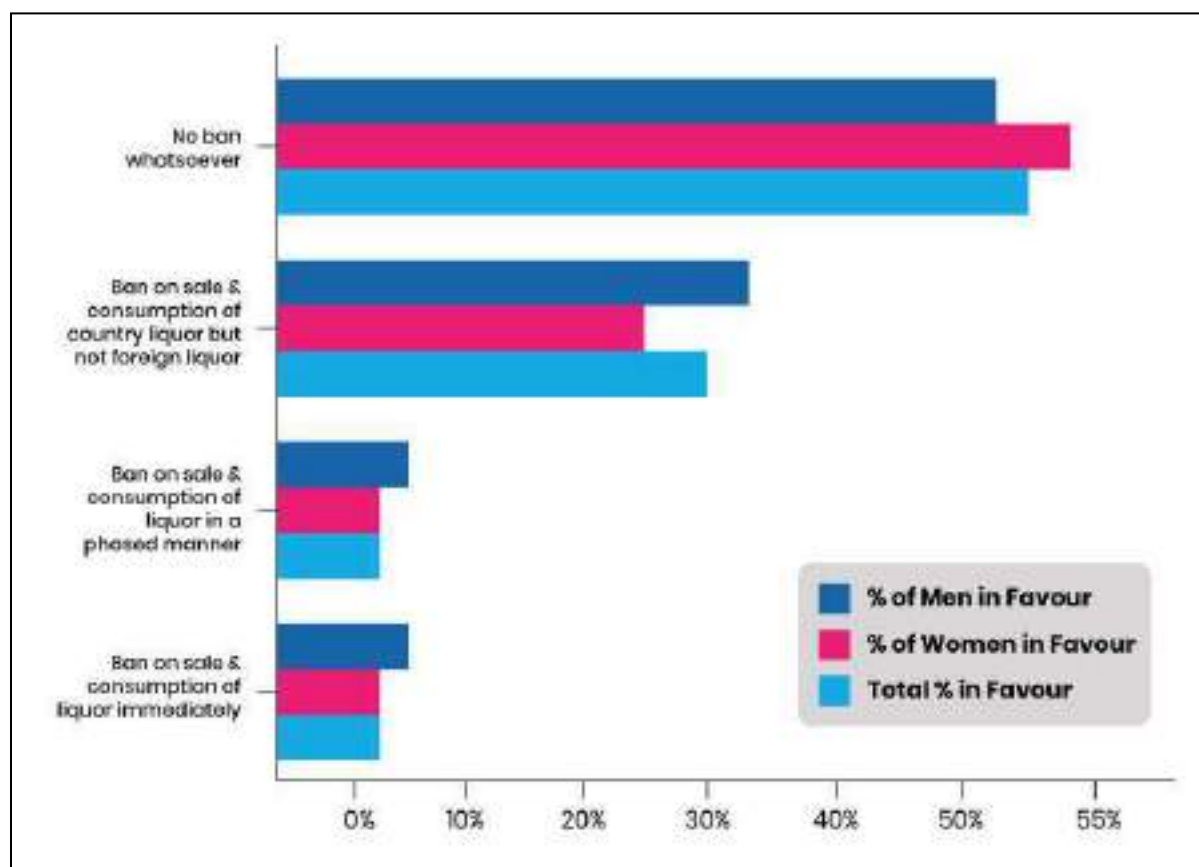


Chart 2: Data on the opinion about Liquor Ban in Tamil Nadu (2016 LokNiti-CSDS Survey)⁹¹⁰

Furthermore, both men and women gave similar reasons as to why they support prohibition, which were primarily domestic violence and financial problems due to consumption of alcohol.¹¹¹²

⁹ LokNiti-CSDS, 2016

¹⁰ [The Indian Express](#), May 2016

¹¹ LokNiti-CSDS, 2016

¹² [The Indian Express](#), May 2016

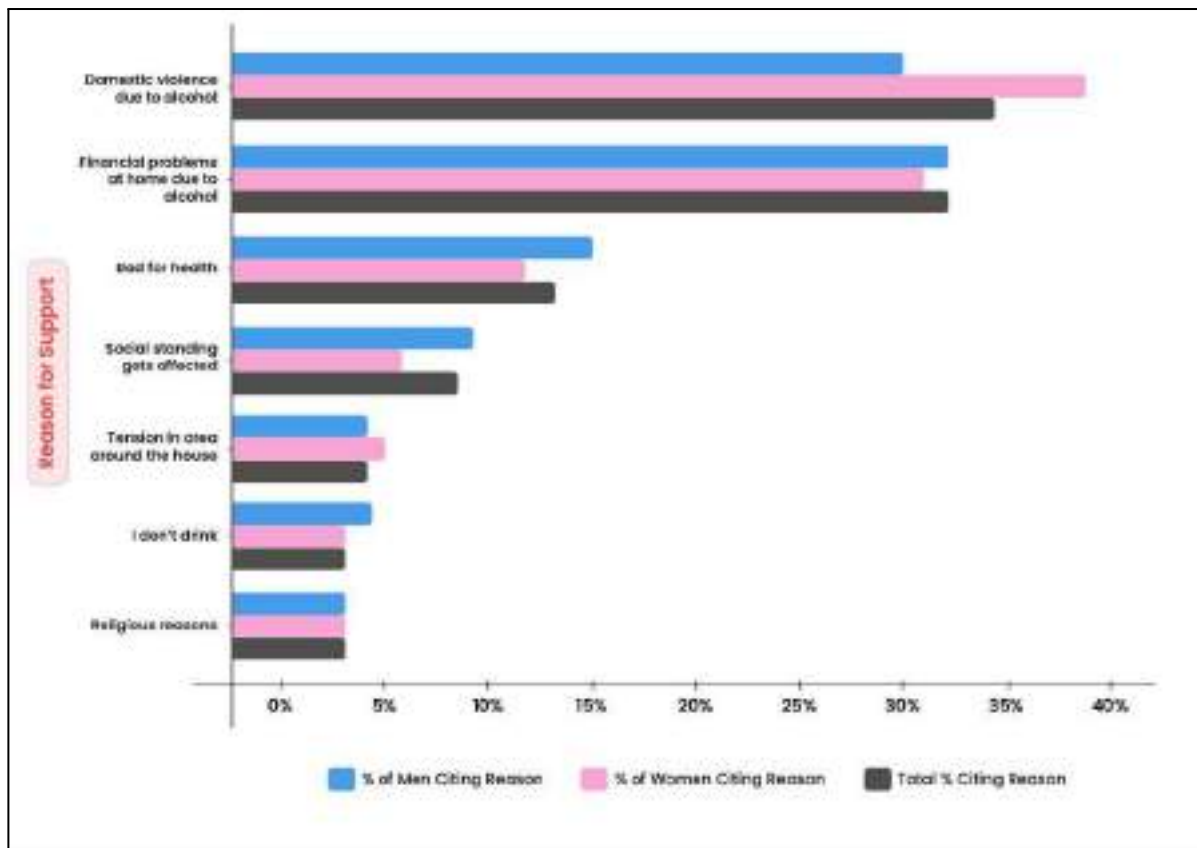


Chart 3: Reasons Cited for Support of Liquor Ban in Tamil Nadu
(2016 LokNiti-CSDS Survey)

E. Call For Prohibition

Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) is the State Government-owned company responsible for liquor retailing, providing substantial revenue to the state exchequer, making it a challenging decision to ban alcohol. Therefore, to implement prohibition, the government needs to develop a multi-pronged strategy that deals not only with the legal aspects of the ban but also includes:

1. A comprehensive plan to offset the financial impact on the state's economy.
2. A Plan for strict enforcement, including community policing and strengthening the prohibition wing.
3. Rehabilitation of the addicts and monitoring program.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

II. Policy Implementation

A. Phased Prohibition

A phased approach to prohibition offers several advantages, including the ability to mitigate the immediate economic impact and provide sufficient time for the implementation of alternative revenue strategies. **The proposed plan aims to achieve a substantial reduction of 75% in alcohol manufacturing and distribution within a timeframe of three years.** This gradual reduction strategy allows for a smoother transition, minimising potential shocks to the economy and enabling stakeholders to adapt to the changing landscape. The phased approach involves a series of targeted measures and timelines to systematically curtail alcohol production and distribution. This includes a comprehensive assessment of the current alcohol market, consumption patterns, and economic dependencies on the industry. Based on this analysis, specific reduction targets and milestones are set to guide the implementation process.

To achieve the desired reduction, collaboration among key stakeholders such as distilleries, distributors, retailers, and regulatory bodies is vital. Establishing a clear communication framework and engaging in continuous dialogue ensures a shared understanding of the objectives and fosters cooperation throughout the phased implementation. During the initial phase, emphasis is placed on reducing the production and distribution capacities of alcohol manufacturers. This can be accomplished through regulatory mechanisms such as licensing restrictions, production quotas, and taxation adjustments. By gradually limiting production levels, manufacturers have the opportunity to adapt their operations and explore alternative revenue streams.

Simultaneously, efforts are made to control and regulate the distribution channels. Implementing stricter licensing requirements, imposing geographical restrictions, and gradually reducing the number of licensed retailers contribute to the phased reduction. The objective is to decrease the accessibility and availability of alcohol in a controlled manner, discouraging consumption while minimising the potential for illicit activities. Throughout the phased approach, careful monitoring

and evaluation mechanisms are established to assess the progress and impact of the implemented measures. This involves collecting and analysing data on alcohol consumption, market dynamics, economic indicators, and public health outcomes. The findings from these evaluations provide valuable insights to inform subsequent stages of the prohibition plan and make necessary adjustments to ensure its effectiveness.

Recognizing the potential economic challenges and social implications, the plan also includes provisions for supporting affected stakeholders. This may involve implementing skill development programs, facilitating the transition to alternative industries, and providing financial assistance to those directly impacted by the reduction in alcohol-related activities. By mitigating the short-term economic repercussions, the phased approach aims to foster a sustainable and inclusive transition for individuals and communities affected by the prohibition measures. A phased approach to prohibition, with a targeted reduction of 75% in alcohol manufacturing and distribution over a three-year period, offers a balanced strategy to limit the immediate economic impact while implementing alternative revenue strategies. By carefully orchestrating the reduction through a series of measures, engaging key stakeholders, monitoring progress, and providing support, the plan endeavours to achieve its objectives while ensuring a smooth transition and minimising potential disruptions to the economy and society at large.

1. Ban On Distilleries And Breweries

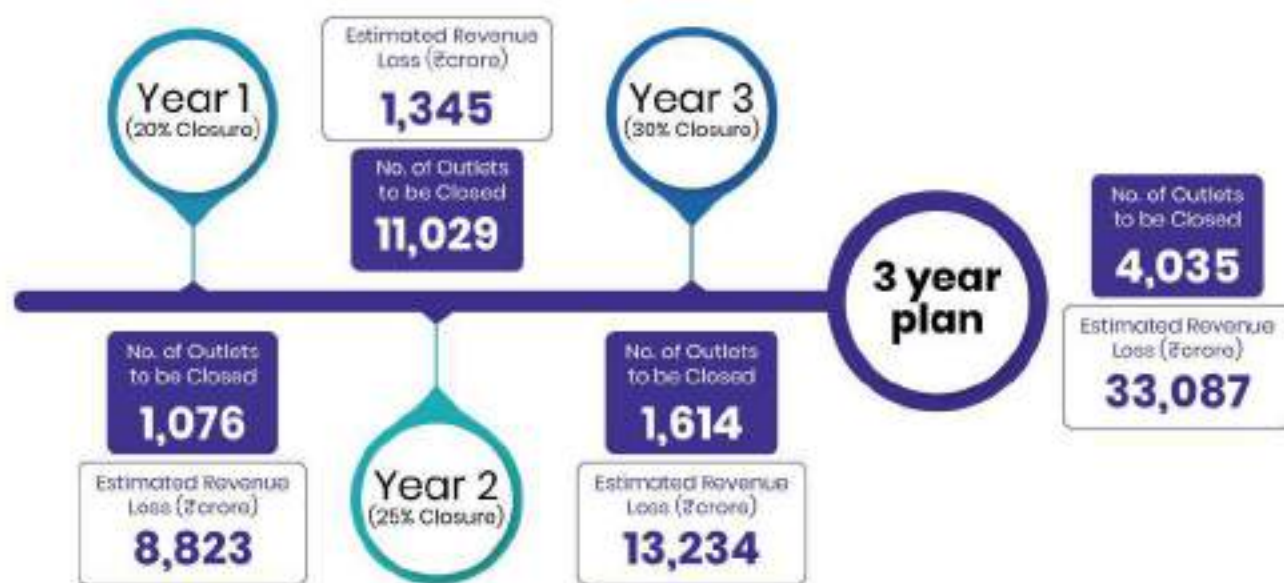
Enforcing a phased ban on distilleries and breweries as part of a reformed liquor policy serves multiple purposes, including the complete dismantling of alcohol production infrastructure and addressing the issue of political involvement in illicit liquor manufacturing. Such a measure requires careful consideration to mitigate potential supply-side shocks and redirect revenue to alternative sources outside the state. To achieve this, a gradual reduction in liquor purchases from these sources can be implemented.

The proposed approach involves limiting the quantity of liquor purchased by the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) from distilleries and breweries over a multi-year period. This phased reduction strategy aims to minimise the immediate impact on supply while gradually transitioning away from these sources. The implementation timeline suggests a progressive increase in the ceiling on liquor purchases from each brewery.¹³

In the initial year (Year 1), TASMAC would purchase only 80% of its existing quantity from these breweries. This allows for a controlled reduction in dependence on distilleries and breweries without causing severe disruptions to the supply chain. In the following year (Year 2), the purchase capacity would be lessened to further 25%, decreasing the reliance on these sources. By Year 3, TASMAC would purchase only 30% of its existing 55% quantities from distilleries and breweries, ensuring a gradual decline in their involvement.

By Year 4, the intention is for all existing distilleries and breweries to sell less than 25% of their current capacity to TASMAC outlets. This step signifies a significant reduction in their contribution to the overall supply of alcohol, effectively diminishing their role in the market. This phased approach allows for a smoother transition, providing stakeholders with sufficient time to adapt their operations and explore alternative business avenues.

¹³ [The Hindu, March 2023](#)



Infographic 1: Timeline on a progressive increase in the ceiling on liquor purchases

It is important to note that an overnight closure of distilleries and breweries could result in a severe supply-side shock. Additionally, redirecting revenue to sources outside the state would have economic implications. Hence, the proposed phased approach strikes a balance by gradually reducing dependence on these sources while minimising potential disruptions and revenue losses.

Simultaneously, alongside the phased reduction in liquor purchases, a complementary strategy should involve the gradual closure of TASMAC outlets. The details of this approach can be outlined separately to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated implementation of the reformed liquor policy.

Overall, implementing a phased ban on distilleries and breweries, coupled with a controlled reduction in TASMAC's liquor purchases, requires careful planning and coordination. This approach addresses concerns related to political involvement, increases transparency and

accountability, and allows for a smoother transition towards a reformed liquor policy in Tamil Nadu.

2. Limiting The Number Of Outlets

As of March 31, 2022, there are a total of 5,380 Liquor Retail Vending Shops, with 3,240 of these shops having attached bars. The proposed reformed liquor policy aims to close down all 3,240 bars within a three-year timeframe, along with a minimum closure of 4,035 outlets.¹⁴ **The closure of bars attached to Liquor Retail Vending Shops is an integral part of the phased implementation of the policy.** This measure seeks to address the social and health implications associated with the consumption of alcohol in bar settings. The closure of these bars will be carried out gradually over the designated three-year period, allowing stakeholders to adapt and explore alternative business opportunities.

To ensure a systematic closure, a comprehensive plan will be developed, outlining the criteria and priorities for shutting down the bars. Factors such as the location, operational history, compliance records, and potential impact on the community will be considered when determining the closure order. By implementing a strategic approach, the closures can be executed in a fair and equitable manner. Simultaneously, a minimum of 4,035 Liquor Retail Vending Shops will be closed during the three-year period. The selection of these outlets for closure will be based on specific criteria, including factors such as proximity to sensitive areas (such as educational institutions or religious establishments), population density, consumption patterns, and market demand. The closures will be executed progressively to minimise immediate disruptions and provide affected stakeholders with an opportunity to adapt to the changing landscape.

Throughout the closure process, it is crucial to ensure transparency and accountability. Proper documentation and record-keeping will be maintained to track the closure progress, ensuring

¹⁴ [Home, Prohibition and Excise Department, Policy Note 2022-23](#)

that the designated number of bars and outlets are closed within the stipulated time frame. Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be established to assess the impact of the closures and make any necessary adjustments to the implementation strategy.

Additionally, it is important to consider the social and economic implications of these closures. Adequate support and assistance programs will be put in place to help individuals and businesses affected by the closures. This may include skill development programs, financial aid, and guidance in transitioning to alternative livelihood options. The proposed reformed liquor policy entails the closure of all 3,240 bars attached to Liquor Retail Vending Shops within three years, along with a minimum closure of 4,035 outlets. This phased approach allows for a controlled transition while addressing social and health concerns associated with alcohol consumption. By following a systematic and inclusive process, the closures can be implemented in a fair and equitable manner, supported by appropriate measures to mitigate the impact on affected stakeholders.

a. Gradual Reduction In Tasmac Outlets: To implement a gradual reduction in the availability of liquor, the government should adopt a phased approach that spans three years. This strategy aims to curtail the number of TASMAC outlets, thereby effectively reducing both the demand and supply side of the industry. By aligning the reduction in TASMAC outlets with the percentage ceiling set on liquor purchases from breweries, a systematic and balanced transition can be achieved.

Similar to the gradual reduction in liquor purchases from breweries, the number of TASMAC outlets would be decreased over the three-year period in proportion to the reduction targets. This means that the percentage reduction in TASMAC outlets would mirror the percentage decrease in liquor purchases from breweries. The ultimate objective is to bring both the demand and supply of liquor to less than 25% of their current capacity. By implementing a phased reduction in TASMAC outlets, the government can effectively control the availability and accessibility of liquor, contributing to the broader goal of a

reformed liquor policy. The reduction targets would be determined based on various factors, including the current number of TASMAC outlets, population density, consumption patterns, and market demand.

To ensure a smooth and well-planned transition, the closure of TASMAC outlets would follow a systematic process. Criteria would be established to identify the outlets for closure, taking into account factors such as location, profitability, compliance records, and potential impact on the community. Priority would be given to outlets located in sensitive areas, such as near educational institutions or places of worship. Throughout the reduction process, it is crucial to maintain transparency and accountability. Proper documentation and record-keeping would be essential to track the progress of outlet closures and ensure compliance with the reduction targets. Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms would be established to assess the impact of the reduction on various stakeholders and make any necessary adjustments to the implementation strategy. Moreover, it is important to consider the social and economic consequences of the closure of TASMAC outlets. Support and assistance programs would be developed to aid affected individuals and businesses during the transition period. This may involve providing alternative livelihood opportunities, skill development initiatives, and financial support to mitigate any adverse effects. A gradual reduction in TASMAC outlets over a three-year timeframe, in proportion to the reduction in liquor purchases from breweries, offers a systematic and balanced approach to curtail the availability of liquor. By implementing a well-planned process that considers various factors and prioritises transparency and support for affected stakeholders, the government can successfully transition towards a reformed liquor policy while minimising potential disruptions to the industry and society at large.

- b. Restricting Around Religious Places:** As part of the phased reduction plan in Year 1, priority should be given to restricting the presence of liquor shops around religious places. This entails removing liquor shops within a 1km radius of religious sites. This step aligns

with the traditional Hindu prohibition of alcohol at sacred places, taking into account the sentiments and beliefs associated with these locations. It is a prudent measure to respect and honour the cultural and religious significance of such sites. The restriction on liquor shops in the vicinity of religious places can initially be implemented in a 1km radius. This distance is chosen to ensure that the immediate vicinity of the religious sites is free from the presence of liquor outlets, respecting the sanctity and religious practices observed in these areas. Moreover, it is worth considering expanding the restricted area to include major pilgrimage towns in Tamil Nadu, such as Kanchipuram, Thanjavur, Srirangam, Velankanni, Nagoor, Rameswaram, Kumbakonam, Chidambaram, Madurai, Poondi, and Goripalayam. These towns hold significant religious importance and attract a large number of devotees and tourists. Similar provisions already exist in other holy cities of India, such as Pushkar and Mathura-Vrindavan. Implementing such restrictions in proximity to religious places acknowledges the cultural and religious context of the region. It demonstrates sensitivity to the traditional Hindu practices that prohibit the consumption of alcohol in sacred spaces. By removing liquor shops from the immediate vicinity, it creates an environment that respects and upholds these beliefs, promoting a harmonious coexistence of religious and social practices. It is important to note that the specific areas and distances for the restriction should be determined based on careful consideration of local customs, cultural sensitivities, and community input. Engagement with religious leaders, local authorities, and community representatives would be instrumental in ensuring that the implementation aligns with the unique characteristics of each location. In conclusion, as part of the phased reduction plan, giving priority to the restriction of liquor shops near religious places, particularly within a 1km radius, is a prudent step that respects the traditional Hindu prohibition of alcohol at sacred sites. Expanding these provisions to major pilgrimage towns in Tamil Nadu recognizes the cultural and religious significance of these areas and promotes an environment that respects local customs and practices. By taking into account the sentiments and beliefs

associated with religious places, the implementation strategy can strike a balance between cultural sensitivities and the objective of a reformed liquor policy.

- c. **Immediate Closure Of TASMAL Bars:** The majority of alcohol consumers in Tamil Nadu purchase their alcohol from TASMAL outlets and immediately consume it in the attached bars. However, it is important to note that TASMAL has no legal control over these bars, as they are leased out to private owners. This arrangement has resulted in a cesspool of corruption and cartel behaviour, with TASMAL itself earning a meagre revenue of less than ₹130 crore through these bars, which is less than 0.3% of TASMAL's overall revenue.¹⁵ In February 2022, the Madras High Court directed TASMAL to close down these bars, citing concerns about the consumption of alcohol in public places and the indirect support provided by TASMAL to the violation of laws. The Court emphasised that even if a bar is not considered a public place, individuals consuming alcohol in these bars would inevitably have to pass through public areas while returning home. Therefore, the Court concluded that TASMAL's allowance of alcohol consumption in bars makes it an accessory to the violation of the law, which cannot be condoned.

However, in January 2023, the order to close down these bars was overturned, reflecting a concerning trend of growing alcoholism in the state and an encouraging stance taken by the government. Additionally, the Court also permitted bars to remain open beyond the previously set closing time of 10PM. In light of this situation, it is worth considering that restricting easy access to bars could act as a disincentive for individuals who do not have private places to consume alcohol. By closing down these bars, people would face limited options for legally permissible places to consume alcohol, which could serve as a severe deterrent.¹⁶ This would result in individuals being less likely to engage in public consumption of alcohol, as they would be aware that law enforcement agencies and

¹⁵ [Times of India, August 2022](#)

¹⁶ [The New Indian Express, February 2022](#)

community volunteers can take immediate and stringent action against such behaviour. The closure of bars attached to TASMAC outlets would not only address the concerns raised by the Madras High Court but also contribute to the larger goal of discouraging public consumption of alcohol. By limiting the availability of places for immediate consumption, individuals would be encouraged to consume alcohol responsibly and within legally permissible boundaries.¹⁷ It is important to approach this issue with sensitivity, considering the social and health implications associated with alcohol consumption. Adequate support services and awareness programs should be put in place to address alcoholism and provide assistance to individuals seeking help. Closing down the bars attached to TASMAC outlets would serve as a significant deterrent, as individuals would face limited options for legally permissible places to consume alcohol. This measure aligns with the concerns raised by the Madras High Court and supports the goal of discouraging public consumption of alcohol. However, it is crucial to accompany such measures with support services to address alcoholism and promote responsible consumption.

3. Restrict Number Of Hours For Sale

To enhance the regulation and control of alcohol sales, the state government should consider reducing the operating hours of TASMAC shops. The current operating timings, which span from noon to 10 pm, should be revised to noon to 7 pm. This reduction in operating hours would facilitate improved monitoring and regulation of the ban on alcohol, while also mitigating the disturbances and public nuisance that often occur outside these shops during nighttime hours. By reducing the operating hours, the government can exercise greater control over the sale and distribution of alcohol. This measure would enable authorities to allocate sufficient resources and personnel during the operating hours to enforce compliance with regulations and ensure the responsible sale of alcohol. The focused oversight within a shorter

¹⁷ [Times of India, January 2023](#)

time frame can result in more effective regulation, preventing illicit activities and reducing the chances of violations.

Additionally, limiting the operating hours can contribute to a safer and more peaceful environment, particularly during the night. It is often observed that the presence of TASMAC shops and the consumption of alcohol in their vicinity can lead to unruly behaviour, disturbances, and public nuisance, especially during late-night hours. By closing the shops at 7 pm, the potential for such ruckus and public disturbances can be significantly reduced, improving the overall safety and tranquillity of the surrounding areas. Moreover, the shorter operating hours can also act as a deterrent, discouraging excessive alcohol consumption and promoting responsible drinking habits. Individuals would have a limited window of time to purchase alcohol, making it less convenient to engage in prolonged drinking sessions. This can contribute to the prevention of alcohol-related issues and promote healthier consumption patterns among the population.

It is important for the government to communicate and educate the public about the revised operating hours and the rationale behind this decision. Public awareness campaigns can highlight the benefits of reduced operating hours, emphasising the importance of responsible alcohol consumption and the need for a more regulated and peaceful environment.

Reducing the operating hours of TASMAC shops from noon to 10 pm to noon to 7 pm would enhance the regulation and control of alcohol sales. This measure would enable better enforcement of the ban, discourage disturbances and public nuisance during night time hours, and promote responsible drinking habits. It is crucial to accompany this change with effective communication and public awareness initiatives to ensure understanding and cooperation from the public.

4. Restrict The Sale Of Liquor Buy Days

As part of the phased implementation of prohibition, the government can introduce the concept of weekly dry days, wherein alcohol would not be available for purchase on specific days of the week. This approach aims to gradually reduce the accessibility and availability of alcohol, encouraging a decrease in alcohol consumption over time. In the proposed plan, the implementation of weekly dry days would occur in a phased manner. During the first year, one day per week would be designated as a dry day, during which alcohol sales would be prohibited. In the second year, the number of dry days would increase to three, and by the final year, four days of the week would be designated as dry days.

The introduction of weekly dry days serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it allows individuals to gradually adapt to a reduced availability of alcohol, thereby promoting a shift towards moderation and responsible drinking habits. By limiting the access to alcohol on specific days, individuals are encouraged to plan their consumption and exercise self-control. Secondly, the concept of dry days helps in reducing the overall alcohol consumption in the population. By providing regular intervals of alcohol-free days, the plan fosters an environment that encourages individuals to explore alternative activities and pursuits, reducing dependence on alcohol as a recreational option.

Furthermore, the phased approach to increasing the number of dry days allows for a smoother transition and minimises the immediate economic impact on stakeholders involved in the alcohol industry. It provides time for businesses and individuals to adapt and explore alternative revenue strategies, reducing the potential disruptions associated with sudden prohibition measures. To ensure effective implementation, it is important for the government to establish clear guidelines and regulations regarding the dry days. This includes measures such as strict enforcement of the prohibition on alcohol sales during dry days, penalties for violations, and communication campaigns to create awareness among the public.

It is also crucial to consider the specific days to be designated as dry days, taking into account cultural and regional factors. Consultation with stakeholders, including religious and community leaders, can help determine the most appropriate days for dry periods, considering local customs, traditions, and public sentiment. The introduction of weekly dry days as part of the phased implementation of prohibition can significantly contribute to reducing alcohol consumption over time. By gradually increasing the number of dry days, individuals are encouraged to adopt responsible drinking habits and explore alternative recreational options. Clear guidelines, effective enforcement, and public awareness campaigns are key to successful implementation.

5. Rebranding Of TASMAC

Even as the State Government claims to conduct ‘vigorous’ awareness campaigns against the evils of alcohol consumption, TASMAC officials themselves admit that these remain largely ‘on paper’. Despite earning as much as ₹36,013.14 crore through liquor sales in 2021-22, the DMK Government only allocated ₹4 crore for awareness activities.¹⁸ Though the Commissionerate of Prohibition and Excise and to some extent, the Prohibition Enforcement Wing is tasked with the duty to conduct awareness activities for preventing the consumption of illicit liquor, TASMAC could also work towards deeper penetration of awareness activities. From being the sole liquor retailer in the State, the State Government may undertake a rebranding exercise to present TASMAC as a responsible government agency that is entrusted with the task of ensuring that consumers are equipped with all the necessary information to make an informed decision.

a. Mandating Graphic Warning Labels For Behavioural Change

The Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Rules, 2008 made it mandatory for cigarette packets to carry Graphic Warning Labels (GWL). These Rules were

¹⁸ [The Hindu, April 2022](#)

amended recently on 21 July 2022 which mandated the printing of new, more horrific visuals along with the text, “Tobacco causes painful death”.¹⁹ Since the amended rule was enforceable for a period of 12 months from 1 December 2022, those cigarette packets manufactured after 1 December 2023, have been mandated to carry another graphic image with the text “Tobacco Users die younger”.²⁰ The violation of this rule by a producer is punishable with imprisonment of up to 2 years and/or a fine of ₹5,000 and while a seller who violates the rule can be punished up to 1 year or ₹1,000 as fine.²¹ A 2013 study conducted by the researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the University of Waterloo found that GLWs are effective - this study compared the smoking rates in the US and Canada in the nine years before and after the warning sign was introduced in Canada.²² The study found that the warning sign in Canada had led to a reduction of 2.9 to 4.7 percentage points in the smoking rate in Canada.²³ When extrapolated to see how this trend would play out in the US, the researchers concluded that it could amount to 8.6 million fewer smokers in the US.²⁴ In another study by the US Food and Drug Administration to map the biological mechanisms that explained why and how GWLs made smokers think about the health consequences of smoking and had an impact on them, similar results were found.²⁵ The researchers displayed two types of cigarette packaging to the subjects - one with either graphic image and text or only warning text and the other one with plain packaging. The study found that the GWLs with graphic visuals were far more successful at discouraging smokers than the plain packaging or even the packaging with just warning text. Therefore, these warning signs especially when accompanied by graphic images of the negative impact that smoking could have on the health of the smoker can trigger a

¹⁹ [The Hindu, July 2022](#)

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ [The Cigarettes And Other Tobacco Products \(Prohibition Of Advertisement And Regulation Of Trade And Commerce, Production, Supply And Distribution\) Act, 2003](#)

²² [ET, November 2013](#)

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ [TOI, May 2018](#)

behavioural change as they increase knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco products, motivate smokers to attempt quitting, and decrease relapse rates among smokers who have quit. Today, cigarette packets sold in more than 65 countries in the world carry such signs given that they have proven to reduce smoking rates.²⁶

Mandating the printing of similar GWLs on liquor bottles could also have a similar positive impact on alcoholics or potential alcoholics and reduce the instances of deaths. In fact, this has already been made mandatory by the country's food regulator, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). As per the notification issued by FSSAI on 19 March 2018, alcoholic beverage manufacturers had to include labels on liquor bottles with the following warnings: "Consumption of alcohol is injurious to health"; and "Be safe: Don't drink and drive".²⁷ The food regulator gave manufacturers a year's time and began enforcement from 1 April 2019. The notification even prescribed different font sizes for these warning labels - the text had to be in capital letters and 1.5 mm high for bottles up to 200 ml and 3 mm high for bottles larger than 200 ml. The notification was issued under the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages Standards) Regulation, 2018, which, for the first time, introduced exclusive labelling requirements for alcoholic beverages.

The Madurai bench of the Madras High Court as recently as January 2023 observed that the labelling requirements under Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations, 2018, and Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011, shall be strictly complied with.²⁸ Hence, such Graphic Warning Labels with the relevant graphic images and warning text could be considered for printing on TASMAC liquor bottles as well. This may help not only existing alcoholics to be more aware of the ill effects that alcoholic beverages would have on their health and nudge them to make a more informed

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ [HT, March 2019](#)

²⁸ [The Hindu, January 2023](#)

choice towards avoiding liquor but also stop potential alcoholics from ever consuming their first drink.

b. Carrying Out Targeted Awareness Campaigns

Currently, there are district level committees under the chairmanship of the District Collector to prepare plans for carrying out awareness activities.²⁹ Though the mode of implementation is varied - like street plays, rallies, camps, skits, poetry writing competitions etc.- the subject of these activities is not based on the prevailing situation in the district. The need of the hour is targeted information campaigns tailored to specific regions and their local context. Various factors need to be taken into consideration while formulating plans for the awareness activities by district level committees. Some of them are listed below -

- i. Proximity to neighbouring states and their porous borders that make them vulnerable to cross-border smuggling activities.
- ii. Geographical location of the district like in the case of Salem and Dharmapuri with their forest cover makes them especially notorious for brewing of illicit liquor.
- iii. Near to Puducherry where alcohol is available at cheaper prices.
- iv. Districts having a greater presence of methanol industries which facilitates easy availability of the chemical for the brewing of illicit liquor.
- v. Demographic considerations like districts with a larger rural or economically backward population who are susceptible to the consumption of cheap, illicit liquor.

Further, conducting customer surveys at the liquor establishments could help determine the drinking patterns across the state, inputs of which can form the basis for the formulation of targeted campaigns.

²⁹ [Policy Note 2023-24, p. No. 17](#)

c. Setting Up Signboards And Banners For Better Decision Making

The Tamil Nadu Liquor (Licence and Permit) Rules, 1981 makes it mandatory to display sign boards with the hazards of drinking written in bold. However, in September 2021, the DMK Government led by Thiru M K Stalin took down the message “drinking liquor will ruin the family; drinking liquor is injurious to health” displayed on these signboards and replaced it with “consumption of alcohol is injurious to health, be safe — don’t drink and drive” by making amendments to these Rules.³⁰ From this decision of the State Government and a reading of the ‘awareness activities’ undertaken by it as explained in its Policy Notes, it becomes clear that there is disproportionate focus on ‘drunken driving’ as one of the ‘evils of alcohol consumption.’ However, as the 2016 LokNiti-CSDS Survey shows, the general public supports prohibition for reasons other than the rising incidence of drunken driving as well. The most common among these is to stop domestic violence and financial problems at home. That drinking is injurious to health features only as the third most common consideration in support of prohibition. Hence, the State Government could consider amending the Rules of 1981 to mandate the setting up of signboards, banners and LED screens to display public interest messages regarding the harmful effects of drinking on family life and the financial health of the household. Further, public announcements on the same could be made in areas that attract large crowds like railway stations, bus terminals, malls etc.

B. Strengthening Law Enforcement

A ban on alcohol would invariably lead to a rise in illegal trade and production. Therefore, law enforcement capabilities should be enhanced, and stringent penalties should be established to deter such activities. **At present, even though liquor sales have been a government monopoly in Tamil Nadu since 2003, the illegal liquor trade still flourishes. This fact was acknowledged**

³⁰ [TOI, September 2021](#)

by the Former Finance Minister of the state Thiru Palanivel Thiagarajan himself, who confessed that about 50% of the liquor trade in Tamil Nadu is outside the excise net.³¹

This illegal trade does not comprise only of illegal smuggling from neighbouring states. A major share of black market is being produced inside the state itself.³² One significant reason for the presence of a thriving black market in liquor is the penchant for intensifying the potency of the liquor. This is driven by the demand of a large addicted population not satiated with the quantity of alcohol in the products procured from TASMAC. This fact reaffirms the magnitude of the problem of alcoholism which persists in the state. To deal with these issues after the prohibition, the following steps merit attention:

1. State Advisory Committee

The government should constitute a State Advisory Committee on Prohibition with the Minister of Prohibition and Excise as the chairperson. The Committee should be constituted of executives from the departments of Finance, Health & Family Welfare, Social Justice, Home and Prohibition & Excise as working members. The Advisory Body should also comprise civil society representatives who are experts in the fields of public health, finance, social work and entrepreneurship. The Committee should take up a detailed study, have periodic meetings, carry out social audits and suggest course corrections after review.

³¹ [NIE, March 2022](#)

³² [NIE, March 2022](#)



Infographic 2: Functions of the proposed State Advisory Committee on Prohibition

2. Crackdown on bootlegging

The government should go on to conduct an absolute crackdown on bootlegging operations in the state. This would entail changes in the enforcement structure with regard to the liquor regulation. At present, the Prohibition and Enforcement Wing (PEW) is tasked with the enforcement of the current liquor regime in the state. Notably, although it is a unit of the police, it is still within the purview of the Commissionerate of Prohibition and Excise. Evidently, they limit themselves to guard the state borders for illegal smuggling and do not deal with the black market within the state.³³ To effectively address bootlegging operations in the state, the government should conduct a comprehensive crackdown on illicit activities. This would require significant changes in the enforcement structure pertaining to liquor regulation. Currently, the

³³ NIE, March 2022

Prohibition and Enforcement Wing (PEW) is responsible for enforcing the existing liquor regime in Tamil Nadu. Insufficient attention is given to combatting the black market operating within the state.

To effectively tackle bootlegging operations, it is necessary to enhance the capabilities and scope of the enforcement agencies. One approach could involve restructuring and empowering the Prohibition and Enforcement Wing to proactively target and dismantle illegal liquor networks within the state. This may involve increasing the number of personnel dedicated to tackling bootlegging activities, providing them with specialised training, and equipping them with the necessary resources and technology for effective enforcement. Additionally, there should be closer coordination and collaboration between law enforcement agencies, such as the police, revenue officials, and excise authorities, to ensure comprehensive enforcement against bootlegging operations. This could include sharing intelligence, conducting joint operations, and establishing dedicated task forces to specifically address the issue of illicit alcohol trade.

Furthermore, establishing a robust system for gathering actionable intelligence on bootlegging networks and their modus operandi is crucial. This could involve utilising modern surveillance technology, developing informant networks, and leveraging data analytics to identify key players and disrupt their operations. By adopting a proactive and targeted enforcement approach, the government can effectively curb bootlegging activities within the state. This, in turn, will contribute to reducing the illegal alcohol trade, protecting public health and safety, and upholding the objectives of the prohibition policy. It is important to note that sustained efforts, periodic evaluations, and continuous adaptation of enforcement strategies will be necessary to stay ahead of evolving bootlegging techniques and networks. Additionally, strict adherence to legal processes, transparency, and accountability should be maintained throughout the enforcement operations to ensure the integrity of the crackdown on bootlegging and to protect the rights of individuals. Significantly, in the state of Gujarat under a Congress Chief Minister Thiru Shankar Sinh Vaghela, the enforcement powers for the Prohibition Act were transferred

to the Commissionerate of Prohibition and Excise, but the government under Chief Minister Thiru Narendra Modi Ji in 2006 again assigned them to the state police, realising the importance of effective enforcement of the state's prohibition act.³⁴

3. Self Help Groups For Monitoring

To enhance the local level enforcement and ensure effective implementation of the phased prohibition, the government should consider the deployment of volunteers from existing self-help groups. These volunteers would be recruited from the local communities and assigned the task of monitoring and reporting various aspects related to alcohol control. It is recommended that a minimum of two volunteers be identified and deployed per ward to cover a wide geographic area and engage a diverse range of community members. These volunteers should be given a monthly honorarium of ₹1,000 to acknowledge their contribution and commitment to the cause. The primary responsibilities of these volunteers would include monitoring and reporting instances of black marketing of liquor, identifying and addressing issues arising from alcoholism, and conducting periodic check-ins with individuals who have undergone rehabilitation to prevent relapse.

By actively engaging in these tasks, the volunteers can play a vital role in maintaining vigilance and ensuring compliance with the prohibition policies at the grassroots level. By involving the local community as stakeholders in the policy implementation, several benefits can be achieved.

Firstly, the presence of volunteers from self-help groups would bring a sense of familiarity and trust within the community, making it easier to gather information and address concerns related to alcohol control effectively. Their local knowledge and connections can prove invaluable in identifying and tackling instances of black market activities. Furthermore, engaging the community in monitoring and reporting alcohol-related issues fosters a sense of collective ownership and responsibility. The involvement of community members as proactive

³⁴ [IE, July 2022](#)

participants in tackling alcohol-related problems creates a supportive environment and promotes a shared commitment to address the challenges associated with alcoholism.

Additionally, these volunteers can act as advocates for raising awareness and promoting preventive measures against alcoholism. They can organise community outreach programs, conduct educational sessions, and provide support to individuals and families affected by alcohol abuse. It is essential to provide proper training and guidance to the volunteers to ensure their effectiveness in carrying out their responsibilities. Regular communication channels should be established to facilitate information sharing, coordination, and feedback between the volunteers and relevant authorities. By leveraging the power of community engagement, the government can strengthen the enforcement efforts, promote social responsibility, and maximise the impact of the phased prohibition. The involvement of self-help group volunteers as local monitors represents a proactive and inclusive approach towards achieving the goals of alcohol control and fostering a healthier and safer society.

C. Rehabilitation and Public Awareness

An embargo on the sale of alcohol would restrict the availability of alcohol but not alcoholism per se, which merits a long term approach. Globally, regulations on the sale of alcohol have been accompanied by state policies which educate citizens about the ill effects of alcoholism. Unfortunately, in India, while drinking is considered a moral weakness, it is still not seen as a health hazard. **As per a 2019 study on the pattern of alcohol consumption and associated morbidity in urban Tamil Nadu, 67% of alcohol consumers had a problematic drinking pattern, with 52.5% having a hazardous/harmful drinking pattern and 14.7% were found to be dependent alcoholics.**

Furthermore, the study found that factors associated with problematic drinking patterns were illiteracy, having a history of tobacco use, being unmarried/divorced and consuming alcohol in wine shops. The study concluded that alcohol consumption significantly added to health

morbidities, with the most common morbidities being hypertension, gastritis/peptic ulcer disease, and psychiatric illnesses.

In this light, there needs to be a strong focus on rehabilitating individuals addicted to alcohol. Increased spending on awareness programs would help reduce the societal demand for alcohol over time. A recent report from the World Health Organisation talks about the importance of rehabilitation as central to holistic healthcare.³⁵ It, in fact, considered the unmet need for rehabilitation in low and middle income countries so dire that it launched an initiative called the Rehabilitation 2030 and raised a “Call to Action”.

It identified six building blocks of the health system amenable to rehabilitation, which have been also broadly suggested in this white paper. These are: Leadership and Governance, Financing, Health Workforce, Service Delivery, Medicine and Technology as well as Health Information System.³⁶ The findings of the study indicate that certain factors, such as illiteracy, history of tobacco use, marital status, and alcohol consumption in wine shops, are associated with problematic drinking patterns.

In light of these findings, it is crucial to prioritise the rehabilitation of individuals struggling with alcohol addiction. Allocating increased resources to awareness programs can help reduce societal demand for alcohol over time.

Leadership and Governance play a vital role in driving the rehabilitation agenda, ensuring policies are in place, and coordinating efforts across various stakeholders. Adequate financing is essential to allocate sufficient resources to support rehabilitation services, including staffing, infrastructure, and treatment modalities. The availability of a skilled and trained Health Workforce is crucial for delivering effective rehabilitation interventions and providing ongoing support to individuals in recovery.

³⁵ [WHO, Rehabilitation in Health Systems Guide For Action, 2019](#)

³⁶ [WHO, Rehabilitation in Health Systems Guide For Action, 2019, pg 4](#)

Service Delivery should be structured to provide accessible, evidence-based rehabilitation services, including detoxification, counselling, therapy, and follow-up care. The appropriate use of Medicine and Technology can enhance rehabilitation outcomes through the integration of pharmacological treatments, assistive devices, and innovative approaches. Furthermore, a robust Health Information System can facilitate data collection, monitoring, and evaluation of rehabilitation programs, enabling evidence-based decision-making and quality improvement. By addressing these building blocks, the government can establish a comprehensive and sustainable rehabilitation framework that focuses on the needs of individuals struggling with alcohol addiction. This approach aligns with global efforts to prioritise rehabilitation within the broader healthcare system and ensures that individuals receive the necessary support to overcome alcohol-related challenges and improve their overall well-being. It is important to emphasise that collaboration between various stakeholders, including government agencies, healthcare providers, community organisations, and civil society, is crucial for the successful implementation of rehabilitation programs. By working together and following the principles outlined by the WHO Rehabilitation 2030 initiative, the government can make significant strides in addressing alcohol addiction and promoting the overall health and well-being of individuals in the state. In light of these factors, the following measures gain significance.

1. Rehabilitation

- a. The state government would establish a 200 bed rehabilitation centre in every taluka, ie. 312 talukas across all the 38 districts of Tamil Nadu. Considering that a normal alcoholic would take an average of no more than 45 days to rehabilitate, in a year, the State Government would be able to accommodate 1,600 beneficiaries in every taluk for rehabilitation purposes. This will ensure the rehabilitation of 4,99,200 persons across the state in a year. Over 3 years this program will cover a minimum of 14,97,600 persons. On the other hand a severe alcoholic may take up to 60 days to recover. Rehabilitation beyond 60 days may be provided for by considering the beneficiary as an Out Patient or for palliative care. The rehabilitation

facility would be equipped with a doctor, a counsellor and other healthcare professionals, as per global norms. Additionally, a quick response team and a counsellor may be deployed at all the 1,421 PHCs in Tamil Nadu.³⁷

- b. To support the rehabilitation process and mitigate the socio-economic impact on families, the government proposes providing a livelihood compensation of ₹15,000 per month (at the rate of ₹500 per day) to the families of beneficiaries undergoing rehabilitation. This compensation will be provided for a maximum duration of 45 days at a time. Over the course of three years, the estimated cost of livelihood compensation is projected to amount to ₹3,369.60 crore. The grant may be complementary to the Central Sector Scheme for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse, as envisaged by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.³⁸ To fund this initiative, a combination of financing sources can be explored.

One option is to allocate a portion of the Anti-Alcohol cess collected from distilleries and suppliers towards the livelihood compensation program. This would help ensure that the burden of funding is partially borne by the alcohol industry itself. Additionally, a policy change can be implemented to establish a dedicated grant of ₹500 crore per year under the National Health Mission, Tamil Nadu. This grant could be specifically earmarked for supporting alcohol rehabilitation efforts, including livelihood compensation for families.

Alternatively, the government can explore partnerships with multilateral development agencies to secure funding for the program. Collaborating with these agencies can provide additional financial support and technical expertise in implementing the rehabilitation initiatives effectively. By aligning with the central scheme, the government of Tamil Nadu can leverage synergies and resources available at both the state and national levels to strengthen the rehabilitation efforts and enhance the overall impact of the program.

Implementing a livelihood compensation program not only supports the families of

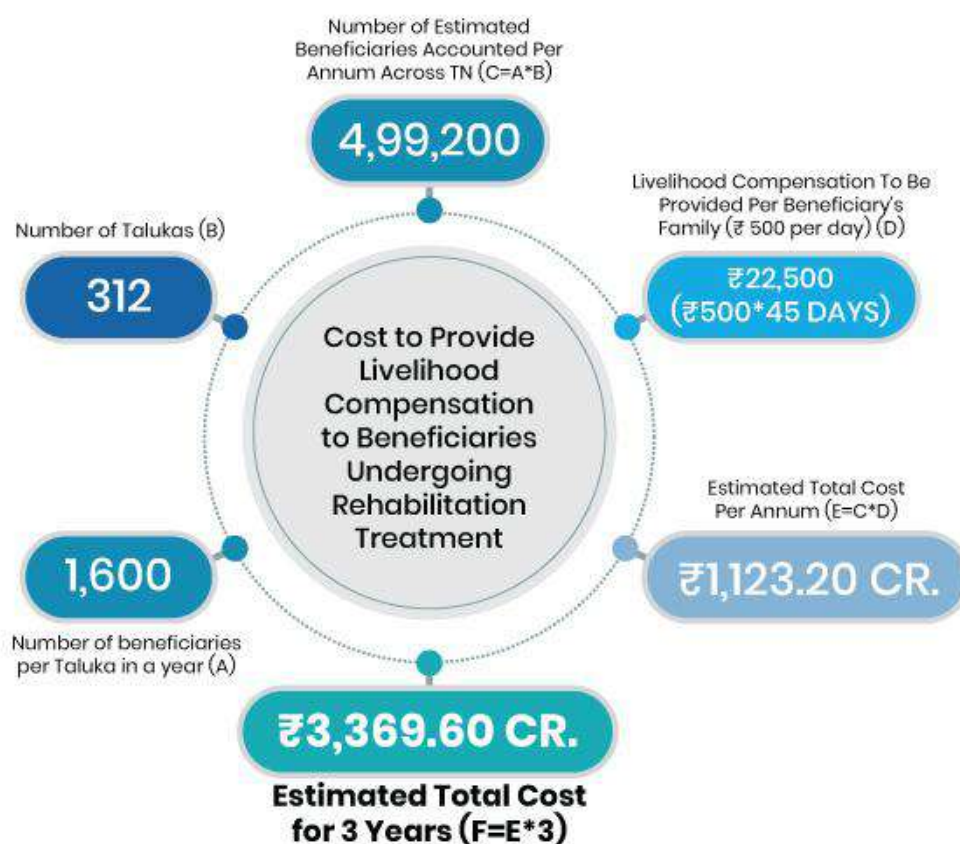
³⁷ [National Health Mission](#)

³⁸ [Central Grant provided by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment](#)

individuals undergoing rehabilitation but also addresses the socio-economic challenges they may face during this period. By providing financial assistance, the program aims to alleviate the immediate economic burden on the families and facilitate their transition towards sustainable livelihoods. This initiative reflects a comprehensive approach to rehabilitation that considers the holistic well-being of individuals and their families.

Careful planning and coordination will be necessary to ensure efficient utilisation of the allocated funds and effective implementation of the livelihood compensation program. This can involve establishing appropriate mechanisms for disbursing compensation, ensuring transparency and accountability in the process, and regularly evaluating the program's outcomes and impact. By adopting a professional and strategic approach, the government can maximise the benefits of the livelihood compensation program and contribute to the successful rehabilitation of individuals and their families affected by alcohol addiction.

- c. Skill development, vocational training and livelihood support of ex-user/ dependent: The government should implement a skilling and livelihood support program in linkage with Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana for the beneficiaries of the rehabilitation program. This will ensure mainstreaming of such persons, and add to the economic empowerment of the society.



Infographic 3: Data on Cost to Provide Livelihood Compensation to Beneficiaries Undergoing Rehabilitation Treatment

- d. There would be a proper monitoring program in place for the rehabilitation beneficiaries which would help in providing information on the progress towards the goal of de-addiction. WHO norms on the benefits of a monitoring framework for rehabilitation underscore their importance for: monitoring the results of the strategic plans against intended objectives, enabling government accountability for rehabilitation, driving integration of rehabilitation into health information systems, building technical knowledge of rehabilitation, identifying failures and successes of the strategic plan and providing data for advocacy and lobbying for further resources.³⁹

³⁹ [WHO, Rehabilitation in Health Systems Guide For Action, 2019, pg 34](#)

2. Public Awareness

- a. The state government should launch an Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign on both conventional and digital media to create awareness on the myriad ill effects of alcohol consumption. They can endeavour to rope in sports and film personalities to strengthen it. Widespread awareness is vital to ensure that prohibition does not get reduced to a government led initiative but is appreciated as a solution to a social malaise affecting the state. The campaign could be along the lines of the anti-tobacco and Two-Child Promotion campaigns launched by the central government at the national level which, through a dedicated course of action, created changes in the attitudes of people at large.
- b. The government can engage religious teachers, seers and leaders to play a proactive role in creating wider awareness about the alcohol problem in Tamil Nadu and its moral dimensions. A worthwhile illustration of this endeavour was the societal evil of female infanticide in Rajasthan and other parts of North India. Many saints and religious figures did a yeoman service at that time to impress upon the common masses about the sinful nature of this practice.

D. Immediate Actionables

The Tamil Nadu Government holds the power to initiate positive changes without delay. In the context of TASMAC, several modifications can be implemented promptly, considering the current circumstances and feasibility.

- a. **TASMAC** currently observes dry days on significant national festivals such as Gandhi Jayanthi, Independence Day, Republic Day, Mahaveer Jayanthi, and others. The government should consider extending **dry days for 45 days during the holy Tamil months of Karthigai and Margazhi**. During this pilgrimage period, people practise abstinence, and their spiritual devotion overrides their addictions. It serves as an effective means to encourage alcoholics towards rehabilitation. Even after the pilgrimage, the

government should consider opening only half of the stores, taking necessary precautions. While the practical implementation may be complex, limiting the sale of beer to private players can potentially pave the way for a phased prohibition, expanding the possibilities for positive change.

- b. The TASMAC shops around the state are stipulated to function within 12:00 PM and 10:00 PM, but there are numerous reports that the retails shops function beyond the stipulated time. Also, it is alleged by many social activists there is a parallel black market of liquor sales during the early hours of the day and the late hours of the night. As it is proved that the current timing does not yield better results, the Government should consider **revising the functioning time of TASMAC between 2:00 PM and 7:00 PM**, to further curtail the access to intoxication.
- c. Within the TASMAC menu, **there is a list of 46 beers mentioned for supply**. However, only a select few brands from politically influential distilleries are made available. This limited availability of high-quality beer leaves consumers with few options, often leading them to choose hard liquor instead. A preferable approach would be to grant access to private players to sell high-quality beer, diverting individuals from their dependence on hard liquor. This step would not only reduce TASMAC's regular dependency but also ensure that the state does not lose its VAT share.
- d. The Tamil Nadu Government should take steps to support TASMAC in **implementing a Customer Identification Number (CIN)** system, assigning a unique identification to each individual to track their drinking habits. In addition, the government should establish regulations concerning the quantity or volume of liquor that can be provided to a single individual. This approach encourages individuals to practise mindful drinking and raises awareness about the economic expenses associated with alcohol consumption. Implementing the CIN system enables the government to categorise individuals into different groups based on their drinking patterns. This classification can include excessive drinkers, occasional drinkers, and social drinkers. Such categorization allows the

government to gain insights into drinking trends and patterns, enabling targeted interventions and policies to address excessive drinking habits while ensuring responsible alcohol consumption. By implementing the CIN system and regulating the amount of liquor provided, the government promotes a culture of responsible drinking. It encourages individuals to be more conscious of their alcohol consumption, fostering a greater understanding of personal limits and potential consequences. This approach not only contributes to individual well-being but also helps in reducing alcohol-related issues and promoting a healthier drinking culture within Tamil Nadu.

The Tamil Nadu Government can take proactive steps towards building a healthier and more harmonious society by promptly implementing these practical changes. These initiatives will be instrumental in gradually reducing the dependency on TASMAC and effectively addressing the associated concerns. The government's swift action in implementing these feasible changes will demonstrate its unwavering commitment to the well-being of its citizens. By reducing reliance on TASMAC, the government can actively mitigate the detrimental social and health impacts stemming from excessive alcohol consumption. Through these proactive measures, the government can pave the way for a society that promotes better health outcomes, fosters responsible behaviour, and creates an environment that values the overall welfare of its people.

OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS COMMITTEE REPORTS ON PROHIBITION

III. Overview of Various Committee Reports on Prohibition

During the course of the past decades, the Central and State governments have constituted several committees to look into both the feasibility and implementation of a total prohibition on alcohol. Before we proceed with outlining a plan for prohibition in Tamil Nadu, it is necessary to undertake a careful study of previous committee reports and their recommendations. To illuminate the same, we have reproduced relevant sections of the committee reports below.

A. Brief of all the Committee Reports

a. A. P. Udayabhanu Committee Report

The K. Karunakaran Government in Kerala commissioned a study on liquor and prohibition in the year 1987. The study was chaired by Shri A.P. Udayabhanu, a Gandhian and former freedom fighter and the report was submitted in 1988. Though the report is not publicly available, it has been used as reference by the LDF government in Kerala to regulate and revive the toddy tapping industry. Broadly, it is mentioned that the Udayabhanu Commission favoured light liquor and abstinence as a solution to growing alcoholism in the state, and not complete prohibition.⁴⁰

b. N. M. Miyabhoy Committee Report

The N. M. The Miyabhoy Committee was established by the Madhavsingh Solanki Government to study the prohibition policy following an election. The report was tabled in 1984 and provided a critical view of the state police machinery, stating that it created and met the demand for liquor. The committee recommended strong measures for stricter enforcement of the prohibition policy, which along with protests from prohibitionists, had prevented the ruling party from amending the law⁴¹.

Former Gujarat High Court Chief Justice N. M. Miyabhoy, who headed the commission, did not recommend the government to allow the consumption of mahua liquor or toddy. He insisted on

⁴⁰ [Times of India, January 2016](#)

⁴¹ [India Today](#)

strict regulation of the use of mahua flowers for brewing liquor, but allowed these flowers to be used as food by tribals and Dalits in Panchmahals and other tribal-dominated districts in central Gujarat. He did not favour relaxing the prohibition policy by allowing the consumption of toddy, as it would dilute the policy. He recommended the government to encourage people to consume neera, a nutritious drink, and proposed the idea of selling it through "neera centres" across the state where toddy trees were abundant⁴².

The committee observed that the prohibition policy in Gujarat was a failure and needed sweeping changes for effective implementation. One of the main reasons for this failure, as pointed out by the committee, was rampant corruption in the police force. The committee suggested the creation of a special cell under the direct supervision of the Director General of Police (DGP) to take action against corrupt prohibition officials. It also recommended the appointment of district prohibition committees headed by the collector, and the removal of any loopholes in the prohibition Act for strict implementation of the policy⁴³.

However, the successive governments did not accept the recommendations of the committee, and the illegal brewing of mahua liquor continued to thrive, especially in rural and tribal areas of Gujarat.

c. K. P. Sivasubramaniam Committee Report

In 2009, the Tamil Nadu State Government constituted an eight-member committee, headed by Justice K. P. Sivasubramaniam, to look into issues concerning coconut and palm tree workers, including toddy tapping. As per news reports, the panel failed to arrive at a conclusion on toddy tapping, with two members in favour of allowing toddy tapping and six members against any such move for the time being.⁴⁴ In 2009, the Tamil Nadu State Government established an eight-member committee, led by Justice K. P. Sivasubramaniam, to examine various matters related to coconut and

⁴² [Indian Express](#)

⁴³ [The Indian Express](#)

⁴⁴ [The Hindu](#), July 2010

palm tree workers, specifically addressing toddy tapping. However, news reports indicate that the committee faced challenges in reaching a consensus on the issue of toddy tapping. Among the committee members, two were in favour of permitting toddy tapping, while the remaining six members opposed such a move, at least for the time being. The committee's objective was to thoroughly evaluate the concerns and implications associated with toddy tapping within the context of coconut and palm tree workers. Toddy tapping refers to the process of extracting sap from coconut or palm trees to produce a traditional alcoholic beverage known as toddy. This activity has significant socio-economic implications for the workers involved, as well as potential cultural and regulatory considerations. The divergent views within the committee reflect the complexity and multifaceted nature of the toddy tapping issue.

The two members in favour of allowing toddy tapping may have taken into account the livelihoods of the workers dependent on this activity, recognizing its cultural and historical significance, and possibly viewing it as a means of economic sustenance for certain communities. On the other hand, the six members opposing toddy tapping may have emphasised concerns related to health and social issues associated with alcohol consumption, potential exploitation of workers, or other factors influencing their decision. The committee's inability to arrive at a conclusive decision highlights the contentious nature of the toddy tapping issue and the need for further deliberation and analysis. It indicates the complexity involved in balancing the socio-economic aspects of toddy tapping with potential health, social, and regulatory implications.

Professional discourse and further research in this domain may be required to examine the diverse perspectives and potential impacts of toddy tapping comprehensively. This could involve engaging relevant stakeholders, conducting studies on the socio-economic dynamics and cultural significance of toddy tapping, assessing health and social consequences, and exploring alternative livelihood options for the workers involved. Through an evidence-based approach and inclusive dialogue, policymakers can navigate the complexities surrounding toddy tapping and make informed

decisions that consider the interests of all stakeholders while addressing potential challenges and promoting the well-being of coconut and palm tree workers in Tamil Nadu.

d. Thiruman Narayan Committee Report

The Government of India constituted the Prohibition Enquiry Committee, headed by Thiruman Narayan, in 1954 to study implementation of prohibition.⁴⁵ The Committee arrived at a set of recommendations, a selection of which follow below:

1. During the transition period, hotels catering to foreign visitors and tourists may allot a separate room to provide liquor. Such hotels must be notified under the State Government, which may grant temporary permits in such cases.
2. Advertisements and other public inducements relating to alcoholic consumption should be prohibited.
3. To implement the prohibition in a phased manner, the following steps should be taken:
 - a. The number of liquor shops in both rural and urban areas should be progressively reduced;
 - b. Liquor shops should be closed for an increasing number of days in a week;
 - c. The quantity of liquor provided to these shops should also be reduced;
 - d. the strength of liquor produced by distilleries in India should be progressively reduced;
 - e. Liquor shops located near specified industrial and developmental projects should be closed on a priority basis;
 - f. Removal of liquor shops to places away from living quarters in rural and urban areas, and also from main roads where drinking may be visible to the public.
 - g. Abstinence should be made a rule of conduct for all Government servants.
 - h. Hemp drugs, such as charas, ganja, bhang and others, should also be curtailed in a progressive manner.
 - i. Permits may be granted for the following:

⁴⁵ [Government of India](#)

- i. Foreign tourists and visitors and foreigners resident in the country may be permitted to have liquor privately but not in public view.
- ii. Liquor may be allowed for sacramental purposes at Christian, Jewish and Parsi places of worship.
- iii. Alcohol and opium may be permitted for medical or medicinal purposes.
- j. To prevent misuse of industrial alcohol, the Government may draft rules to proper disposal of such.
- k. With respect to enforcement, the Committee recommended the following:
 - i. Public consensus should be roused to combat the evil of drinking and drugs;
 - ii. Enforcement should be along two lines: i) educative and preventative, and ii) legal and administrative;
 - iii. An Administrator of Prohibition should be appointed in every state to coordinate with both wings of enforcement;
 - iv. States should constitute a Prohibition Board with representatives of the two wings of enforcement, along with representatives of public opinion;
 - v. The system may be further devolved to Prohibition Committees at a district or even village and mohalla level;
 - vi. Prohibition offences should be treated at par with other offences and the police should be made responsible for legal enforcement of prohibition.

e. **Justice Tek Chand Committee Report**

The Government of India constituted the Study Team on Prohibition, headed by Justice Tek Chand, in 1963.⁴⁶ During that time, the states of Gujarat, Madras, and Maharashtra had no availability of alcohol, while Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore, Orissa, and Punjab had limited availability. Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Delhi, on the other hand, had ample availability of alcohol. The research team was concerned to observe

⁴⁶ [Government of India](#)

an increasing trend of alcohol consumption in the states where it was readily available. As a result, the team recommended that the states with easy access to alcohol should enforce a complete prohibition within the next ten years. Additionally, the team proposed implementing various social, legal, and punitive measures to control the illegal distillation and sale of alcohol.

**CASE STUDIES & PREVIOUS NEWS ON
ALCOHOLISM RUINING SOCIAL
HARMONY/ DESTROYING FAMILIES**

IV. Case Studies & Previous News on Alcoholism Ruining Social Harmony/ Destroying Families

A. Spurious Liquor Strikes Twice: Reflecting on the May 2023 Tragedy⁴⁷

Dravidian Parties argue that TASMACH plays a crucial role in keeping illicit liquor, commonly known as hooch, under control. TASMACH, the state-run agency responsible for the distribution of liquor in the region, aims to regulate and streamline the sale of alcohol in the state. However, despite these efforts, the prevalence of Hooch remains a significant concern.

The tragic incident⁴⁸ of spurious liquor deaths in Tamil Nadu in May 2023 has shocked the entire nation. In the districts of Villupuram and Chengalpattu, 23 individuals lost their lives after consuming spurious liquor that was laced with Methanol, a highly dangerous industrial substance when ingested. The recent incidents of hooch-related deaths have raised serious concerns regarding the efficacy of TASMACH and the broader strategy employed to combat the production and distribution of illicit liquor. Despite the efforts made by TASMACH to regulate the legal sale of alcohol, the existence and prevalence of hooch indicate the presence of a parallel black market for liquor.

Various factors contribute to the persistence of hooch, despite regulatory measures implemented by TASMACH. One significant factor is the demand for inexpensive and easily accessible alcohol among certain segments of society. This demand creates an environment that fosters the production and sale of illicit liquor. Hooch, being considerably cheaper than legally sold alcohol, attracts consumers who may not have the means or willingness to purchase alcohol through legal channels. This economic incentive encourages the illegal production and trade of counterfeit alcohol, resulting in a dangerous and unregulated market.

⁴⁷ [HT](#)

⁴⁸ [The Quint](#)

A key component of the hooch problem lies in the use of methanol, a highly toxic substance commonly referred to as wood alcohol. Illicit brewers, driven by profit and showing little regard for consumer safety, sometimes incorporate methanol into their production processes to create cheap and counterfeit alcohol. Methanol ingestion can have severe health consequences, leading to fatalities and causing long-term health complications for those who survive. The tragic incidents that have occurred in the villages of Ekkiyarkuppam and Perunkaranai in Tamil Nadu serve as tragic reminders of the inherent risks associated with the consumption of illicit liquor. These incidents highlight the urgent need for stronger measures to combat the production and sale of illicit liquor, with a particular focus on eliminating the use of methanol in its production. Strengthening law enforcement efforts, enhancing surveillance and intelligence capabilities, and implementing stringent penalties for those involved in the illicit liquor trade are crucial steps in addressing this issue. Additionally, raising awareness among the public about the dangers of consuming illicit liquor, as well as promoting alternative sources of affordable legal alcohol, can contribute to reducing the demand for hooch.

The loss of lives and the suffering experienced by the affected families underscore the grave consequences of consuming toxic brews produced in the illicit liquor trade. The government, law enforcement agencies, and relevant stakeholders must work together to develop comprehensive strategies and effective interventions to curb the production, distribution, and consumption of illicit liquor, thereby safeguarding the well-being and safety of the population.

By addressing the root causes of the illicit liquor trade, implementing stricter regulations, and fostering a culture of responsible alcohol consumption, it is possible to protect the lives and well-being of individuals in Tamil Nadu and beyond. The recent spurious liquor deaths have undoubtedly shaken the nation, prompting a reevaluation of the existing strategies to tackle the issue.

The hooch tragedy has sent shockwaves through the community, prompting the emergence of two critical questions that demand immediate attention and careful deliberation:

- a. Why did spurious liquor deaths occur despite concerted efforts to regulate the distribution of alcohol through TASMAL?
- b. With a substantial number of 222 TASMAL shops operating in Villupuram, why do people still engage in the dangerous practice of brewing spurious liquor?

1. Background⁴⁹

In the coastal hamlet of Ekkayarpuram, a distressing incident unfolded as a significant number of individuals, exceeding twelve in count, consumed a dangerous concoction comprising methanol, chemicals, and water. Shockingly, this lethal mixture was being illegally peddled under the guise of arrack, packaged in sachets.



Image 1 : Deaths due to consumption of illicit liquor in Tamil Nadu

Source : [India Today](#), May 15, 2023

The impoverished fishing community residing in Ekkarpuram found themselves in a precarious situation due to the escalating prices set by the corrupted TASMAL, the authorised liquor distribution agency. The exorbitant costs made it increasingly unaffordable for them to obtain

⁴⁹ [India Today](#)

alcohol through legal channels. Confronted with limited options, they reluctantly turned to an alternative source in the hope of procuring better quality liquor that could fit within their constrained budgets. Unfortunately, the illicit liquor that originated in the coastal hamlet of Ekkarpuram managed to infiltrate the Chengalpattu district, resulting in a tragic continuation of the unfolding tragedy. The following day, the village of Chithamur witnessed the loss of nine more lives. These unsuspecting individuals fell victim to the consumption of the same perilous concoction - a deadly mixture comprising methanol, chemicals, and water. The revelation of the alleged involvement of a DMK functionary named Amaran in the production of this spurious liquor has sent shockwaves throughout the community. The spread of the illicit liquor from Ekkayarpuram to Chengalpattu, coupled with the implication of a prominent individual, raises serious concerns about the extent and reach of the illegal alcohol trade. The devastating consequences of consuming this deadly mixture have left the affected poor communities in a state of devastation, mourning the loss of their loved ones.

The dire circumstances pushed these community members to take the perilous risk of consuming the hazardous brew, unaware of the life-threatening consequences that awaited them. Their pursuit for a more accessible and affordable means of obtaining alcohol tragically led to the consumption of the fatal mixture, resulting in severe health complications and, in some cases, loss of lives. This tragic incident highlights the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address the underlying issues contributing to the proliferation of illicit liquor.

Efforts must focus on curbing corruption within the liquor distribution system, enhancing affordability and accessibility of legal alcohol, and implementing stringent enforcement measures to crack down on illegal alcohol production and trade. Additionally, community awareness campaigns should be conducted to educate vulnerable populations about the dangers of consuming illicit liquor and to promote safer alternatives.

Furthermore, thorough investigations and appropriate legal action should be taken to hold accountable those involved in the production and distribution of spurious liquor. Collaborative

efforts involving law enforcement agencies, government authorities, community leaders, and civil society organisations are crucial in preventing such tragedies and safeguarding the well-being of communities affected by the illicit alcohol trade.

2. **Suo Motu Intervention from NHRC**⁵⁰

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India has taken Suo Motu cognizance of distressing media reports regarding the alarming incidents of numerous fatalities suspected to be caused by the consumption of spurious liquor in Villupuram and Chengalpattu districts of Tamil Nadu since May 12, 2023. In addition to the lives lost, several others have been hospitalised due to this unfortunate situation. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has expressed deep concern over the media reports regarding the deaths caused by spurious liquor, highlighting a severe violation of the right to life of the affected individuals. The NHRC has further observed that it appears that the state government failed to effectively prohibit the sale and consumption of illicit and spurious liquor, leading to this tragic outcome.

In response to this grave situation, the NHRC has promptly issued notices to the Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police in Tamil Nadu. The purpose of these notices is to request a comprehensive and detailed report on the matter within a period of four weeks. The report is expected to provide crucial information, including the status of the First Information Report (FIR) filed by the police, the medical treatment provided to the victims, and any compensation granted to the bereaved families. Additionally, the NHRC seeks information on the measures taken against the officials responsible for this devastating tragedy. The Commission aims to ascertain the accountability of these officials and ensure that appropriate action is taken to prevent such incidents in the future. The issuance of these notices reflects the NHRC's commitment to safeguarding human rights and its dedication to holding authorities accountable for any lapses or negligence that result in the violation of these rights. It underscores the importance of conducting a thorough investigation, providing necessary medical care, extending compensation to the affected families,

⁵⁰ [NHRC](#)

and taking punitive measures against those responsible. The NHRC's intervention in this matter serves as a reminder of the crucial role it plays in protecting and promoting human rights, particularly in cases where the right to life is at stake. The comprehensive report requested from the state government will enable the NHRC to assess the situation comprehensively and formulate appropriate recommendations to prevent similar incidents in the future and uphold the fundamental right to life of all individuals.

3. Police Intervention

According to the Tamil Nadu Police, they confiscated a substantial quantity of illicit liquor, totaling 19,028 litres, along with 16,493 bottles of Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) from the thriving black market within the past two days. In addition, the police managed to seize a four-wheeler and seven two-wheelers that were utilised for the transportation of such illicit goods. Highlighting the severity of the matter, Director General of Police (DGP) Thiru Sylendra Babu stated that 79 individuals involved in the illegal sale of spurious liquor were promptly booked under the stringent provisions of the Goondas Act.

The question arises as to why the police did not take preemptive action to prevent such an incident from occurring in the first place. The recent actions taken by the Tamil Nadu Police indicate their active involvement in combating the illicit liquor trade. The confiscation of a significant quantity of illicit liquor and the apprehension of individuals involved in its illegal sale demonstrate their efforts to address the issue and enforce the law. However, it is crucial to address the question regarding why preemptive action was not taken to prevent such incidents from occurring in the first place. This question raises concerns about the effectiveness of intelligence gathering, proactive measures, and preventive strategies implemented by the police authorities. It also highlights the need for enhanced surveillance, intelligence sharing, and coordination among various law enforcement agencies to identify and disrupt the networks involved in the production, distribution, and sale of spurious liquor. Investigating the factors contributing to the lack of preemptive action requires a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced by law enforcement

agencies in detecting and preventing the illegal liquor trade. This analysis may involve examining factors such as limited resources, inadequate training, corruption, collusion with illicit networks, and the complexity of the illicit liquor market. To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen the capacity of the police force through specialised training programs focused on tackling the illicit liquor trade.

Additionally, improving intelligence gathering and sharing mechanisms, enhancing surveillance techniques, and establishing dedicated task forces or specialised units can significantly aid in preventing such incidents and dismantling the illicit liquor networks. Furthermore, fostering cooperation between the police, excise department, and other relevant agencies is crucial in addressing the issue comprehensively. Collaborative efforts, information exchange, and joint operations can help identify and target the key players involved in the production and distribution of spurious liquor. Overall, while the recent actions of the Tamil Nadu Police in confiscating illicit liquor and apprehending individuals involved in its sale demonstrate their commitment to enforcing the law, there is a need for a proactive and preventive approach. Strengthening intelligence networks, enhancing coordination among law enforcement agencies, and focusing on capacity building are essential to prevent such incidents and effectively combat the illicit liquor trade in the long run.

4. Tumbling TASMAC

Tamil Nadu holds the unfortunate distinction of being at the forefront of alcohol consumption in the country, accounting for approximately 13% of the nation's total alcohol usage. Despite its staggering prevalence, the TASMAC distribution system, which aims to regulate the alcohol market, has come under scrutiny for its apparent failure to effectively curb the circulation of illicit alcohol within the state. One of the critical factors contributing to this challenge is the existence of an extensive network of illicit liquor producers and distributors who operate secretly, navigating through legal loopholes and evading accountability. This underground trade in spurious liquor poses a significant obstacle in the battle against illicit alcohol. A recent report sheds light on another

concerning aspect: the link between low wages, substandard working conditions, and corruption within the alcohol stores. The combination of meagre pay and poor work environments creates an environment ripe for misconduct, fostering a culture of bribery and malpractice. Such unethical practices further perpetuate the circulation of illicit alcohol and undermine the efforts to maintain a regulated and safe alcohol market.

B. Tasmal Poisoning Cases

1. Cyanide Poisoning⁵¹

Kuppusamy (68), a fish vendor from Kizhavasal, and Vivek (38) from Pumanravathan Kovil Street, obtained alcoholic beverages from the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (TASMAC). Following the consumption of the liquor, Kuppusamy returned to his shop but soon collapsed. Witnesses observed foam emanating from his mouth. Kuppusamy was immediately rushed to a government hospital in Thanjavur, where medical professionals pronounced him deceased.



Image 2: Victims of the Cyanide Poisoning, Vivek (left) and Kuppuswamy (Right)

Source : [The Indian Express](#), May 22, 2023

⁵¹ [II](#)

The investigation into the tragic incident took a significant turn with the emergence of the viscera report, which conclusively confirmed the presence of cyanide in the consumed liquor. This revelation is deeply concerning and highlights the severity of the situation, as cyanide is a highly toxic substance known to pose an immediate threat to human life.

The presence of cyanide in the contaminated liquor raises alarming questions about the safety and integrity of the alcohol supply chain. It indicates a serious breach in the production, distribution, or storage process, as the introduction of such a lethal poison into the liquor indicates intentional tampering or gross negligence. The discovery of cyanide in the liquor not only establishes the cause of the tragic deaths but also underscores the potential danger posed to anyone who had consumed the contaminated product. Cyanide is a potent poison that can have severe and fatal effects on the human body, leading to acute health complications and even death. This revelation demands a thorough investigation into the source of the contaminated liquor and the individuals or entities responsible for its distribution. It necessitates an examination of the entire supply chain, including the production facilities, transportation methods, and storage locations involved in the distribution of alcohol.

Additionally, this incident underscores the urgent need for stringent quality control measures and regular inspections within the alcohol industry to prevent the adulteration or contamination of alcoholic beverages. Implementing robust protocols, including strict monitoring of production processes, comprehensive testing procedures, and regular audits, is crucial to ensure the safety and integrity of the alcohol supply chain. Furthermore, it is imperative that law enforcement agencies, regulatory bodies, and industry stakeholders collaborate closely to identify and apprehend those responsible for the introduction of cyanide into the liquor supply chain. Such actions should be accompanied by stringent legal consequences to deter individuals or groups from engaging in such dangerous activities. Overall, the confirmation of cyanide in the consumed liquor highlights the need for a comprehensive investigation into the safety and integrity of the alcohol supply chain. It

emphasises the importance of implementing robust quality control measures, strengthening regulatory oversight, and taking decisive action to ensure the protection of public health and safety.

2. Death Of A Duo⁵²

In the city of Tiruchirapalli, two individuals named Muniyandi and Sivakumar experienced a tragic outcome after consuming liquor purchased from a local Tasmac outlet. Unbeknownst to them, this seemingly ordinary choice would lead to devastating consequences. After consuming the liquor within the premises of the bar, they remained unaware of the hidden danger that awaited them. Following their consumption of the intoxicating liquor, Muniyandi and Sivakumar returned to their respective homes, oblivious to the impending tragedy. As the night progressed, Muniyandi's health rapidly deteriorated, manifesting in severe diarrhoea and ultimately resulting in a state of unconsciousness. Despite desperate efforts to save his life, Muniyandi tragically succumbed to his condition while being transported to the hospital.

Simultaneously, Sivakumar, having skipped dinner the previous night, failed to awaken the next morning. Despite endeavours to revive him, all attempts proved futile, leaving those around him grief-stricken and helpless. These incidents paint a distressing picture of the consequences that unfolded as a result of their consumption of the liquor. The sudden and tragic demise of Muniyandi, along with the inexplicable loss of Sivakumar, underscores the gravity of the situation and the devastating impact it has had on their families and the community at large. It is imperative that a thorough investigation be conducted to ascertain the specific circumstances surrounding their consumption of the liquor and the potential factors contributing to their tragic outcomes. This investigation should include an examination of the quality and safety of the liquor procured from the Tasmac outlet, as well as a comprehensive analysis of any possible contaminants or substances that may have led to their unfortunate demise.

Furthermore, this incident highlights the significance of ensuring the quality control and safety measures implemented within the liquor industry. It underscores the need for rigorous inspections,

⁵² [DT Next](#)

adherence to regulatory standards, and effective oversight to safeguard consumers from potential harm associated with the consumption of adulterated or unsafe liquor. The untimely deaths of Muniyandi and Sivakumar serve as a poignant reminder of the profound impact that such incidents can have on individuals, families, and communities. It is essential that authorities, including law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies, work diligently to uncover the truth behind these tragic events, hold any responsible parties accountable, and implement measures to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.



Image 3: Victims Muniyandi (Top) and Sivakumar (Bottom)

Source : [DT Next](#), 18th June, 2023

The recurring incidents of alcohol poisoning within TASMAL outlets reveal a distressing pattern that has raised serious concerns among the public. The failure to provide safe and regulated access to liquor, as originally intended, has shattered trust in TASMAL's operations. These incidents demand immediate action, including thorough investigations, improved quality control measures, and enhanced staff training. The tragic experiences of individuals like Muniyandi and Sivakumar

underscore the urgent need to prioritise the safety and well-being of consumers. TASMACH must undertake significant reforms to restore public confidence.

C. Families destroyed by Liquor

1. The High Price: A Student's Tragic Suicide Linked to Father's Alcoholism⁵³

In a distressing incident that highlights the devastating consequences of alcoholism, a 10th-grade student named Vishnu Priya took her own life in Chinnaraju Kuppam village, located in the Kutiyattam region of Vellore district, Tamil Nadu. Vishnu Priya was studying at a government-aided school in Nellurpettai, where she had achieved exceptional academic success, scoring an impressive 410 out of 500 marks in the public examinations.

The tragic event unfolded against the backdrop of her father, Prabhu, a labourer, battling a long-standing alcohol addiction. Prabhu's addiction had severe repercussions on the family's financial stability, as he consistently squandered his earnings on alcohol, leaving the family in a state of financial strain. The financial burdens, coupled with the strain caused by Prabhu's addiction, resulted in frequent arguments between Prabhu and his wife, further exacerbating the family's distressing circumstances. In an attempt to alleviate the family's financial burdens, Vishnu Priya took on part-time work after school. However, despite her best efforts, the income generated was insufficient to meet the growing financial demands and provide a sustainable solution to the challenges posed by her father's addiction.

On the day of the tragic incident, Vishnu Priya returned home from school, only to find her father in an inebriated state, engaged in a heated argument with her mother. Concerned for her mother's safety and driven by her sense of responsibility, Vishnu Priya bravely attempted to intervene, seeking to defuse the escalating confrontation. Tragically, Prabhu's intoxication heightened his aggression, leading to him physically assaulting Vishnu Priya's mother in a display of violence. Overwhelmed by

⁵³ [Student Commits Suicide](#)

the distressing turn of events and burdened by the helplessness of her circumstances, Vishnu Priya succumbed to profound despair.

Overwhelmed by her emotions, she fled from the house and tragically took her own life by hanging herself from a nearby tree, marking a heartbreaking end to her young life. This deeply tragic incident underscores the devastating impact of alcohol addiction, not only on individuals but also on their families and the wider community. The destructive consequences of Prabhu's addiction had far-reaching effects, inflicting emotional turmoil, financial strain, and, ultimately, leading to the loss of Vishnu Priya's life.

The incident serves as a sombre reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address the complex issue of alcoholism and its profound implications. Efforts must be directed towards increasing awareness about the detrimental effects of alcohol addiction, establishing accessible and effective treatment options for individuals struggling with addiction, and implementing support systems to assist families affected by alcohol-related challenges.

Furthermore, it underscores the importance of community engagement and the role of educational institutions in promoting holistic well-being and providing necessary support to students facing challenging circumstances. Collaborative efforts among government agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and social welfare organisations are vital in creating a comprehensive framework that addresses the root causes and consequences of alcohol addiction while offering preventive measures and support services.

This tragic incident serves as a poignant reminder of the pressing need for proactive interventions to combat alcohol addiction, protect vulnerable individuals, and foster a supportive environment that promotes mental health and overall well-being.

The heart-wrenching incident has sent shockwaves through the village, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced efforts by the government to address the pervasive issue of alcoholism. The suicide

note left behind by the deceased carries immense emotional weight, serving as a poignant testament to the profound impact of growing up with alcoholic parents.

Children in Tamil Nadu who are raised in households with alcoholic parents often endure a multitude of adverse effects that permeate various aspects of their lives. Financial struggles commonly plague these families, as resources are frequently diverted to sustain the addiction, leading to limited financial support for the children's basic needs, education, and overall well-being. The emotional neglect experienced by these children, arising from their parents' preoccupation with alcohol, leaves a significant void in their lives, depriving them of the nurturing and guidance necessary for healthy development.

The absence of parental love, attention, and support creates a profound sense of abandonment and insecurity in these children. They may grapple with diminished self-esteem and struggle to form secure attachments, which can hinder their emotional and social development. The lack of a stable and supportive family environment deprives them of the necessary emotional scaffolding to navigate the challenges of adolescence and young adulthood, increasing their vulnerability to psychological distress. Furthermore, children growing up with alcoholic parents face an elevated risk of experiencing physical abuse or witnessing domestic violence within their households. The chaotic and unpredictable nature of an alcoholic home environment can subject children to episodes of violence, exacerbating the emotional trauma they endure. These adverse experiences significantly impact their psychological well-being and can manifest in various behavioural issues, including aggression, delinquency, and susceptibility to substance abuse themselves as they seek to cope with their distressing circumstances.

The long-term consequences of growing up in such challenging conditions can extend into adulthood, with individuals from these backgrounds facing an increased likelihood of engaging in substance abuse later in life. The exposure to parental alcoholism creates a risk factor for developing their own addiction struggles, perpetuating the cycle of alcoholism across generations. Addressing the complex issues surrounding children growing up with alcoholic parents requires a multifaceted

approach. It necessitates comprehensive support systems that prioritise the well-being of these vulnerable children, including access to counselling and mental health services, educational support, and interventions aimed at breaking the cycle of addiction within families. Government initiatives should focus on raising awareness about the detrimental effects of alcoholism on children, implementing preventive measures, and establishing rehabilitation programs that target not only individuals struggling with addiction but also their families. Additionally, collaboration among governmental agencies, educational institutions, social welfare organisations, and healthcare providers is crucial in developing integrated systems of care that address the multidimensional needs of children from alcoholic households. By providing early intervention, support, and resources, it is possible to mitigate the adverse effects of alcoholism on children's lives and foster environments that promote resilience, well-being, and positive developmental outcomes. Ultimately, the tragic incident serves as a poignant reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address alcoholism, protect the welfare of children, and break the cycle of intergenerational addiction. It calls for a concerted effort to create a society where children are shielded from the devastating consequences of alcoholism, ensuring they have the opportunity to grow and thrive in nurturing and supportive environments.

2. Drunk Driving: A Family Shattered⁵⁴

In a distressing event, the TASMACH outlet located at Jambukandi along the bustling Anaikatti-Thadagam Road, in Coimbatore district, has been marred by numerous accidents, resulting in tragic consequences. The incident on a fateful Monday afternoon when a 48-year-old woman named R. Shobhana from Thadagam lost her life. She was riding a scooter that was struck by a motorcycle driven by an individual who was allegedly under the influence of alcohol.

Despite wearing a helmet, the impact of the collision was so severe that it caused Shobhana's helmet to be forcefully dislodged. Tragically, she succumbed to her injuries, leaving behind a devastated family. Shobhana's daughter, Shanthala, a 16-year-old student in the 11th grade at Vidya Vanam in

⁵⁴ [The Hindu](#)

Anaikatti, was also on the scooter as a pillion rider and suffered injuries in the incident. This heart-wrenching incident serves as a stark reminder of the dangers associated with reckless and intoxicated driving.⁵⁵



Image 4: Public staging a protest seeking closure of the Tasmac outlet at Jambukandi on Anaikatti.

Source : [The Hindu](#), June 24, 2019

3. Widows of Kumaran Nagar: TASMACH's Making⁵⁶

Sumathi's harrowing journey began when she got married in 2008 and settled in Kumaran Nagar, an illegal slum situated on the banks of the Korai River in Trichy. This impoverished community is primarily comprised of women who work as domestic helpers, struggling to earn meagre monthly incomes of around 2000 rupees. Unfortunately, Sumathi's life took a tragic turn due to her husband's destructive drinking habit, which transformed him into an abusive and violent individual. Day after day, she endured physical and emotional abuse at his hands as he relentlessly demanded money to fuel his addiction. Tragically, his excessive alcohol consumption ultimately led to his untimely demise.

⁵⁵ [Youtube](#)

⁵⁶ [The Wire](#)

The presence of TASMAL, the state-run liquor retail outlet, has had a devastating impact on Sumathi's life and the lives of countless others in similar circumstances. The easy availability of alcohol through TASMAL outlets has exacerbated her husband's addiction and fueled the cycle of violence and neglect within their family. The lure of readily accessible alcohol has perpetuated a destructive pattern, leaving families vulnerable to the detrimental effects of alcoholism.

Sumathi's personal experience reflects the profound consequences of alcoholism on individuals, families, and communities. She has not only lost her husband to the grips of addiction but also witnessed the detrimental effects of violence and neglect on her children. The toxic environment created by her husband's addiction has deprived her children of a safe and nurturing upbringing, leaving lasting emotional scars and hindering their development.

In her quest to break free from this cycle of destruction, Sumathi strongly advocates for the closure of TASMAL. She firmly believes that by removing the ready availability of alcohol, families like hers can have a chance at healing and rebuilding their lives. Closing TASMAL would serve as a critical step towards curbing the devastating impact of alcoholism, protecting vulnerable individuals from falling prey to addiction, and creating a safer and healthier environment for future generations.

Sumathi's story highlights the urgent need for comprehensive measures to address the root causes of alcoholism and its far-reaching consequences. It underscores the importance of implementing effective strategies to combat addiction, provide support services for affected individuals and families, and create alternative livelihood opportunities to alleviate economic hardships. Additionally, raising awareness about the destructive effects of alcoholism and promoting preventive measures within communities is essential to address the underlying social and cultural factors contributing to its prevalence.

Closing TASMAL alone may not be a panacea for the complex issue of alcoholism. However, it serves as a symbolic and tangible step towards addressing the systemic challenges faced by individuals like Sumathi. A comprehensive approach that combines alcohol regulation, addiction

treatment and rehabilitation, social support systems, and educational initiatives can help break the cycle of destruction, empower individuals to overcome addiction, and provide a pathway towards a healthier and more prosperous future.



Image 5 : Women who became widows because of alcohol

Source : [The Wire](#), March 16, 2023

In Kumaran Nagar, 21 women are living a heartbreaking reality. They have all lost their husbands to alcoholism, and they are now left to raise their children alone. These women are determined to make a change. They believe that the sale and consumption of liquor must be prohibited, so that no other family has to suffer the same loss that they have.

D. Liquor Ruining Social Harmony

1. Alcoholism rising among Migrants - Case of Tiruppur⁵⁷

Tiruppur, a major industrial hub in Tamil Nadu, is facing a growing problem of absenteeism due to alcoholism among migrant workers. This has led to significant losses in production. Factory owners say that the workers, who were previously teetotalers, have started drinking after mingling with locals. The problem of alcoholism is having a negative impact on the economy of Tiruppur. It is leading to job losses, decreased profits, and a decline in the quality of life for the workers and their families.

Reshma, hailing from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, shares the story of her husband, Ashok, who, at 30 years old, worked as a helper in a garment unit in Tiruppur for several years. Initially, Ashok did not have any drinking habits, but he gradually adopted them through influence from his friend, leading to significant problems in their lives. The situation escalated, resulting in daily fights and immense misery. Compounded by the challenges of caring for their differently abled elder son. Eventually, Ashok relocated to Chennai, while Reshma remained in their hometown. Recently, he returned and, with the assistance of NGOs, actively participated in awareness programs. With the support of local community elders, he successfully overcame alcoholism. However, it is worth noting that many migrants from North and Eastern India continue to struggle with drinking habits.

The industrial city of Tiruppur is plagued by a pervasive presence of alcohol, with a wide range of options available, both legally and illegally. This abundance of alcohol has fueled a distressing surge in alcoholism among migrant workers within the district, particularly those aged between 18 and 40. Tiruppur, a prominent industrial hub in Tamil Nadu, is grappling with a pressing issue of alcoholism among migrant workers, which is detrimentally impacting productivity and economic stability. Previously known for their sobriety, these workers have succumbed to the influence of the local community, leading to a rise in alcohol consumption and subsequent absenteeism. This

⁵⁷ [NIE](#)

phenomenon has resulted in substantial losses in production, causing adverse effects on the economy of Tiruppur, including job losses, reduced profits, and a diminished quality of life for the workers and their families.

2. New Audience for TASMAC in the Form of Teens

- a. **Easy access to alcohol:** Tamil Nadu stands out as a state with a significantly high prevalence of alcohol consumption, largely attributed to the widespread availability of alcohol facilitated by TASMAC outlets. These establishments, conveniently situated near schools and colleges, present an accessible avenue for Tamil Nadu teenagers to obtain alcohol easily. The underlying causes for this trend are multifaceted. The following are the factors that contribute to teen alcoholism in Tamil Nadu, The issue of easy accessibility of alcohol in the state of Tamil Nadu, particularly near educational institutions, is indeed a pressing concern. The presence of numerous alcohol outlets, including TASMAC stores, in close proximity to schools and colleges creates an environment that normalises alcohol consumption and facilitates its easy acquisition for teenagers.

This situation poses significant risks to the health and mental well-being of young individuals who are still in the process of forming their identities. One of the major concerns is that the proximity of alcohol outlets to educational institutions increases the exposure of impressionable young minds to alcohol. Adolescence is a critical period of development, and exposure to alcohol at such a vulnerable age can have detrimental effects on their physical and mental health. Easy access to alcohol can lead to experimentation and regular consumption among teenagers, potentially leading to addiction and other related problems. The widespread availability of alcohol near educational institutions not only normalises its consumption but also sends a message that alcohol is easily accessible and socially acceptable. This can contribute to the normalisation of alcohol use among teenagers, leading to an increase in underage drinking rates. The influence of peers and the desire to fit in can further fuel this behaviour, leading to a harmful cycle of alcohol misuse.

Another aspect that exacerbates the issue is the lack of strict regulations and effective enforcement measures. The current regulatory framework might be inadequate in addressing the problem of easy access to alcohol near educational institutions. There is a need for stronger regulations and enforcement to restrict the establishment of alcohol outlets in close proximity to schools and colleges. Stricter age verification measures and penalties for those who sell alcohol to minors should also be implemented to deter underage drinking. Furthermore, comprehensive educational programs and awareness campaigns need to be implemented to educate young individuals about the risks and consequences of alcohol consumption. Such initiatives should focus on promoting healthy lifestyle choices, building resilience, and providing alternative recreational activities for teenagers. Collaborative efforts between schools, parents, communities, and governmental organisations are crucial in addressing this issue effectively.

The easy accessibility of alcohol near educational institutions in Tamil Nadu presents a cause for alarm. It exposes young individuals to the temptation of alcohol and normalises its consumption, potentially leading to detrimental effects on their health and well-being. Strict regulations, effective enforcement measures, and comprehensive educational programs are needed to address this issue and protect the future generation from the harmful consequences of underage drinking.

- b. **Peer Pressure:** Peer pressure stands as a powerful and pervasive force, exerting a significant influence on the prevalence of underage alcohol consumption. Within the context of Tamil Nadu, peer pressure emerges as the foremost and primary catalyst driving young individuals to engage in alcohol drinking before they have reached the legal drinking age. During this developmental stage, individuals often seek validation and approval from their peers, placing a strong emphasis on fitting in and conforming to social norms. Unfortunately, in many social circles, the consumption of alcohol has become synonymous with notions of popularity, maturity, and social status.

The consequences of succumbing to peer pressure and engaging in underage alcohol drinking can be profound and far-reaching. Beyond the immediate risks to physical and mental health, such as impaired judgement, increased vulnerability to accidents, and potential addiction, there are also long-term implications. Early exposure to alcohol can significantly impact brain development, disrupt academic performance, hinder personal growth, and increase the likelihood of future substance abuse issues.

- c. **Status of adulthood:** You have raised an important cultural perspective regarding alcohol consumption in Tamil Nadu. In certain cultural contexts, including Tamil Nadu, alcohol is often associated with notions of maturity and the assumption of adult responsibilities. This cultural belief can exert significant influence on young individuals, leading them to feel compelled to engage in alcohol consumption in order to conform to societal expectations and gain acceptance within their communities.

In Tamil Nadu, the consumption of alcohol is sometimes viewed as a symbol of maturity and a rite of passage into adulthood. It is seen as a way for young individuals to demonstrate that they are ready to take on adult responsibilities and participate in social gatherings. This cultural belief creates a strong social pressure on young people to engage in alcohol consumption, as abstaining from alcohol may be perceived as a lack of maturity or an inability to conform to societal norms.

The desire to conform and gain acceptance within one's community is a powerful motivator, particularly during adolescence when individuals are in the process of shaping their identities. Young people often seek validation from their peers and the wider community, and conforming to cultural expectations, such as drinking alcohol, becomes a way to establish their identity and gain social recognition.

This prevailing pressure to engage in alcohol consumption as a means of signalling adulthood can have significant consequences. It can lead to increased rates of underage drinking and the normalisation of alcohol use among young individuals. Moreover, the association between alcohol

and maturity can perpetuate harmful drinking patterns and contribute to the development of alcohol-related problems later in life. It is crucial to address this cultural perspective and challenge the assumption that alcohol consumption is synonymous with maturity. Education and awareness campaigns can play a vital role in promoting alternative perspectives and providing young individuals with accurate information about the risks and consequences of alcohol consumption. By promoting a broader understanding of maturity that encompasses responsible decision-making and healthy lifestyle choices, it is possible to reduce the pressure on young individuals to engage in alcohol consumption solely for the purpose of conforming to cultural expectations. Furthermore, creating supportive environments where young people can feel accepted and valued irrespective of their alcohol consumption choices is essential. This involves fostering open and non-judgmental discussions about alcohol, providing positive role models who choose not to drink, and promoting alternative activities and outlets for socialisation that do not revolve around alcohol. In summary, the cultural perspective in Tamil Nadu regarding alcohol consumption as a symbol of maturity and acceptance creates a significant pressure on young individuals to engage in drinking alcohol. Addressing this issue requires challenging cultural norms, promoting alternative perspectives on maturity, and creating supportive environments that value individual choices and well-being. By doing so, we can reduce the social pressure on young individuals and foster healthier attitudes towards alcohol consumption.

Moreover, several other factors contribute to the increasing reliance on alcohol among Tamil Nadu teens. Academic pressure, familial issues, and financial hardships compound the challenges they face, pushing them towards alcohol as a means of coping with the stressors in their lives. Tragically, many adolescents fail to recognize the long-term dangers associated with alcohol consumption, unwittingly succumbing to its allure as a temporary escape from their problems.

The persistent failure of successive governments in Tamil Nadu to effectively address the issue of underage drinking has resulted in a complex and deeply-rooted problem that continues to plague the state. The inability to curb underage drinking has far-reaching consequences. The lack of

stringent measures and enforcement to prevent young individuals from accessing and consuming alcohol has led to a surge in alcohol-related problems among the youth population. The absence of effective prevention strategies has allowed for the perpetuation of these health risks, leaving countless young lives vulnerable to the detrimental effects of alcohol abuse. The failure to curb underage drinking has had a profound impact on the educational landscape of Tamil Nadu. Schools and colleges, which should ideally be safe and conducive environments for learning, have become breeding grounds for underage alcohol consumption.

According to a 2019 survey by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre, 9% of school children in Tamil Nadu are addicted to alcohol.⁵⁸

In 2020, the Tamil Nadu government reported that there were over 100,000 cases of underage drinking in the state.⁵⁹

3. TASMAC near Temples and Schools: Unfortunate Consequences

Rule (8) of the Tamil Nadu Liquor Retail Vending (Shops and Bars) Rules states that, **no shop shall be established within a distance of 50 metres of places of worship or educational institutions in municipal corporations and 100 metres in municipalities and in other areas.**

a. Does the Tamil Nadu Government adhere to the rules?

In a startling admission before the Madras High Court in 2016⁶⁰, the acknowledgment by TASMAC, the state-controlled liquor retailer in Tamil Nadu, that a significant number of their outlets were located in direct violation of prescribed distance restrictions from places of worship or educational institutions is indeed a grave matter. The disclosure of 900 outlets operating in contravention of established guidelines highlights a distressing disregard for the

⁵⁸ [TOI](#)

⁵⁹ [NIE](#)

⁶⁰ [TOI](#)

sanctity of religious and educational spaces and raises serious concerns about regulatory oversight and ethical practices within the state-run liquor distribution system.

The prescribed distance restrictions from places of worship and educational institutions are in place to protect the integrity and sanctity of these spaces. These regulations are designed to prevent the easy accessibility of alcohol in close proximity to locations where vulnerable populations, such as students or worshipers, may be present. By flouting these guidelines, TASMAC has demonstrated a lack of respect for the principles behind these regulations and a disregard for the potential risks posed to individuals, particularly young people, in these areas. The magnitude of the violation, with 900 outlets being affected, highlights systemic failures within the regulatory framework and enforcement mechanisms. It raises questions about the effectiveness of monitoring and oversight processes that should have identified and rectified such violations earlier. This revelation points to a need for a comprehensive review of the regulatory system governing the establishment and operation of liquor outlets, as well as the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance. Additionally, the disclosure raises concerns about the ethical practices within the state-run liquor distribution system. It suggests a potential lack of transparency, accountability, and adherence to established guidelines. The violation of distance restrictions may indicate a prioritisation of commercial interests over the well-being and safety of communities and individuals.

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach. Firstly, there is a need for a thorough investigation into the factors contributing to the violation of distance restrictions and the failure of regulatory oversight. This investigation should identify any lapses or corruption within the system and hold those responsible accountable. Secondly, it is essential to strengthen the regulatory framework governing the establishment and operation of liquor outlets. This may involve revisiting and updating existing guidelines, implementing stricter enforcement measures, and ensuring regular monitoring and inspections to prevent future violations.

Furthermore, transparency and accountability should be prioritised within the state-run liquor distribution system. Clear guidelines and procedures should be established to ensure ethical practices and the protection of vulnerable populations. Efforts should be made to involve community stakeholders, religious organisations, and educational institutions in the decision-making processes related to the establishment and relocation of liquor outlets. Ultimately, rectifying the grave violation of regulations by TASMAC requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort from regulatory authorities, government agencies, community organisations, and the public. By addressing the systemic failures, enhancing regulatory oversight, and promoting ethical practices, steps can be taken towards ensuring the sanctity of religious and educational spaces while upholding the well-being and safety of the people of Tamil Nadu.

In the year 2021⁶¹ V. Senthil Balaji, the Former Minister of Excise in Tamil Nadu, issued explicit instructions to government officials, emphasising the imperative to relocate liquor shops that had been situated in close proximity to temples and schools. This directive revealed a recognition of the potential adverse impact such coexistence could have on the sacredness of religious spaces and the nurturing environment of educational institutions.

E. Liquor used for Political gains

The demand for prohibition in Tamil Nadu has indeed had a recurring history, often resurfacing during election periods. The movement, led by women and social activists, gains prominence, particularly when political motives may be at play. While the concerns and intentions of those advocating for prohibition may be genuine, the correlation with political cycles raises valid questions about the underlying motivations and the authenticity of the movement. The timing of the prohibition movement during election periods suggests a calculated strategic approach, where political mileage and public sentiment may influence the prominence of the cause. This pattern raises concerns about whether the pursuit of prohibition genuinely addresses the well-being and

⁶¹ [TOI](#)

welfare of the people or if it serves as a means to garner support and gain political advantage. To evaluate the authenticity and long-term commitment of the movement, it is crucial to assess whether its objectives go beyond opportunism and align with the broader goal of addressing alcohol-related issues. Prohibition should be seen as a comprehensive strategy that includes not only the closure of TASMAC outlets but also effective measures to tackle alcohol abuse, promote awareness, provide rehabilitation services, and support alternative livelihoods for those affected by the closure. Regarding the closure of TASMAC outlets, the Former Excise Minister, Thiru Senthil Balaji, disclosed a significant development stating that 96 TASMAC establishments had already been shut down as part of a comprehensive plan. He further emphasised that approximately 500 additional shops are earmarked for closure in the near future. These closures indicate an initial step towards enforcing a localised implementation of prohibition. However, it is important to address the unresolved question regarding the actual sales volume being recorded. Closing TASMAC outlets alone does not necessarily eliminate the consumption of alcohol, as alternative sources may emerge or illegal activities may increase. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of the closures on alcohol consumption, public health, and societal well-being are crucial to understanding the effectiveness of prohibition measures. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that the closure of TASMAC outlets is accompanied by comprehensive strategies to address the socio-economic consequences and provide support for affected individuals, such as employees who may lose their livelihoods. In summary, the demand for prohibition in Tamil Nadu, particularly during election periods, raises valid questions about the motivations and authenticity of the movement. While the closure of TASMAC outlets is a significant step, it should be part of a comprehensive approach that addresses the broader issues related to alcohol abuse, promotes awareness, and provides support services. Careful evaluation and monitoring of the impact of prohibition measures are necessary to ensure that the pursuit of prohibition goes beyond opportunism and genuinely addresses the well-being and welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu.

THE CORRUPTION AND POLITICS IN TASMAL

V. The Corruption And Politics In TASMAL

“Purchases in TASMAL are not made on the basis of demand but on the basis of corruption.”⁶²

This statement made by Thiruchelvam, a Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU) leader reflects the perception that corruption is deeply ingrained in the functioning of TASMAL, the state-controlled liquor retailer in Tamil Nadu. The prevailing view is that corruption within TASMAL is not only tolerated but also regarded as a normal part of doing business. This perception suggests a lack of effective oversight and a failure on the part of successive political parties in addressing the issue. Various stakeholders, including politicians, liquor manufacturers, bar owners, and customers, contribute to the continuation of corruption within TASMAL. Politicians turn a blind eye and benefit from the easy money generated through corrupt practices. Liquor manufacturers may seek to expand their market share through illicit means, while bar owners are said to be involved in kickbacks for obtaining licences or other unlawful activities. Customers, who continue to purchase from TASMAL despite these issues, are seen as inadvertently perpetuating the corruption. The deeply entrenched corruption within TASMAL is described as a systemic problem that goes beyond isolated incidents. The statement highlights various forms of corruption, including deals between liquor manufacturers and TASMAL, violations of maximum retail price (MRP), and arbitrary hikes in liquor prices. These issues, although reported in the news, are perceived as being ignored or neglected by the government.⁶³

The lack of effective action against corruption within TASMAL raises concerns about the integrity of the system and the commitment of the government to address the issue. The perception that corruption is business as usual suggests a culture of impunity, where those involved in corrupt practices face little to no consequences for their actions. Such a culture undermines public trust in the government and erodes the credibility of the state-controlled liquor retail system. To address these concerns, it is essential for the government to take decisive action in combating corruption within TASMAL. This includes strengthening oversight mechanisms, implementing transparent processes,

⁶² [ET, January 2015](#)

⁶³ [TOI, October 2017](#)

and holding those involved in corruption accountable. Additionally, promoting a culture of transparency, ethical practices, and public engagement can help restore public trust and ensure that TASMAL operates in a manner that prioritises the well-being and welfare of the people.⁶⁴

A. Law Of Corruption, Not Demand Drives Business At TASMAL

The information provided raises serious concerns about the quality of liquor sold by TASMAL and the lack of effective quality control measures in place. Consumer complaints regarding substandard and adulterated liquor highlight a significant failure on the part of TASMAL to fulfil its objective of providing quality liquor at affordable prices.

The admission from sources within TASMAL in 2017, acknowledging the lack of instances where liquor sold at shops was collected for random testing since the State Government took over as the sole retailer in 2003, indicates a glaring negligence on the part of TASMAL administration and the food safety department. This negligence is particularly troubling considering that Tamil Nadu distilleries are registered with the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and are subject to the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006. The government should have ensured that stringent quality control measures were in place to uphold the safety and quality of the liquor sold through TASMAL outlets. The involvement of the Madras High Court, where a petitioner alleged the presence of "toxic substances" in the liquor sold by TASMAL, further highlights the seriousness of the issue. The court's directive to TASMAL to conduct quality checks indicates that there is a recognized need for independent verification and oversight of the liquor sold by TASMAL. The statement you provided suggests that the ownership of many distilleries in Tamil Nadu by ministers may explain the lack of quality control and negligence in ensuring standards. This raises concerns about potential conflicts of interest and favouritism, which could compromise the impartiality and integrity of quality control processes. The failure of the government, as the authority responsible for ensuring standards, to address the issue of poor quality liquor sold by TASMAL is indeed a matter of great concern. Immediate action must be taken to rectify this situation, including the

⁶⁴ [ET, January 2015](#)

implementation of regular and random quality checks, strict enforcement of safety standards, and measures to eliminate conflicts of interest in the ownership of distilleries. Transparency, accountability, and a strong commitment to consumer safety are crucial in restoring public trust in the quality of liquor sold through TASMAL outlets. The government must demonstrate its dedication to upholding standards by taking swift and decisive action to rectify the failures within TASMAL's administration and the food safety department. The information provided underscores the failure of TASMAL to maintain quality standards in the liquor it sells and the lack of effective quality control measures. The government must address these concerns, enforce safety regulations, and ensure independent oversight to restore confidence in the quality of liquor sold through TASMAL outlets.

1. Distilleries Owned By Ministers

During former Chief Minister MGR's rule, there were only 5 liquor manufacturing companies in Tamil Nadu.⁶⁵ Currently, TASMAL procures liquor from 11 distilleries manufacturing Indian Made Foreign Manufacture.⁶⁶ At least 5 of these were approved by the DMK Government in 2010 alone to meet the 'growing demand' - the second time it did in that very tenure.⁶⁷ Not surprisingly, most of the companies for which the Letter of Intent were issued, permitting manufacturing of beer/liquor for consumption belonged to persons close to the ruling party and other influential politicians.

The information provided highlights a significant increase in the number of liquor manufacturing companies supplying TASMAL in Tamil Nadu, comparing the period during former Chief Minister MGR's rule to the present. It is stated that during MGR's rule, there were only five liquor manufacturing companies, while TASMAL currently procures liquor from 11 distilleries manufacturing Indian Made Foreign Manufacture. The statement suggests that during the DMK Government's tenure in 2010, at least five additional distilleries were

⁶⁵ [ET, January 2015](#)

⁶⁶ [TASMAL Website](#)

⁶⁷ [TOI, October 2010](#)

approved to meet the perceived growing demand for liquor. It is further implied that the approval of these distilleries coincided with individuals associated with the ruling party and influential politicians being involved in the ownership or management of these companies.

The association between the ruling party and the liquor manufacturing industry, as suggested in the statement, raises concerns about potential favouritism and conflicts of interest. It implies that the issuance of permits and the increase in the number of distilleries may be influenced by political connections rather than being solely based on objective assessments of demand and adherence to regulations.

The issuance of Letter of Intents (LOIs) permitting the manufacturing of beer/liquor for consumption is also mentioned, indicating that these LOIs were granted to individuals and companies close to the ruling party and influential politicians. This further reinforces the perception of favouritism and raises questions about the transparency and fairness of the permit issuance process. To address these concerns and ensure transparency and accountability, it is crucial for the government to review and strengthen the approval process for liquor manufacturing companies and the issuance of permits. The evaluation should be based on objective criteria such as demand, quality standards, and public interest, without any undue influence from political affiliations. By implementing transparent procedures and avoiding favouritism, the government can uphold the integrity of the liquor manufacturing industry and ensure a level playing field for all participants.

This will help build public trust and confidence in the regulatory processes governing the industry. In summary, the information provided suggests a connection between the ruling party and the increase in the number of liquor manufacturing companies in TamilNadu. The involvement of influential individuals in the ownership or management of these companies raises concerns about potential favouritism. To address these concerns, the government should establish transparent processes for approving liquor manufacturing companies and issuing permits, ensuring that decisions are based on objective criteria and public interest.

2. The Curious Case Of SNJ Distilleries

SNJ Distilleries, a prominent player in the liquor industry, indeed warrants special attention due to its intriguing history and significant market presence. The information provided sheds light on the company's origins, expansion into various sectors, and its influence in the Tamil Nadu market.

The Income Tax Department's raids on the headquarters of SNJ Distilleries, as well as other related offices, in 2019 marked a significant development in the company's history. The allegations of holding ₹1,000 crore in unaccounted income raised serious concerns about the company's financial practices and potential involvement in illegal activities. The deployment of 100 officials for simultaneous raids indicates the magnitude and seriousness of the investigation. The primary objective of such raids is to uncover any evidence of tax evasion, undisclosed income, and financial irregularities. During the operation, the Income Tax Department seized ₹4 crore in unaccounted cash, which further strengthened the suspicion of financial impropriety.

One of the notable findings from the search and seizure operations was the registration of 912 shell companies by a key figure associated with SNJ Distilleries. Shell companies are often used for illicit purposes, such as money laundering and tax evasion. The large number of shell companies raises questions about the legitimacy and transparency of SNJ Distilleries' financial operations. Furthermore, the discovery of overseas transactions running into crores and the alleged involvement of a 'VVIP' in Tamil Nadu added another layer of complexity to the investigation.

The discovery of unaccounted cash, overseas transactions, and the reference to a 'VVIP' adds intrigue to the case, leading to speculation and suspicions about the involvement of influential political figures.

Ultimately, a thorough and unbiased investigation is necessary to uncover the truth and hold accountable those responsible for any financial improprieties. The outcome of such

investigations will not only impact the reputation of SNJ Distilleries but also reflect on the broader issues of transparency, accountability, and the rule of law within the business and political landscape of Tamil Nadu.

3. Beer Fixing In Tamil Nadu

Despite raids and evidence of black money, SNJ continues to hold sway over the beer that is pushed to the market. Although there are 46 brands of beer in Tamil Nadu, only 4-5 brands are available for consumers - SNJ 10000 and British Empire made by SNJ Breweries are among the few options that consumers can choose from.⁶⁸

How certain liquor manufacturing companies exercise such influence on the alcoholic beverage market in Tamil Nadu is a question best answered by the corrupt antics of TASMACH.

The continued influence of SNJ Distilleries and its control over the beer market in Tamil Nadu, despite the raids and evidence of black money, highlights the deep-rooted issues within the state's alcoholic beverage industry. Despite there being 46 brands of beer available, it is alarming to note that only a limited number, such as SNJ 10000 and British Empire produced by SNJ Breweries, are made accessible to consumers. This raises concerns about the lack of variety and choice available to consumers, suggesting a potential monopolistic control exerted by certain liquor manufacturing companies in collusion with TASMACH.

The control and influence exercised by specific liquor manufacturing companies over the alcoholic beverage market in Tamil Nadu can be attributed to the corrupt practices and irregularities within TASMACH. TASMACH, being the state-controlled liquor retailer, plays a pivotal role in the distribution and sale of alcohol in the region. The systemic failures, corruption, and lack of stringent regulations within TASMACH create an environment conducive to the manipulation and dominance of certain players in the market. One of the key factors enabling the influence of liquor manufacturing companies is the nexus between

⁶⁸ [TOI, May 2023](#)

politicians, influential individuals, and the industry. The allocation of licences and permits, including the approval of Letter of Intents, has been marred by favouritism, cronyism, and political patronage. This leads to the establishment and expansion of distilleries owned by individuals with close ties to the ruling party or influential politicians. The concentration of power and influence in the hands of a few select players gives them a significant advantage in shaping the market dynamics and monopolising the availability of certain brands. Furthermore, the inadequate oversight and regulatory control by TASMACH and the government contribute to the perpetuation of such monopolistic practices. The lack of effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms allows liquor manufacturing companies to operate with impunity, ignoring quality control standards and engaging in illicit activities. The limited testing and random checks on the quality of liquor sold by TASMACH outlets, as mentioned earlier, further highlight the disregard for consumer safety and well-being. The prevalence of black money and unaccounted income within the industry, as revealed through the Income Tax Department's raids, showcases the deeper systemic issues that enable the control and influence of certain liquor manufacturing companies. The accumulation of unaccounted wealth allows these companies to exert financial leverage and maintain their dominance in the market. It also raises concerns about the ethical practices and transparency of their operations.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach. It is crucial to establish robust regulatory frameworks and stringent enforcement mechanisms to ensure fair competition, prevent monopolistic practices, and promote consumer choice. Transparency in the allocation of licences and permits should be prioritised, eliminating favouritism and ensuring a level playing field for all stakeholders. Moreover, there is a need for increased accountability and scrutiny of TASMACH and its operations. Strengthening internal controls, implementing regular audits, and promoting transparency in the decision-making process are essential steps towards curbing corruption and ensuring ethical practices within the organisation. Public awareness and citizen participation also play a significant role in addressing the issue. It is important for

consumers to be informed about their rights, demand greater variety and quality, and support initiatives that promote fair and responsible business practices within the alcoholic beverage industry. Ultimately, breaking the influence of certain liquor manufacturing companies over the alcoholic beverage market in Tamil Nadu requires a collective effort involving regulatory authorities, government agencies, consumers, and civil society organisations. By addressing the corrupt antics of TASMAL and promoting a more transparent and accountable ecosystem, it is possible to create a fair and competitive market that prioritises consumer welfare and choice.

4. Bribes For Pushing Selected Brands

The disparity between the choices available to consumers in neighbouring states and those in Tamil Nadu when it comes to the quality of liquor is indeed a concerning issue. While consumers in other states may have access to a wide range of established and popular brands, consumers in Tamil Nadu often find themselves limited to lesser-known or barely known brands. This lack of variety and quality can be attributed to the corrupt practices within TASMAL, where the law of economics takes a back seat and the influence of corruption shapes the brand and quantity of liquor that reaches the retail stores.

In a functioning market economy, the law of economics dictates that consumer demand and preferences play a significant role in shaping the supply of goods and services. However, in the context of the alcoholic beverage industry in Tamil Nadu, corruption within TASMAL distorts this natural market mechanism. Instead of responding to consumer demand for high-quality and diverse liquor options, the choices available are heavily influenced by the corrupt practices and vested interests of those involved in the distribution and sale of alcohol.

Corruption within TASMAL allows certain liquor manufacturing companies to manipulate the market in their favour. This may involve promoting their own brands while suppressing or limiting the presence of competing brands. By leveraging their connections and influence, these companies can secure preferential treatment and ensure that their products dominate the shelves

of retail stores. The impact of such corruption is felt directly by the consumers who are left with limited options and compromised quality. Consumers in Tamil Nadu are denied the opportunity to enjoy the same variety and quality of liquor as their counterparts in neighbouring states. This not only affects their overall experience but also hampers their ability to make informed choices based on personal preferences and tastes. To address this issue, it is imperative to tackle the corruption within TASMAC and establish a transparent and accountable system of liquor distribution. This requires rigorous monitoring and enforcement measures to prevent undue influence and favouritism. Additionally, promoting fair competition and ensuring a level playing field for all brands can help foster a market environment that responds to consumer demand and offers a wide range of quality options. Moreover, creating awareness among consumers about their rights and encouraging them to demand better choices can also drive positive change. When consumers voice their preferences and expectations, it puts pressure on the authorities and stakeholders to address the issue of limited choice and compromised quality. Ultimately, eradicating corruption within TASMAC and revitalising the alcoholic beverage market in Tamil Nadu requires a concerted effort from regulatory bodies, government agencies, and the active participation of consumers. By prioritising transparency, accountability, and fair competition, it is possible to restore consumer confidence and ensure that consumers in Tamil Nadu have access to the quality and variety of liquor they deserve.

a. How Orders Should Be Placed At TASMAC

In the normal procedure followed by retail outlets, inventory management plays a crucial role in ensuring that the right brands and quantities of liquor are available to meet consumer demand. Typically, retail outlets take stock of their inventory on a regular basis, usually weekly, to assess the sales and determine which brands are fast-moving and in high demand.

Based on the analysis of consumer demand, the retail outlets then place orders with the depots, which serve as intermediaries between the retail outlets and the liquor manufacturers. These orders specify the brands and quantities of liquor required to

replenish the stock and meet the anticipated demand. Upon receiving the orders from the retail outlets, the depots compile the requirements by brand and quantity and forward them to the Purchasing Committee at TASMACH. The Purchasing Committee, composed of officials responsible for procurement decisions, evaluates the orders and decides on the quantities to be purchased from the liquor manufacturers. The Purchasing Committee is responsible for interacting with the concerned liquor manufacturers and placing the orders accordingly. This involves communicating the demand for specific brands and negotiating the terms and conditions of the purchase, including pricing and delivery schedules. Once the orders are placed, the liquor manufacturers proceed with the production and supply of the requested quantities to the depots. The depots then distribute the liquor to the respective retail outlets, ensuring that the inventory is replenished in a timely manner. The purpose of this procedure is to align the supply of liquor with the demand from consumers. By regularly assessing inventory levels and placing orders based on consumer preferences, the retail outlets aim to maintain a sufficient stock of the desired brands to meet customer requirements. However, it is important to note that in the presence of corruption and unethical practices within TASMACH, this normal procedure may be compromised. If influential individuals or companies manipulate the procurement process through bribes or other illicit means, it can distort the distribution of liquor and undermine the principles of fair competition and consumer choice. To ensure the integrity of the normal procedure and prevent corruption, it is crucial to establish robust monitoring mechanisms and enforce strict ethical standards within TASMACH. This can involve regular audits, transparency in the procurement process, and severe penalties for those engaged in corrupt practices. By promoting transparency and accountability, it is possible to uphold the normal procedure and maintain a fair and efficient system for meeting consumer demand for liquor.

b. How Orders Are Placed At TASMAL

The admission by TASMAL officials regarding their involvement in deals with distillers sheds light on the corrupt practices that have tainted the liquor distribution system in Tamil Nadu. In this illicit arrangement, distillers make payments to TASMAL in exchange for preferential treatment and the promotion of their specific brands in the market. In the normal procedure, depots are expected to fulfil orders based on consumer demand, ensuring that popular and fast-moving brands are stocked in the retail outlets. However, when corruption comes into play, the procedure takes a darker turn. Instead of considering consumer demand, the depots prioritise the brands of liquor from companies that have paid bribes to TASMAL officials. As a result, liquor from lesser-known or slow-moving brands is pushed into the market, disregarding the preferences and choices of consumers. The quantity and selection of liquor delivered to the retailers are pre-determined and agreed upon in the corrupt deal between the distillers and TASMAL.

This practice not only undermines the principles of fair competition but also limits consumer choice. It deprives consumers of the opportunity to explore a wide range of brands and makes them susceptible to purchasing liquor that may not align with their preferences or meet their expectations in terms of quality. The corruption within TASMAL not only distorts the normal procedure of liquor distribution but also has a detrimental impact on the overall integrity of the system. It erodes public trust in the fairness and transparency of the process and undermines the efforts to ensure a level playing field for all liquor manufacturers. To address this issue, it is imperative to combat corruption within TASMAL and implement measures that promote transparency and accountability. This can include strict enforcement of anti-corruption laws, regular audits, and investigations into suspicious activities.

Additionally, promoting a culture of ethical conduct and integrity within TASMAL is crucial to prevent such corrupt practices from occurring in the first place. Furthermore,

establishing a robust regulatory framework that includes oversight mechanisms and severe penalties for those involved in corrupt activities can act as a deterrent and promote a fair and competitive environment in the liquor distribution system. By combating corruption and ensuring a transparent and accountable process, the normal procedure of liquor distribution can be restored, allowing for a more diverse and consumer-driven market that meets the preferences and demands of consumers in Tamil Nadu.

5. Killing The Competition⁶⁹

In TASMAC's pursuit of promoting specific brands in exchange for bribes, the corrupt practices extend beyond pushing liquor from lesser-known brands to actively sabotaging competition and obstructing popular brands from gaining an advantage in the market. Depot officials, in collusion with their staff, engage in various notorious techniques to ensure that the favoured brands of bribe-paying companies are prioritised, while popular brands face deliberate delays and obstacles.

One such technique employed by depot officials is the intentional delay in providing notice for orders. They grant advance notice to the companies that have paid bribes, allowing them to keep their stock ready for immediate dispatch once the order is approved. In contrast, popular brands are given significantly less time, sometimes no more than a weekend's notice, to prepare their stock. This puts the bribe-paying companies at an unfair advantage, as their products are readily available, while popular brands struggle to arrange and deliver their stock within the limited timeframe.

Moreover, depot officials go even further by instructing their staff to delay the unloading of stock. This deliberate obstruction is intended to ensure that popular brands face additional hurdles and lose any advantage they may have had over their loyal customers. By intentionally prolonging the unloading process, the depot officials create a situation where liquor from the

⁶⁹ [ET, January 2015](#)

unpopular brands, already prepared for dispatch, reaches the market and retailers before the preferred brands can catch up. As a result, consumers are left with limited choices and are more likely to consume the liquor that has been pushed onto the shelves due to the unavailability of their preferred brands.

These manipulative tactics employed by TASMAL and its depot officials not only undermine fair competition but also adversely affect consumer choice and satisfaction. By intentionally delaying notice for orders and obstructing the timely delivery of popular brands, TASMAL seeks to manipulate the market in favour of bribe-paying companies, disregarding the preferences and demands of consumers.

To rectify this situation, it is essential to address the systemic corruption within TASMAL and ensure strict enforcement of anti-corruption measures. Additionally, measures such as implementing transparent and efficient order placement processes, reducing the influence of depot officials, and establishing a fair and level playing field for all brands can help promote healthy competition and provide consumers with a diverse range of choices. Furthermore, strengthening oversight mechanisms, conducting regular audits, and holding those involved in corrupt practices accountable are crucial steps towards creating a transparent and ethical liquor distribution system. By upholding integrity, fairness, and consumer welfare, Tamil Nadu can foster an environment where competition thrives, and consumers have access to a wide array of quality liquor options.

a. Creating Bottlenecks For New Bar Applicants

In addition to manipulating the liquor market through brand promotion and favouritism, TASMAL also employs tactics to discourage competition and protect the interests of existing bar owners who have close connections to political parties. The process of opening new bars in Tamil Nadu is riddled with hurdles deliberately created to discourage potential competitors and maintain the monopoly of influential bar owners. Bribes have become the

norm for anyone seeking to navigate through this corrupt system, highlighting the pervasive nature of corruption within TASMACH.⁷⁰

To open a new bar in Tamil Nadu, applicants are required to pay exorbitant amounts ranging from ₹2 lakhs to ₹8 lakhs in bribes to politicians. This practice is an open secret, known to all those involved in the process. Although the application process was automated in an attempt to enhance transparency, fairness, and efficiency by eliminating human interference, the nexus between existing bar owners and district-level employees of TASMACH ensures that these goals are not achieved. Despite the provision for online applications on the State Government's tender website for each district, bar owners have complained that TASMACH officials still demand applications to be submitted in a specific envelope, which is only available at the district manager's office upon personal request by the applicant.⁷¹

These tactics employed by TASMACH officials create unnecessary barriers and additional costs for individuals seeking to establish new bars. The insistence on using a prescribed envelope, only accessible through personal visits to the district manager's office, adds an extra layer of bureaucracy and provides an opportunity for officials to extort bribes from applicants. Such practices not only deter potential competitors but also perpetuate a culture of corruption within the system.

To address this issue, it is crucial to establish a transparent and streamlined application process for opening new bars in Tamil Nadu. The State Government should ensure that online applications are fully implemented and eliminate the need for specific envelopes or any other unnecessary requirements that create opportunities for corruption. Strict penalties should be imposed on officials found engaging in bribery and favouritism, and a robust monitoring system should be established to prevent such malpractices.

⁷⁰ [ET, January 2015](#)

⁷¹ [TOI, August 2022](#)

Promoting fair competition in the bar industry will not only encourage entrepreneurship but also offer consumers a wider choice of establishments. By eliminating corruption and creating a level playing field, the Tamil Nadu government can foster a more transparent and vibrant bar sector that benefits both businesses and consumers. Oftentimes, applications have been made available for new candidates after office hours - after having invited bids from existing bar owners over call.⁷² Further, tokens are provided to participating bidders - something that is not handed out to every successful applicant but only to those who can 'afford' to participate.⁷³ Applicants have also been harassed over the need for a No-Objection Certification from the landlord of the bar premises even though participation in the bidding process is not conditional upon its production.⁷⁴ To discourage new candidates from applying for licences more bottlenecks have been created by laying down unreasonable conditions like the payment of unpaid dues by previous bar contractors.⁷⁵

B. Political Patronage, Not Economics Determines Market Position

The influence of TASMAC, as a powerful entity, on the liquor market in Tamil Nadu is evident through the fluctuations in the fortunes of various liquor manufacturing companies during changes in government. This influence extends beyond the realm of bribes and extends to political clout, which can significantly impact a company's market share and success.⁷⁶

A prime example of this influence is seen in the case of United Spirits Ltd (USL). During the tenure of the DMK government, USL held a significant 20% market share. However, with the change in government, USL's market share dropped to 12.38%. In contrast, rival company Midas Golden experienced a substantial increase in market share, rising from 7% during the DMK regime to

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ [ET, January 2015](#)

16.62% under the new government. These significant shifts in market share indicate the extent to which TASMAL's power and influence can shape the fate of liquor manufacturing companies.⁷⁷

Another striking example is the case of Elite Distilleries Pvt. Ltd. Within a short span of less than five years, the company's revenues skyrocketed to ₹712 crore. However, after the AIADMK came to power, the company experienced a drastic decline in revenues, plunging by 71% to ₹416 crore in 2012-13. This sudden decline suggests a correlation between political changes and the fate of liquor companies, emphasising the close intertwining of money and politics in the industry.⁷⁸

The nexus between money and politics in the liquor industry creates an environment conducive to corruption. The manipulation of market shares and the rise and fall of companies based on political affiliations point to the existence of corrupt practices and favouritism. This system not only hampers fair competition but also undermines the integrity of the industry as a whole.

To address this issue, it is essential to establish transparent and accountable mechanisms within the liquor industry. Stricter regulations, independent oversight, and enforcement of anti-corruption measures are necessary to break the cycle of corruption and political influence. Additionally, promoting fair competition and ensuring a level playing field for all liquor manufacturing companies will contribute to a healthier and more transparent industry.

Ultimately, eradicating corruption from the liquor industry in Tamil Nadu requires a collective effort from the government, regulatory bodies, and society as a whole. By dismantling the deep-rooted nexus between money, politics, and the liquor market, the industry can move towards greater transparency, fairness, and integrity.

C. Consequences Of The Corruption And Politics In TASMAL

In the case of corruption at TASMAL, the dynamics create a win-lose situation where the losers are the consumers and retail store supervisors, while the winners are the politicians and political parties.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ [India Today, May 2017](#)

Corruption within an organisation like TASMACH can have severe repercussions for all parties involved.

For consumers, corruption translates into various negative consequences. One significant impact is the higher prices they have to pay for goods. When corruption permeates the system, illicit practices like bribery and kickbacks often result in inflated costs and inefficiencies. As a result, consumers bear the brunt of these increased prices, affecting their purchasing power and economic well-being.

Additionally, corruption can lead to compromised product quality and safety standards. When officials prioritise personal gain over public welfare, they may turn a blind eye to substandard or counterfeit products being sold. Consumers unwittingly become victims of these fraudulent practices, risking their health and safety.

Retail store supervisors also suffer in this win-lose scenario. Corruption often involves favouritism, where certain stores receive preferential treatment due to their connections with corrupt officials. This unfair advantage puts honest and law-abiding retailers at a significant disadvantage, hindering their growth and profitability. The competition becomes skewed, stifling fair market practices and hindering the potential success of legitimate businesses.

On the other hand, politicians and political parties benefit from the corrupt practices at TASMACH. By engaging in corruption, they secure illicit funds that can be used for personal enrichment or for financing their campaigns and political activities. This enables them to maintain and strengthen their positions of power, giving them an unfair advantage in the political landscape.

The win-lose nature of this corruption scenario perpetuates a vicious cycle. Politicians and political parties continue to benefit from corrupt practices, while consumers and retail store supervisors bear the negative consequences. The fear of impending doom for those involved in corruption becomes less relevant when the system itself is tainted, and individuals feel protected by their connections and positions of power.

Ultimately, the prevalence of corruption at TASMACH undermines trust in public institutions, weakens the economy, and hampers the overall well-being of society. Efforts to address and eradicate corruption are essential to restore fairness, promote transparency, and ensure the welfare of all stakeholders involved.

1. Losers

a. Consumers

i. Forced To Drink More

The liquor industry in some regions faces a concerning issue that affects consumers' preferences and their overall well-being. Apart from being compelled to consume liquor from lesser-known brands that may not align with their personal preferences, consumers often find themselves consuming alcoholic beverages of substandard quality. However, the root cause of this problem lies not in addiction, but in corruption within the industry.

One of the shady practices involves the collusion between influential liquor manufacturing companies and state-controlled liquor retail outlets, such as TASMACH (Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation). In these questionable deals, the higher-priced products, such as 750 ml bottles, are given a prominent position on the shelves of TASMACH shops. This strategic placement ensures that these products overshadow the availability of smaller options like quarter bottles.

As a result, consumers who would have otherwise been content with purchasing smaller bottles are left with no choice but to opt for the larger, higher-priced ones dominating the shelves. This coerces consumers into spending more money and consuming larger quantities of alcohol than they originally intended. This situation poses significant risks to both their physical and financial health.

From a physical health standpoint, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol can lead to various health problems, including liver damage, cardiovascular issues, and an increased risk of addiction. Moreover, consuming substandard quality liquor can further exacerbate health risks due to potentially harmful ingredients or poor production processes.

Financially, consumers are burdened with increased expenses as they are compelled to purchase larger bottles, which are often more expensive than smaller alternatives. This not only puts a strain on their budgets but also limits their ability to control their alcohol consumption based on their preferences and financial capabilities.

In summary, the collusion between influential liquor manufacturers and state-controlled retail outlets creates an unfavourable environment for consumers. They are forced to consume liquor from lesser-known brands, down substandard quality beverages, and purchase larger bottles against their intended preferences. This combination of limited choices, higher expenses, and increased alcohol consumption poses significant risks to consumers' physical and financial well-being. Addressing these issues requires tackling corruption within the liquor industry and implementing measures that prioritise consumer choice, quality, and health.

ii. Victims Of Price Hike

In March 2022, TASMAC, the state-controlled liquor retail outlet in Tamil Nadu, implemented a price hike on liquor ranging from ₹10 to ₹60. This decision was met with dissatisfaction from consumers. The price increase came after a gap of two years and was justified by TASMAC due to the ₹90 crore loss incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the timing of the price hike, just before the budget session for 2022-23, raised suspicions among many, who saw it as a move to generate additional

revenue rather than a necessary measure to recover losses.⁷⁹ The scepticism surrounding the price hike is not unfounded, particularly when considering the significant role of revenue from state excise duty collected on liquor.

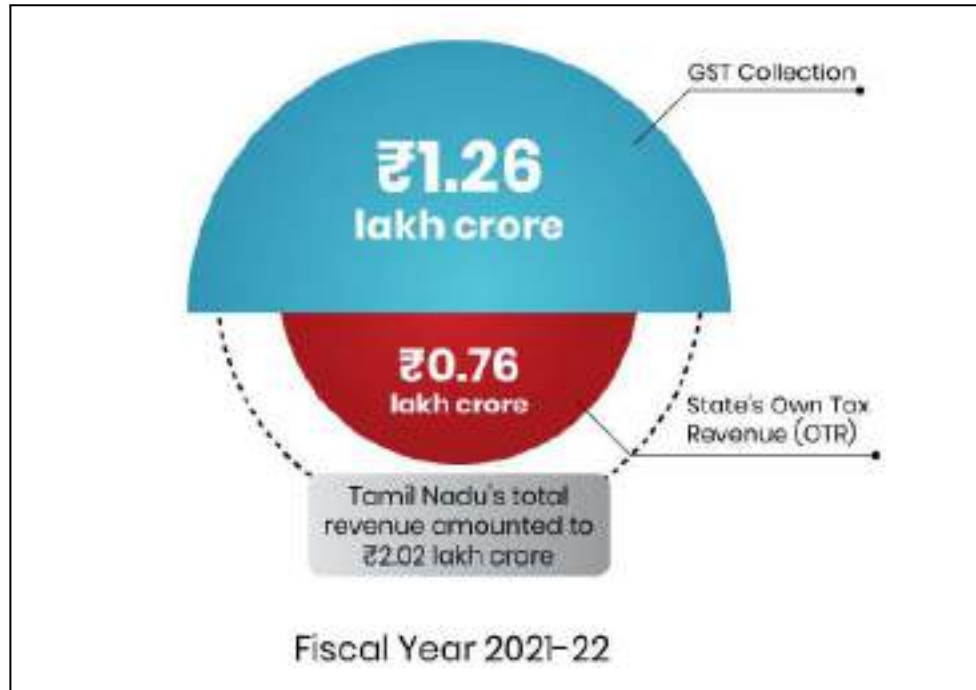


Chart 4 : Tamil Nadu's tax revenue for the fiscal year 2021-22

The state excise duty collected on TASMAC liquor alone accounted for ₹62,568 crore, nearly 50% of the state's OTR. Therefore, increasing liquor prices presents an easily accessible avenue to boost the state's revenue, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic-induced losses.⁸⁰

However, the lack of transparency in TASMAC's accounting practices raises concerns regarding the extent of the reported losses and the actual profits that flow back to the state exchequer. Activists have filed two separate Right to Information (RTI) queries in the past, and the responses received have yielded contradictory information.

⁷⁹ [The Federal, March 2022](#)

⁸⁰ Ibid.

In one instance, TASMAL claimed a loss of ₹244.82 crore between FY 2011 and FY 2020, while another response indicated losses amounting to ₹300 crore between FY 2010 and FY 2021. The discrepancy in these figures raises doubts about the accuracy and reliability of TASMAL's reported losses.

By frequently implementing price hikes for liquor, TASMAL appears to have undermined the very purpose for which it was established – to ensure the availability of affordable liquor to consumers. Instead, these price increases further burden consumers, who already face challenges in accessing their preferred choices of liquor due to limited options and quality concerns. The continuous escalation of liquor prices not only affects consumers' financial well-being but also casts doubt on TASMAL's commitment to its original mandate.

The reliance on liquor revenue as a substantial contributor to the state's Own Tax Revenue (OTR) highlights the ease with which the government can bolster its finances by increasing liquor prices. However, this approach neglects the potential consequences for consumers, who are forced to bear the brunt of these escalating costs.⁸¹

Transparency issues surrounding TASMAL's financial accounts further complicate the matter. Conflicting responses to RTI queries regarding the extent of losses suffered by TASMAL have cast doubt on the accuracy of their reported figures. This lack of clarity raises concerns about the actual profitability of TASMAL and the extent to which its earnings benefit the state exchequer.

Furthermore, the price hikes for liquor not only impact consumers' financial health but also have broader implications. By curtailing the supply of affordable options and pushing consumers towards higher-priced products with greater alcohol content, TASMAL's practices contribute to an environment where individuals may consume

⁸¹ [TNIE, June 2023](#)

more alcohol than they initially intended. This can lead to adverse health effects and increased alcohol-related risks for the consumers.

Overall, a comprehensive approach that considers both revenue generation and consumer welfare is necessary. Striking a balance between these two aspects will help restore public trust in TASMAL and ensure that the consumers' physical, financial, and overall well-being is safeguarded.

iii. Consumers cursed to sub-standard alcohol

TASMAL, the state-run alcohol retailer, has faced accusations of selling substandard alcohol to its customers, raising concerns about the quality and safety of the products being offered. There are several ways in which TASMAL customers are exposed to sub-standard alcohol, leading to potential risks and health hazards. One common issue is the use of adulterated alcohol, where substances like water, methanol, or other chemicals are mixed with the alcohol. Adulteration not only reduces the potency of the alcohol but also poses significant dangers to those consuming it, as the added substances can be toxic or harmful. Another concern is the sale of expired alcohol. TASMAL has been accused of selling alcohol that has surpassed its sell-by date. Consuming expired alcohol can be risky, as it may have lost its effectiveness or become contaminated over time, potentially leading to adverse health effects. Improper storage of alcohol is another problem associated with TASMAL. Inadequate storage conditions can cause the alcohol to spoil or become contaminated, making it unsafe for consumption. Moreover, TASMAL has faced allegations of inadequate inspections of its alcohol inventory. Insufficient scrutiny of the products before they are sold can allow sub-standard alcohol to enter the market and be distributed to customers, further compromising the safety and satisfaction of consumers.

iv. Victims Of MRP Violations

In addition to the burden of increased liquor prices, consumers also face the issue of additional charges imposed by TASMAL outlets. Salespersons at these TASMAL shops often charge amounts exceeding the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) printed on the bottles, further straining consumers' finances. This practice has been reported on multiple occasions, highlighting a systemic problem within the operations of TASMAL.⁸²

As recently as 8 June 2023, a TASMAL salesman in Tenkasi was fined ₹5,900 by the TASMAL administration and transferred to the TASMAL depot for charging an extra ₹5 per bottle. This incident exemplifies how consumers are issued bills reflecting prices higher than the MRP displayed on the bottle. For instance, even though the MRP on a bottle may indicate ₹260, consumers end up paying ₹265 per bottle due to the additional charge imposed by the salesman.⁸³

However, such instances are not isolated cases. In January 2021, the Madras High Court reprimanded the Tamil Nadu State Government for the sale of overpriced drinks and directed them to issue a circular to all district-level TASMAL officers. The purpose of this circular was to ensure that TASMAL outlets strictly adhere to the MRP and refrain from selling drinks above the designated prices. Additionally, the court ordered TASMAL outlets to display a price list in accordance with Rule 14 of the Tamil Nadu Liquor Retail Vending (In Shops and Bars) Rules, 2003. The court also emphasised the importance of displaying a list of employees who have faced disciplinary action for violations related to MRP.

These measures aim to bring transparency and accountability to the pricing practices of TASMAL outlets. By displaying the correct prices and taking action against employees

⁸² [TNIE, June 2023](#)

⁸³ [TOI, January 2021](#)

involved in MRP violations, consumers can make informed purchasing decisions and be assured that they are not being charged unjustifiably.

Overall, the issue of additional charges beyond the MRP at TASMACH outlets adds to the financial burden faced by consumers. The Madras High Court's intervention and subsequent directives highlight the need for stricter enforcement of pricing regulations and improved transparency in TASMACH's operations. By addressing these concerns, consumers can be better protected from arbitrary charges, ensuring fair pricing practices and enhancing their overall experience with TASMACH outlets.

b. Retail Store Supervisors

The liquor industry has been plagued by cartelization, resulting in significant challenges for retail stores. TASMACH, as a key player in this industry, actively promotes the sale of liquor supplied by selected manufacturers. This approach has had detrimental effects on the business of retail stores, as they are no longer guided by consumer choice but rather by the dictates of TASMACH depots.

Orders placed by store owners are often ignored in favour of orders from vested interests, including corrupt politicians and favoured manufacturers. This practice undermines fair competition and distorts the market, as the interests of a few influential entities take precedence over the preferences and demands of consumers.

Furthermore, TASMACH's aggressive promotion of lesser-known brands, coupled with the imposition of premium brands that cater exclusively to the upper-middle-class customer base, exacerbates the challenges faced by retail store supervisors. These forced premium brands often have a limited customer base, resulting in large unsold inventories that tie up significant capital and lead to substantial losses for the retail stores.

The consequences of these practices are twofold. Firstly, retailers are burdened with excessive inventory that fails to generate adequate returns on investment. The unsold stock ties up their resources and hampers their ability to sustain profitable operations. Secondly, the lack of consumer demand for these forced brands further exacerbates the financial strain on retail store supervisors, as they struggle to attract customers and meet their preferences effectively.

The overall impact is a distorted market, with limited choices for consumers and a compromised retail sector that is forced to bear the brunt of TASMAC's directives. The dominance of vested interests and the lack of consideration for consumer demand undermine the principles of fair competition and consumer rights within the liquor industry.

To address these issues, it is imperative to promote transparency, accountability, and fair business practices within the liquor industry. Measures should be implemented to mitigate cartelization, prevent the undue influence of corrupt politicians, and ensure that retail store supervisors have the autonomy to cater to the preferences of their customers. Doing so would also restore the balance of power and allow consumer choice to guide the market, the industry can foster healthy competition and better serve the needs and preferences of consumers.

The detrimental impact of cartelization in the liquor industry goes beyond the challenges faced by retail store supervisors. It also undermines the principles of fair competition, stifles innovation, and limits consumer choice. The active push by TASMAC to promote liquor supplied by selected manufacturers not only hampers the growth of smaller and lesser-known brands but also restricts the variety of options available to consumers.

By favouring specific manufacturers and brands, TASMAC creates an uneven playing field where the interests of a few influential entities take precedence over market dynamics and consumer preferences. This not only hampers the growth and survival of smaller players in

the industry but also limits the choices available to consumers. The absence of a diverse range of options curtails competition and innovation, as manufacturers are discouraged from introducing new and unique products.

Moreover, the forced imposition of premium brands on retail store supervisors exacerbates the problem. These premium brands often cater exclusively to the upper middle class, leaving retailers with large amounts of unsold inventory. The mismatch between the target audience and the consumer base leads to financial losses and reduced returns on investment for retailers, further undermining their business viability.

This centralised control exerted by TASMAC depots not only restricts consumer choice but also compromises the freedom of retail store supervisors. They are compelled to comply with TASMAC's directives, which prioritise the interests of certain manufacturers and corrupt politicians over their own business strategies and the preferences of their customers. Such a situation erodes the independence and autonomy of retail store supervisors, who are left with limited control over their inventory and the ability to cater to the demands of their local market.

To address these issues, it is crucial to foster an environment of fair competition and consumer-centric policies in the liquor industry. This can be achieved through measures such as promoting transparency in the selection and promotion of liquor brands, ensuring a level playing field for all manufacturers, and empowering retail store supervisors to make independent decisions based on consumer demand. Additionally, regulatory bodies should actively monitor and intervene to prevent cartelization and protect the interests of consumers and small businesses.

By breaking the grip of cartelization, diversifying options, and empowering retailers, the liquor industry can regain its integrity, provide greater consumer satisfaction, and foster a healthier business ecosystem. Ultimately, the focus should be on promoting a fair and

competitive market that serves the interests of both consumers and retailers, while facilitating the growth and sustainability of all players in the industry.

2. Gainers

a. Individual Politicians

The presence of an unholy and corrupt nexus between politicians and liquor manufacturers/bar owners has undoubtedly led to personal gains for individual politicians involved in this collusion. This illicit relationship allows politicians to benefit from the profits generated by the liquor industry, leveraging their positions and connections for personal financial gain. One way in which politicians benefit is through direct involvement in the ownership or management of liquor manufacturing companies or bars. By holding undisclosed stakes or positions of influence, they ensure a significant share in the profits made by these establishments. This enables them to amass wealth through illicit means, exploiting their positions of power for personal enrichment. Another avenue for politicians to gain from this corrupt nexus is through bribery and kickbacks. Liquor manufacturers and bar owners seeking favours or leniency from politicians may offer illicit payments or kickbacks in exchange for political protection, favourable policies, or preferential treatment. This allows politicians to accumulate undisclosed funds and assets, further fueling their personal wealth at the expense of ethical and transparent governance. The influence of politicians in the liquor industry extends beyond financial gains. They may use their political power to manipulate regulations, licensing processes, and enforcement activities to favour specific manufacturers or bar owners with whom they have close connections. This grants them an unfair advantage in the market, leading to a concentration of power and limited opportunities for others.

Additionally, the unholy nexus between politicians and liquor industry players creates an environment conducive to corruption, as regulatory oversight and accountability

mechanisms are compromised. This lack of transparency and integrity not only undermines the functioning of the industry but also erodes public trust in the political system.

It is crucial to recognize and address the issue of political involvement and corruption within the liquor industry. Stricter enforcement of laws, robust anti-corruption measures, and increased transparency in political financing can help curb this illicit nexus. Additionally, empowering regulatory bodies to operate independently and impartially, free from political interference, is vital in ensuring fair competition, ethical business practices, and the overall well-being of society. By dismantling this corrupt nexus, holding politicians accountable for their actions, and promoting transparent and ethical governance, we can work towards a more equitable and just society where the interests of the public take precedence over personal gains of a few individuals.

b. Political Parties

Political parties involved in corruption within the liquor industry stand to gain not only financially but also politically from such illicit deals. The increase in revenue from state excise duty resulting from these corrupt practices provides the parties with additional funds to finance their various initiatives, including the distribution of freebies, which are often promised before elections. This strategic use of funds has the potential to significantly boost the political prospects of these parties within the state.

By engaging in corrupt deals with bar owners or liquor manufacturers, political parties can secure a substantial portion of the profits generated by the industry. These illicit funds are then channelled towards various political activities, such as election campaigns, party infrastructure, and grassroots mobilisation. This financial advantage allows parties to enhance their visibility, reach a larger audience, and exert greater influence over the political landscape.

The availability of increased funds enables political parties to fulfil their promises of providing freebies and welfare schemes to the electorate. These freebies, ranging from essential goods and services to financial assistance, are often announced with the intention of garnering popular support and securing votes. By using the revenue generated from corruption within the liquor industry, parties can implement these populist measures, which resonate with the aspirations and demands of the electorate.

The distribution of freebies not only appeals to voters but also helps create a perception of political patronage and goodwill towards the ruling party. The beneficiaries of these freebies become loyal supporters, which can translate into increased political support and a higher likelihood of electoral success. This symbiotic relationship between corruption, financial gains, and political benefits creates a cycle that perpetuates the existence of such corrupt practices within the liquor industry.

Moreover, the ability to finance a comprehensive list of freebies and welfare schemes enhances the political standing of parties in the state. It allows them to project themselves as champions of the people, caring for the welfare and needs of the population. This perception can translate into a positive public image, increased popularity, and ultimately, electoral victories.

However, it is important to note that these political gains come at the expense of ethical governance, transparency, and the overall well-being of society. Corruption within the liquor industry undermines the principles of fairness, undermines the rule of law, and erodes public trust in the political system. It perpetuates a cycle of illegitimate practices, compromises the integrity of political parties, and hinders genuine progress and development.

Efforts should be directed towards combating corruption, strengthening anti-corruption measures, promoting transparency in political financing, and creating a level playing field for all parties. By addressing these underlying issues and promoting ethical governance, political

parties can focus on genuine policy-making, responsive governance, and serving the best interests of the people, rather than relying on corrupt practices for short-term political gains.

C. Liquor Manufacturers

Even though the tides turn every five years for the liquor manufacturers who run their business solely on political patronage or bribes as seen from the fluctuations in market position coinciding with the change in government, they are assured of brisk business for at least 5 years. The liquor manufacturers who rely on political patronage or bribes for their business operations often experience fluctuations in their market position coinciding with changes in government. However, despite these shifts, they can be assured of brisk business for at least five years due to several factors. Firstly, the liquor industry is heavily regulated, and the granting of licences, permits, and approvals is subject to the influence of the ruling government. Manufacturers who have established close ties with the political establishment enjoy preferential treatment in obtaining these necessary permissions. This gives them a significant advantage over competitors, allowing them to maintain a stronghold in the market. Secondly, the relationships built on political patronage or bribes are often long-standing and deeply entrenched. Liquor manufacturers invest considerable time, effort, and resources in nurturing these connections with politicians across party lines. As a result, when a change in government occurs, they can leverage their existing relationships and influence to secure the support and favour of the incoming administration. This ensures that their business operations continue smoothly, even under a new political regime.

Furthermore, the liquor industry is characterised by high entry barriers, including stringent regulations, licensing requirements, and distribution networks. Manufacturers who have successfully navigated these hurdles and established themselves in the market enjoy a significant advantage over new entrants. This advantage, combined with their political connections, provides them with a stronghold that is not easily disrupted by changes in government. Moreover, the liquor industry is relatively insulated from economic

fluctuations. Regardless of the economic conditions, there is a consistent demand for alcoholic beverages, making it a stable and profitable sector. This inherent demand, coupled with the influence and protection provided by political connections, ensures a steady stream of customers and revenue for liquor manufacturers, regardless of changes in the political landscape. However, it is important to note that relying solely on political patronage or bribes for business sustainability is unethical and undermines fair competition in the industry. Such practices perpetuate corruption, hinder genuine market competition, and limit opportunities for new players or those without political connections. For the better functioning of TASMAL, a multi-pronged strategy is required to revamp the organisation.



Infographic 4: Ways to increase transparency in TASMAL

EMPLOYEE ISSUES AT TASMAL

VI. Employee Issues At TASMAL

“We are treated like modern-day bonded labourers.”

The plight of TASMAL employees is indeed disconcerting, as they face numerous challenges and are deprived of the benefits and protections typically granted to government employees. Despite their significant contribution to the state's tax revenue, they are subjected to low income, poor working conditions, and a lack of labour law coverage. As of March 31, 2023, TASMAL employed over 24,000 workers, with the majority being salesmen. These employees play a crucial role in the operations of TASMAL outlets, contributing to the substantial revenue generated through liquor sales in Tamil Nadu, which accounts for nearly 20% of the state's tax revenue.

However, despite their crucial role, TASMAL employees do not enjoy the benefits and protections that are typically extended to government employees. They are employed on a contractual or consolidated pay basis, which often results in low income and financial insecurity. This disparity in remuneration is particularly concerning given the significant revenue generated by the liquor industry and the state's reliance on it for tax income.⁸⁴

Moreover, TASMAL employees remain excluded from the purview of labour laws that are designed to safeguard the rights and welfare of workers. This exclusion leaves them in a vulnerable position, lacking legal protections against exploitation, unfair treatment, and unsafe working conditions. The absence of labour law coverage further exacerbates the challenges faced by TASMAL employees and perpetuates their precarious situation.

In response to their dire circumstances, TASMAL employees have resorted to frequent protests and demonstrations, seeking better wages, improved working conditions, and recognition of their rights as workers. Despite their vociferous protests and pleas, the Tamil Nadu Government has largely ignored their demands and failed to address their concerns adequately.

⁸⁴ [NewsClick, January 2022](#)

The TASMAL Workers Union has strongly criticised the state government, accusing it of treating the employees as modern-day bonded labourers. This suggests that the government has not taken sufficient measures to address the issues faced by TASMAL employees, leaving them in a state of exploitation and vulnerability.

The disregard for the welfare of TASMAL employees raises serious questions about the government's responsibility towards its workforce and its commitment to social and economic justice. It is essential for the Tamil Nadu Government to recognize the legitimate grievances of TASMAL employees, engage in meaningful dialogue, and take concrete steps to improve their working conditions, provide fair compensation, and extend labour law protections.

By addressing these issues and treating TASMAL employees with dignity and respect, the government can ensure a more equitable and just work environment, promote social welfare, and uphold the rights of workers.

A. Labour Issues

“For the government, TASMAL workers are like ducks that lay golden eggs. They want the egg, not the duck.”

1. Contractual Nature Of Employment

The employment status of TASMAL employees, who are hired on a contractual basis, significantly impacts their benefits and job security compared to liquor shop employees in neighbouring states like Kerala. The temporary nature of their posts prevents them from enjoying the benefits typically afforded to permanent employees of the State Government. As a result, one of the primary demands of various workers' unions is the regularisation of their positions to establish job permanency.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ [The Hindu, July 2022](#)

Regularisation would automatically entitle TASMACH employees to essential associated benefits such as Housing Rent Allowance (HRA), Dearness Allowance (DA), and other perks. These benefits are crucial for ensuring their financial stability and improving their overall quality of life. The promise of regularisation was made to the employees at the time of their appointment by the District Collectors who directly recruited them through employment exchanges. Many workers continue to hold on to the hope of receiving a "government salary" based on this promise.⁸⁶

Unfortunately, this false promise attracted numerous well-educated and overqualified graduates, including those with postgraduate and doctoral degrees, to TASMACH employment. Those who chose to leave and seek appointment for other vacant government posts faced disappointment as well. Even when the State Government allocated jobs to them in the Public Distribution System (PDS) and ration shops, their past experience was overlooked. They were forced to start afresh with a compulsory probationary period and a low starting salary. This disregard for their experience and qualifications only adds to their frustration and disillusionment.⁸⁷

While the demand for regularisation has received support from Dravidian parties on various occasions, neither party has taken concrete steps towards fulfilling this demand when in power. This highlights the lack of genuine commitment to addressing the grievances of TASMACH employees. Their fate is sealed by a State Government that appears unwilling to listen to their demands, exacerbating their already precarious situation.⁸⁸

In addition to regularisation, TASMACH employees have also called for a shift from the current consolidated pay system to a time-scale pay system. Under the time-scale pay system, employees receive incremental salary hikes up to a maximum as prescribed, reflecting their experience and performance. In contrast, the consolidated pay system offers a fixed salary irrespective of an employee's performance or achievements. Although there have been occasional salary hikes for

⁸⁶ [TNIE, October 2017](#)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ [TOI, August 2010](#)

TASMAL employees, the annual increments have been minimal, further fueling their dissatisfaction.⁸⁹

Furthermore, TASMAL employees allege that the Tamil Nadu Government discriminates against them. While TASMAL workers are officially labelled as "state government employees," they lack the privileges enjoyed by workers in other government cooperatives such as Aavin and Co-optex. The workers in these cooperatives have permanent jobs and benefit from the time-scale pay system. This disparity in treatment reinforces the sense of injustice felt by TASMAL employees, who find themselves labelled as government employees only on paper.

The plight of TASMAL employees, marked by a lack of job security, low increments, discrimination, and broken promises, underscores the urgent need for the Tamil Nadu Government to address their grievances. It is imperative for the government to fulfil its commitment to regularise their positions, provide them with fair wages, and ensure equitable treatment in line with other government cooperatives. By doing so, the government can alleviate the hardships faced by TASMAL employees and restore their faith in the system.

The discriminatory treatment faced by TASMAL employees becomes even more apparent when comparing their conditions to those of workers in other government cooperatives. Workers in cooperatives like Aavin (the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation) and Co-optex (Tamil Nadu Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society) enjoy permanent jobs and the benefits of the time-scale pay system. This system recognizes the experience and performance of employees, ensuring incremental salary increases over time.

In contrast, TASMAL employees are denied these benefits despite being designated as "state government employees." This discrepancy in treatment based on the specific cooperative they work for highlights a clear case of discrimination. TASMAL employees are left feeling marginalised and treated as second-class workers within the state government framework.

⁸⁹ [NewsClick, January 2022](#)

The lack of regularisation and the absence of the time-scale pay system severely affect TASMAL employees' financial stability and future prospects. Without permanent employment status, they face constant job insecurity and the absence of retirement benefits. Moreover, the consolidated pay system fails to reward their efforts and performance, further exacerbating their discontent.

The failure of the Tamil Nadu Government to address the demands of TASMAL employees regarding regularisation and the adoption of the time-scale pay system showcases a lack of concern for their well-being. It perpetuates an environment of exploitation, where these workers are left vulnerable to unfair treatment and arbitrary decisions.

The TASMAL workers' unions have been at the forefront of advocating for their rights and pressing for these necessary changes. Through protests and demonstrations, they have voiced their grievances and demanded justice. However, their pleas have fallen on deaf ears, as the state government has shown little willingness to take concrete actions to address their concerns.

The continued neglect of TASMAL employees by the Tamil Nadu Government not only perpetuates their precarious situation but also undermines their trust in the government and its promises. It is essential for the government to recognize the contributions and sacrifices of TASMAL employees and take immediate steps to rectify the systemic issues they face. This includes regularising their jobs, implementing the time-scale pay system, and ensuring equal treatment and benefits for all government cooperatives' workers. By doing so, the government can demonstrate its commitment to social justice, fairness, and the welfare of its employees.

2. Low Income

One of the consistent demands of the TASMAL employees has been to increase their salary. Even the Tamil Nadu Government's response to this demand has been consistent - providing temporary solutions by offering meagre hikes of ₹500 to ₹1,000 - not as a part of the regular revision in pay to match the increasing standard of living but as a concession to the workers just to get them to call off the protests. Even the most recent salary hike that was implemented in

March of 2022 followed a state-wide protest in January that year.⁹⁰ After the State Budget session, the DMK Government announced a negligible increment of ₹500.⁹¹ Moreover, in 2022, the DMK Government chose not to increase the salaries in spite of it having the fiscal space to do so - in 2021-22, the state earned revenues worth ₹36,013.14 crore from the sale of liquor; an increase of over ₹2,200 crore compared to the revenue earned in 2020-21 when it stood at ₹33,811.15 crore.⁹² Despite the consistent demands of TASMACH employees for a substantial increase in their salaries, the response from the Tamil Nadu Government has been far from satisfactory. Instead of addressing their concerns and providing a fair and regular revision in pay, the government has resorted to temporary solutions aimed at appeasing the workers and ending their protests.⁹³

The salary hikes offered by the government have been meagre, ranging from ₹500 to ₹1,000. These increments have been provided as concessions to the workers rather than as part of a comprehensive and regular revision to match the increasing cost of living. It is clear that these token increases are aimed at pacifying the workers and persuading them to call off their protests, rather than addressing the fundamental issue of inadequate wages.⁹⁴

Even the most recent salary hike, implemented in March 2022, came only after a state-wide protest by TASMACH employees in January of the same year. This indicates that the government is reactive rather than proactive when it comes to meeting the legitimate demands of the employees. It raises questions about the government's commitment to ensuring fair compensation and a decent standard of living for TASMACH workers.⁹⁵

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Tamil Nadu Government had the fiscal space to increase the salaries of TASMACH employees in 2022 but chose not to do so. The revenue

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ [TOI, February 2023](#)

⁹² [The Hindu, April 2022](#)

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ [TOI, February 2023](#)

⁹⁵ [The Hindu, April 2022](#)

generated from the sale of liquor in the state during the fiscal year 2021-22 amounted to ₹36,013.14 crore, an increase of over ₹2,200 crore compared to the previous year's revenue of ₹33,811.15 crore. This significant increase in revenue clearly demonstrates that the government had the means to address the salary concerns of TASMAL employees but failed to take appropriate action.⁹⁶

The reluctance of the government to provide substantial salary hikes to TASMAL employees despite their contributions to the state's revenue raises concerns about the government's priorities and its commitment to the welfare of its workers. It highlights a lack of recognition and appreciation for the hard work and dedication of TASMAL employees, who play a crucial role in generating substantial tax revenue for the state.⁹⁷

The meagre salary increments and the government's failure to prioritise fair compensation for TASMAL employees further exacerbate their financial struggles and perpetuate a cycle of exploitation and discontent. It is crucial for the government to acknowledge the importance of fair wages, address the grievances of TASMAL workers, and provide them with a salary that reflects their contributions and ensures a decent standard of living.

This indicates the absence of any bona fide intention on the part of the Tamil Nadu Government to improve the economic conditions of the employees. Currently, the three classes of employees at TASMAL receive the following salaries⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ [TOI, February 2023](#)

⁹⁸ Ibid.



Infographic 5: Salary of TASMACH Employees

The issue of meagre take-home salary for TASMACH employees becomes even more apparent when considering the deductions made for provident fund (PF) and insurance. After these deductions, the employees are left with very little to bring home as their actual salary.

The recent salary hike for the finance staff of TASMACH raises questions about the underlying problem at hand, which may be the lack of political will. In February 2023, TASMACH finally decided to address the long-standing demand of its finance staff for a salary increase. The annual increment for the finance staff was enhanced by ₹1,250, taking it from ₹1,250 to ₹2,500. Additionally, TASMACH promised to settle the arrears for the past three years. This decision highlights the possibility that the inadequate salary situation for TASMACH employees may stem from a fundamental lack of political will to address their concerns.

Now, TASMACH employees are left to hope that the DMK Government will make a similar decision in their favour. However, even if the state government agrees to increase the annual

increment by a greater amount than the nominal raises it has offered thus far, the true measure of the decision's impact would be whether it brings the monthly salary of TASMACH employees on par with those in equivalent government positions.

Equalising the salaries of TASMACH employees with their counterparts in other government roles would demonstrate a genuine commitment to fair compensation and recognition of the valuable contributions made by TASMACH workers. It would address the persistent issue of low income and financial struggles faced by these employees and provide them with a sense of dignity and security in their employment.

Ultimately, it is essential for the government to not only fulfil its promises but also prioritise the well-being and livelihoods of TASMACH employees. Adequate salaries that reflect the responsibilities and contributions of the workers should be ensured, along with the provision of benefits and protections afforded to other government employees. This requires a genuine commitment from the government to rectify the current disparities and create a more equitable and supportive working environment for TASMACH employees.

The persistently low take-home salary of TASMACH employees, even after necessary deductions, continues to be a pressing issue. It reflects a systemic problem that extends beyond mere concessions or nominal salary hikes. The lack of political will to address this issue raises concerns about the overall treatment of TASMACH employees and their financial well-being.

While TASMACH took a positive step by addressing the salary demands of its finance staff, it remains to be seen whether the government will extend similar considerations to all TASMACH employees. The hope is that the DMK Government recognizes the significance of providing fair and competitive salaries that align with equivalent government positions. This would demonstrate a genuine commitment to rectifying the financial struggles faced by TASMACH employees.

The true measure of progress would be if the salary increase brings TASMAL employees' monthly earnings at par with those in equivalent government roles. It is crucial not only to bridge the wage gap but also to ensure that TASMAL employees receive the same level of financial security and benefits enjoyed by their counterparts.

By equalising salaries and offering the necessary benefits, the government can address the long-standing grievances of TASMAL employees. This includes providing housing rent allowances, dearness allowances, and other benefits that are typically associated with government employment. It is only through such comprehensive measures that TASMAL employees can experience improved working conditions and financial stability.

The government must prioritise the well-being of TASMAL employees and recognize their valuable contributions to the state's revenue and economy. Fair and adequate compensation is not only essential for their livelihoods but also for ensuring their motivation, dedication, and job satisfaction. By taking decisive action, the government can create an inclusive and supportive work environment for TASMAL employees, fostering a sense of dignity and empowerment within the organisation. Additionally, an increased pay would also decrease susceptibility to engage in corrupt practices to make a quick buck at the cost of consumers.

3. Fewer Benefits

The lack of comprehensive compensation and benefits for TASMAL employees extends to unfortunate situations such as the death of an employee. Unlike other government employees, the dependents of TASMAL workers do not receive any compensation or assurance of a government job. This leaves the families of TASMAL employees in a vulnerable position, without the financial support and security that would typically be provided in such circumstances.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ [TNIE, October 2017](#)

Similarly, when it comes to medical insurance, TASMAL employees face challenges and restrictions. They are often required to seek treatment only in specific government-designated hospitals for particular ailments. If they choose to receive treatment elsewhere, they are reimbursed only up to 70% of the expenses incurred. This limitation in healthcare options can be burdensome for employees who may prefer or require treatment from a different healthcare provider or facility.¹⁰⁰

These limitations on compensation and medical insurance further underscore the disparities faced by TASMAL employees compared to their counterparts in other government sectors. The absence of adequate support for the families of TASMAL employees in times of need and the restrictions on healthcare choices highlight the need for comprehensive reforms and better provisions.

It is crucial for the Tamil Nadu Government to address these issues and ensure that TASMAL employees and their families are provided with appropriate compensation, benefits, and support systems. By extending similar privileges and assistance as given to other government employees, the government can demonstrate its commitment to the well-being and welfare of TASMAL employees and their families.

4. Poor Working Conditions

The working conditions faced by TASMAL employees are indeed challenging and pose numerous physical and mental hardships. Despite the regulations set forth by Rule 11 of the Tamil Nadu Liquor Retail Vending (in shops and bars) Rules, which state specific working hours, TASMAL employees often find themselves working for extended periods, sometimes even up to 12 hours a day. This lack of adequate breaks and rest periods, particularly during the demanding business hours from 10 AM to 10 PM, can take a toll on their physical well-being and overall health.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ [Rules Of 2003](#)

The working environment itself adds to the difficulties faced by TASMAL employees. The outlets are often described as cramped and lacking proper facilities, including clean and accessible toilets. These substandard conditions not only contribute to an uncomfortable and unsanitary work environment but also jeopardise the health and hygiene of the employees.¹⁰²

Furthermore, TASMAL employees do not enjoy the benefits and entitlements that are typically associated with employment, such as holidays, off days, overtime pay, and holiday wages. This lack of time off and additional compensation exacerbates their workload and financial struggles, leaving them with limited respite or opportunities to improve their financial situation.¹⁰³

The nature of their work also exposes TASMAL employees to psychological stress and safety risks. Dealing with unruly customers, frequent brawls, and potentially dangerous situations on a daily basis can have a severe impact on their mental well-being. The constant pressure and challenges they face while handling difficult customers further compound the stress and strain they experience on the job.¹⁰⁴

In addition to these physical and mental hardships, TASMAL employees also face social stigma and discrimination. The nature of their work in the liquor industry, coupled with the perception that surrounds it, leads to them being treated as outcasts by society. This further isolates them and adds to their sense of marginalisation and exclusion.

Overall, the working conditions and challenges faced by TASMAL employees are concerning and demand attention. It is crucial for the Tamil Nadu Government to address these issues by providing better working conditions, adequate breaks, proper facilities, and comprehensive support systems for the physical and mental well-being of TASMAL employees. Additionally, efforts should be made to change societal perception and provide them with the dignity and respect they deserve. The harsh working conditions and challenges faced by TASMAL

¹⁰² [Frontline, July 2022](#)

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ [TNIE, October 2017](#)

employees not only impact their personal well-being but also have broader implications for their overall quality of life. The meagre salaries they receive add to their financial burdens, making it difficult for them to meet their basic needs and provide for their families. This financial strain, combined with the lack of job security and benefits, creates a constant state of uncertainty and vulnerability for TASMACH employees.

Moreover, the physical and mental toll of their work can have long-lasting effects on their health. The absence of proper breaks and rest periods deprives them of necessary rejuvenation and can lead to exhaustion and burnout. The stressful and potentially volatile nature of their interactions with customers increases their risk of physical harm and psychological distress.

The societal stigma and discrimination faced by TASMACH employees further compound their challenges. Being labelled as liquor shop workers, they often face judgement and prejudice from others, which can contribute to feelings of isolation and a sense of being marginalised within their own communities. This social exclusion further deepens the hardships they endure, affecting their self-esteem and overall well-being.

Addressing these issues requires not only immediate action to improve working conditions and provide fair compensation but also a shift in societal attitudes towards these employees. TASMACH workers deserve recognition for their contributions and should be afforded the same rights and benefits as other government employees. Efforts should be made to raise awareness about the challenges they face, challenge stereotypes, and foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for them.

In conclusion, the plight of TASMACH employees is characterised by low incomes, poor working conditions, physical and mental challenges, and societal discrimination. It is essential for the Tamil Nadu Government and relevant authorities to prioritise the welfare of these employees, ensuring fair treatment, decent working conditions, and the provision of necessary benefits and

support systems. Only through such measures can their rights be protected, and their dignity and well-being restored.

5. Workers' Plight During The Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, TASMAL employees faced additional challenges and hardships, further exacerbating their already difficult working conditions. The decision to reopen liquor shops by the Tamil Nadu Government raised concerns about the safety and well-being of these employees.

One of the major issues highlighted by the employees was the lack of adequate safety measures and personal protective equipment (PPE). The provision of masks, gloves, and disinfectant bottles was insufficient, forcing the employees to bear the expenses of purchasing these essential items themselves. This added financial burden was an unfair expectation, considering the already low salaries they received.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the employees were also burdened with additional expenses related to the operation of the liquor shops during the pandemic. They had to personally cover the costs of setting up safety barriers, loading and unloading stock, and transportation expenses for restocking. These expenses were not reimbursed by the government or TASMAL, further straining the financial situation of the employees.

In the unfortunate event that TASMAL employees contracted COVID-19, they faced disparities in compensation compared to other government employees. The compensation provided to TASMAL employees for their illness was not on par with that given to other government workers. This disparity in treatment is unjust and further highlights the lack of equal protection and support for TASMAL employees.

¹⁰⁵ [TNIE, May 2020](#)

Tragically, if TASMAC employees succumbed to the infection and passed away, their families were not provided with government jobs as a form of support, as is often the case for families of other government employees. This lack of support compounds the financial and emotional hardships faced by the families of TASMAC employees, leaving them without a means of livelihood or security.

The unequal treatment of TASMAC employees during the pandemic underscores the need for fair and just policies that prioritise their safety, well-being, and rights. It is crucial for the Tamil Nadu Government to address these disparities, provide adequate support and compensation for COVID-19-related challenges, and ensure that the families of deceased employees are given the same benefits as those of other government workers.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities and inequities faced by TASMAC employees, highlighting the urgent need for their protection, fair treatment, and recognition of their contributions.

The COVID-19 pandemic not only highlighted the poor working conditions of TASMAC employees but also exacerbated their already difficult circumstances. As frontline workers during the pandemic, they faced increased health risks and financial burdens.

The inadequate provision of safety equipment, such as masks, gloves, and disinfectants, put TASMAC employees at a higher risk of contracting the virus. Despite the nature of their work, the government failed to prioritise their safety by not supplying these items in sufficient quantities. Consequently, employees had to rely on their own resources to purchase the necessary protective gear, further straining their limited finances.

Additionally, the financial burden of operating the liquor shops during the pandemic fell on the employees themselves. Expenses related to setting up safety barriers, stocking inventory, and transportation costs were not reimbursed, forcing the employees to cover these costs out of their

own pockets. This unequal distribution of financial responsibility added to their financial hardships, with little to no support from the government or TASMAL.

In terms of compensation, TASMAL employees faced disparities compared to other government workers who contracted COVID-19. The compensation provided to TASMAL employees for illness or medical expenses related to the virus was not on par with the benefits and support offered to their counterparts in other government sectors.

Tragically, if a TASMAL employee succumbed to the virus, their families were not provided with government jobs or any substantial support. This left the families without a stable source of income or the security typically provided to families of deceased government employees. The absence of such benefits compounded the financial and emotional distress experienced by the families during an already challenging time.

The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the systemic issues faced by TASMAL employees, including poor working conditions, inadequate safety measures, and unequal treatment. It is essential for the Tamil Nadu Government to address these concerns and ensure that TASMAL employees receive fair compensation, proper safety measures, and support for themselves and their families. Recognizing their contributions as essential workers and prioritising their well-being is crucial for creating a more equitable and just work environment within the TASMAL system.

6. No Physical Security

The safety of TASMAL employees, particularly those working in liquor shops located in rural areas, has been a long-standing concern even before the onset of the pandemic. These employees face significant risks due to the lack of security measures in place at these establishments, making them vulnerable to theft and violent incidents.

The absence of adequate security at rural liquor shops exposes TASMAL employees to various threats, including instances of theft and physical assaults. Employees have reported incidents

where they were targeted by thieves and subjected to violent attacks. These incidents not only jeopardise their physical well-being but also have a severe psychological impact on the employees, leaving them in a constant state of fear and distress.¹⁰⁶

To mitigate the risks associated with working during the night shift, TASMAL officials have advised employees to stay inside the liquor shops overnight. This recommendation is aimed at safeguarding them from potential miscreants or criminals who may attempt to target the shops during non-operational hours. However, this measure has had tragic consequences in some cases.¹⁰⁷

One such unfortunate incident occurred in Vellore, where a TASMAL salesman was burned alive by protestors while he was asleep in the store during his night shift. This horrific incident highlights the grave dangers faced by TASMAL employees, even within the supposedly secure confines of the liquor shops. The lack of proper security measures and the volatile nature of public sentiment surrounding liquor sales can result in tragic outcomes for these employees.¹⁰⁸

These incidents underscore the urgent need for enhanced security measures, both within and around TASMAL outlets, to ensure the safety and well-being of the employees. It is the responsibility of the TASMAL administration and the government to address these security concerns and take proactive steps to protect the lives and livelihoods of the employees. This may include implementing robust security systems, improving surveillance, providing appropriate training to employees in handling security threats, and establishing effective communication channels with law enforcement authorities to respond swiftly to any incidents.¹⁰⁹

Creating a safe working environment is essential to protect the lives and dignity of TASMAL employees, enabling them to perform their duties without fear and ensuring their overall well-being.

¹⁰⁶ [TNIE, October 2017](#)

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

TASMACH employees indeed face harassment and threats from bar owners, which puts them in extremely difficult and dangerous situations. Bar owners often use intimidation tactics to coerce TASMACH workers into shutting their shops early, allowing the bar owners to purchase liquor from TASMACH outlets at government prices and then resell it at exorbitant prices during after-hours.¹¹⁰

These threats and demands create a hostile working environment for TASMACH employees, forcing them to comply with the illegal practices of bar owners or face dire consequences. When employees refuse to comply with the demands of bar owners, they may face physical assaults and violence. Such incidents not only pose a direct threat to their safety but also leave them emotionally traumatised.

What adds to the distressing situation is the complicity of the government in these matters. It is evident that the government is aware of the challenges faced by TASMACH workers but fails to take decisive action to protect them. The transfer of store supervisors or workers who protest against such practices indicates the government's reluctance to address the issue and protect the interests of the employees.

Moreover, during the demonetisation period, TASMACH shops were misused by politicians for exchanging illegal currency notes. This history raises concerns that similar illegal activities may occur again, particularly following the recent decision by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to withdraw ₹2,000 notes from circulation. Therefore, it is crucial for the Union Finance Ministry to closely monitor the influx of ₹2,000 notes, especially in TASMACH outlets, to prevent any illegal activities related to currency exchange.

To ensure the safety and well-being of TASMACH employees, it is imperative for the government to take immediate action. This includes implementing strict measures to prevent harassment and violence against workers, conducting thorough investigations into allegations of illegal

¹¹⁰ [NDTV, May 2023](#)

activities involving TASMAL shops, and holding accountable those responsible for such actions. Additionally, providing support and protection to the workers who speak out against these injustices is essential to create a safer and more secure work environment for them.

By addressing these issues and actively working towards the eradication of corruption and illegal practices within the liquor industry, the government can ensure the rights and dignity of TASMAL employees are protected, and they can perform their duties without fear of harassment or violence.

7. Overburdened By Additional Duties

In addition to their main responsibility of selling liquor, TASMAL salesmen are burdened with additional tasks that are not typically part of their job description. They are made personally responsible for various supplementary activities that are traditionally handled by others.¹¹¹

One such responsibility is ensuring the sale of cardboard boxes in which the liquor bottles are delivered. These cardboard boxes are typically used for packaging and transportation purposes and are not intended for sale to customers. However, TASMAL salesmen are required to sell these boxes as well, which adds an extra task to their already demanding roles. They need to keep track of the boxes sold and maintain records accordingly.

Furthermore, TASMAL salesmen are also expected to ensure that the contract between TASMAL and the respective shop owner or contractor is settled properly. This responsibility involves overseeing financial matters and ensuring that the dues are cleared and accounted for. This additional administrative duty adds to the workload and responsibilities of the salesmen, diverting their attention from their primary role of serving customers and promoting liquor sales.

¹¹¹ [TNIE, October 2017](#)

These additional tasks, which are beyond the traditional scope of a salesman's role, can contribute to increased stress and workload for TASMACH salesmen. It can also impact their ability to focus on providing efficient and customer-oriented service. With these added responsibilities, salesmen may find it challenging to meet their sales targets while simultaneously managing administrative duties.

It is essential for the authorities to consider the workload and responsibilities placed upon TASMACH salesmen and evaluate whether these additional tasks are necessary or if they can be delegated to other appropriate personnel. By streamlining the roles and responsibilities, salesmen can focus more on their core duties, resulting in improved customer service and sales performance.

Efforts should be made to ensure that the job roles and responsibilities of TASMACH employees are well-defined and aligned with their skills and expertise. This can contribute to a more efficient and productive work environment for the salesmen, allowing them to better serve customers and fulfil their primary role as sales representatives.

The additional responsibilities assigned to TASMACH salespersons, such as selling cardboard boxes and managing contract settlements, can have several implications for their work and overall job satisfaction.

Firstly, selling cardboard boxes, which are typically not intended for retail sale, can be seen as an added burden for the salesmen. It requires them to divert their attention from core sales tasks to focus on selling these additional items. This may lead to a distraction from their primary responsibilities and hinder their ability to provide effective customer service.

Moreover, maintaining records of cardboard box sales adds administrative work to their already demanding roles. It increases their workload and can be time-consuming, taking away valuable time that could be spent on more customer-centric activities.

Additionally, being responsible for contract settlements further adds to the complexity of their role. This task involves financial management and ensuring that all dues and obligations are properly handled. It may require them to coordinate with shop owners or contractors, monitor payment schedules, and maintain accurate records. These responsibilities can be daunting, especially if they lack the necessary expertise or support to fulfil them efficiently.

The cumulative effect of these additional responsibilities is that TASMAC sales person may feel overwhelmed and stretched thin in their roles. The pressure to meet sales targets, handle administrative tasks, and manage contract settlements can lead to increased stress and job dissatisfaction. It may also impact their overall job performance and motivation.

It is important for the authorities to evaluate whether assigning these additional tasks to salesmen is necessary or if they can be delegated to other personnel or departments within TASMAC. Streamlining job responsibilities and providing adequate support and resources can alleviate the burden on salesmen and allow them to focus on their core duties of sales and customer service.

Creating a conducive work environment where salesmen can concentrate on their primary responsibilities will not only improve their job satisfaction but also enhance the overall efficiency and effectiveness of TASMAC operations.

B. Forced To Participate In Corruption

“Customers who come here do not know the pressure we go through. We have to bribe local goons, politicians and police.”

As seen in the previous section, TASMAC workers are forced to be complicit in the illegal activities carried on at the liquor stores owing to the fear of retribution from politicians and bar owners. Given the poor working conditions as elucidated in the earlier sections, there have been numerous instances where TASMAC workers have indulged in corruption. With the pittance they make as

employees at TASMAL, workers make quick money on the side by making 'cuttings' - the practice of breaking open a liquor bottle and selling it by the 'peg.'¹¹² This practice is particularly prevalent in remote areas TASMAL outlets with attached bars and those in remote places. That doing so would lead to adulteration and dilution is known to officials but choose to remain ignorant about it. The target-oriented sales strategy at TASMAL has further lent to the rampant corruption. To meet sales targets set by the public sector undertaking, workers have adopted several illegal practices such as overcharging customers, faulty billing, and dilution of alcohol.¹¹³ This has significantly contributed to the increasing trend in MRP violations and the aggressive push that salespersons are forced to give for selected, often unfamiliar brands just to honour the shady deal TASMAL made with liquor manufacturers for a hefty sum. All of which have been elaborated in the previous section titled 'Corruption and Politics in TASMAL'.

¹¹² [Frontline, July 2022](#)

¹¹³ Ibid.

**TN EXPENDITURE ON PUBLIC HEALTH
ISSUES AROUND ALCOHOLISM AND
ALCOHOL-RELATED AILMENTS**

VII. TN Expenditure on Public Health Issues Around Alcoholism and Alcohol-related Ailments

A. Overview of the Impact of Alcohol Consumption on the Economy

Alcohol consumption is causally related to more than 60 different medical conditions, and official estimates suggest that 4% of the global burden of disease and 6% of global total deaths can be attributed to alcohol.¹¹⁴¹¹⁵ Furthermore, a report by the WHO showed that alcohol use results in an estimated 132.6 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs), i. e. 5.1% of all DALYs.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, alcohol is widely acknowledged to be a major public health issue with a significant economic impact. A recent analysis showed that, when accounting for both direct and indirect costs, the global economic impact of alcohol consumption is equivalent to 2.6% of the global GDP.¹¹⁷

Studies also show that the degree of the economic impact of alcohol consumption is highly variable among different countries due to several factors, including the rate of alcohol consumption among the population. For example, an analysis showed that the economic burden of alcohol in 12 selected countries was estimated to equate to 0.45 - 5.44% of GDP.¹¹⁸

B. Impact of Alcohol Consumption on the Indian Economy

Specifically, when it comes to India, a 2019 study estimated that alcohol attributable deaths would lead to a loss of 258 million life years between 2011 and 2050. Additionally, treatment of alcohol-related health conditions will impose an economic burden of INR 3127 billion (US\$ 48.11 billion) on the health system. The societal burden of alcohol, inclusive of health system cost, out of pocket expenditure and productivity losses, will be INR 121,364 billion (US\$ 1867 billion).

¹¹⁴ [Alcohol and public health: heavy drinking is a heavy price to pay for populations](#), 2014

¹¹⁵ [Alcohol consumption's attributable disease burden and cost-effectiveness of targeted public health interventions: a systematic review of mathematical models](#), 2019

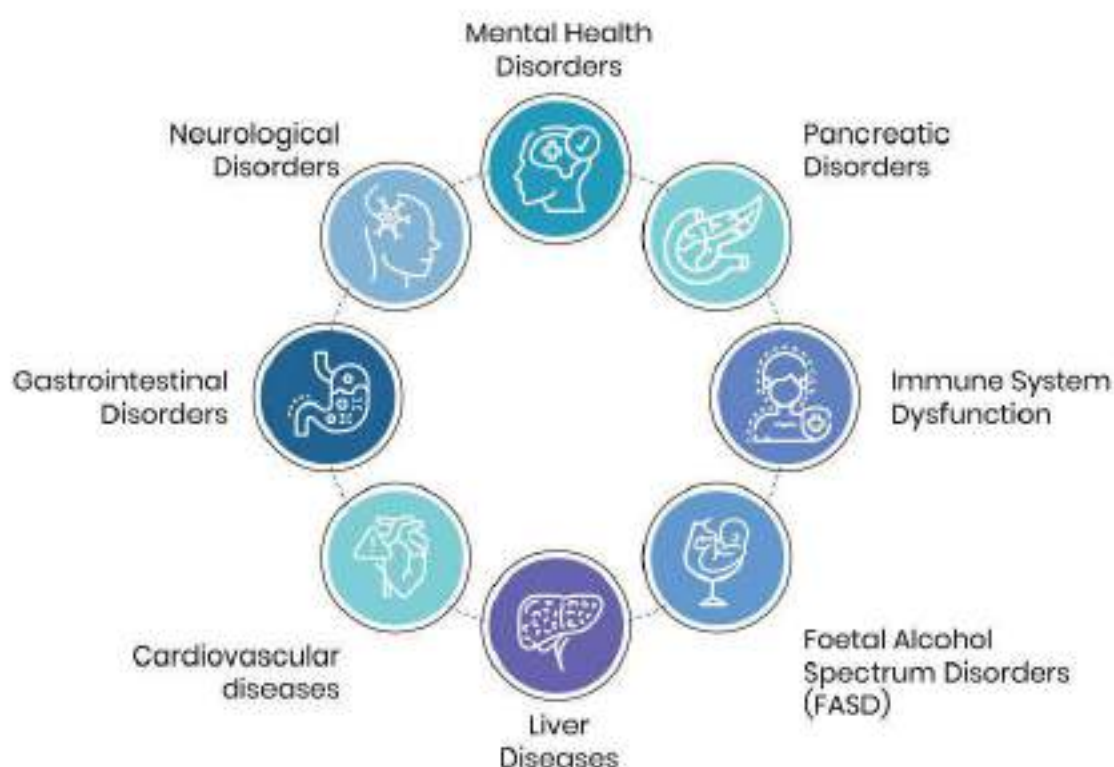
¹¹⁶ [WHO](#), September 2018

¹¹⁷ [What are the Economic Costs to Society Attributable to Alcohol Use? A Systematic Review and Modelling Study](#), 2021

¹¹⁸ [The economic impact of alcohol consumption: a systematic review](#), 2009

The study further specified that even after adjusting for tax receipts from sale of alcohol, alcohol poses a net economic loss of INR 97,895 billion (US\$ 1506 billion). This amounts to an average loss of 1.45% of the GDP per annum to the Indian economy. It bears noting that this exceeds the Central Government's health budget to GDP ratio, which stands at 0.35% for FY 2023-24. Comparatively, the study found that 552 million quality adjusted life years (QALYs) would be gained by eliminating alcohol consumption.¹¹⁹

C. Alcohol Related Ailments and Diseases



Infographic 6: Various alcohol related ailments and diseases

1. **Liver Diseases:** Chronic alcohol abuse is a leading cause of liver diseases. Fatty liver occurs when excessive alcohol consumption leads to the accumulation of fat in liver cells. Alcoholic hepatitis is inflammation of the liver, which can cause symptoms such as jaundice, abdominal

¹¹⁹ [Health impact and economic burden of alcohol consumption in India](#), 2019

pain, and liver enlargement. If alcohol abuse continues, it can progress to liver fibrosis, where scar tissue forms in the liver, and ultimately to cirrhosis, a condition where healthy liver tissue is replaced by scar tissue. Cirrhosis is irreversible and can lead to liver failure, portal hypertension, and other complications.

2. **Cardiovascular Diseases:** Alcohol abuse can have detrimental effects on the cardiovascular system. Regular heavy drinking can raise blood pressure, contributing to hypertension. It can also weaken the heart muscle, leading to cardiomyopathy, which impairs the heart's ability to pump blood effectively. Irregular heart rhythms, known as arrhythmias, can also result from excessive alcohol consumption. Additionally, alcohol can increase the risk of stroke due to its effects on blood clotting and the blood vessels in the brain.
3. **Gastrointestinal Disorders:** Alcohol irritates the lining of the gastrointestinal tract, which can lead to various disorders. Gastritis is inflammation of the stomach lining, causing symptoms like stomach pain, nausea, and vomiting. Excessive alcohol consumption can also contribute to the development of peptic ulcers, which are open sores in the stomach or small intestine. Pancreatitis, inflammation of the pancreas, is another serious condition associated with alcohol abuse. It can cause severe abdominal pain, digestive issues, and complications such as pseudocysts and pancreatic cancer.
4. **Neurological Disorders:** Alcohol has profound effects on the central nervous system, and long-term abuse can result in several neurological disorders. Chronic alcohol abuse can lead to cognitive impairment, memory loss, and difficulty with learning and problem-solving. Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome, a combination of Wernicke's encephalopathy and Korsakoff's syndrome, is a severe neurological disorder characterised by confusion, impaired coordination, memory deficits, and psychosis. Peripheral neuropathy, which causes numbness, tingling, and weakness in the extremities, is also associated with alcohol abuse.

5. **Mental Health Disorders:** Alcohol misuse is strongly linked to mental health problems. Heavy drinking can contribute to the development or worsening of conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, and substance use disorders. The relationship between alcohol and mental health is complex, as alcohol can initially provide temporary relief from emotional distress but can exacerbate symptoms over time, leading to a vicious cycle of self-medication and worsening mental health.
6. **Pancreatic Disorders:** Alcohol abuse can cause inflammation of the pancreas, known as pancreatitis. Acute pancreatitis is a sudden and severe condition that causes intense abdominal pain and requires immediate medical attention. Chronic pancreatitis, resulting from long-term alcohol abuse, leads to persistent inflammation, scarring, and irreversible damage to the pancreas. Chronic pancreatitis increases the risk of pancreatic cancer, which has a poor prognosis.
7. **Immune System Dysfunction:** Alcohol weakens the immune system, impairing the body's ability to fight infections. Heavy drinkers are more susceptible to respiratory infections, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and other infectious diseases. Alcohol-induced immune system dysfunction can also delay wound healing and increase the risk of complications after surgeries or injuries.
8. **Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD):** Consuming alcohol during pregnancy can have devastating effects on the developing foetus. Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders encompass a range of physical, behavioural, and cognitive abnormalities that can occur in children exposed to alcohol in the womb. These effects can be permanent and lifelong, resulting in growth deficiencies, facial abnormalities

D. Impact of Alcohol Consumption on the Economy of Tamil Nadu

Given that data from NFHS - 5 shows that Tamil Nadu has significantly higher rates of alcohol consumption among males (25.4%)¹²⁰ compared to the all-India figures (18.8%), it would follow that the societal and economic burden would also be comparatively more pronounced for the state.¹²¹

A survey conducted by the Satta Panchayat Iyakkam in 2015 estimated that there were 1.32 crore alcoholics in the state, of whom 70 lakh were daily drinkers. The survey also found that average expenditure of alcoholics on liquor per month was ₹4,312, which increases to ₹6,552 when limited to daily drinkers. Based on these figures, and including wage loss due to alcoholism and healthcare costs, the surveyors calculated that ₹67,444 crore per year was lost due to alcoholism in the state.¹²²

A 2021 study analysing alcohol consumption patterns in rural Tamil Nadu showed alcohol users spent an average of ₹3,273 per month on health-related expenditure.

Furthermore, the study found that alcohol users spent around 13.3% of their annual income on alcohol, with alcohol users categorised as having a high standard of living spending around 6.2% of their annual income on alcohol while those categorised as having a low standard of living spending around 36.1% of their annual income on alcohol.

¹²⁰ [NFHS - 5](#), 2019-21

¹²¹ [NFHS - 5](#), 2019-21

¹²² [The New Indian Express](#), August 2015

MODELS OF PROHIBITIONS IN INDIA AND AROUND THE WORLD

VIII. Models of Prohibition in India and Around the World

A. Gujarat Model of Prohibition

The Gujarat Prohibition Model, originating from the Bombay Prohibition Act of 1949, has been implemented for over six decades in the state of Gujarat. It stands as a testament to its success in curbing alcohol abuse and has garnered recognition for its efficacy. This comprehensive approach to prevention and treatment has inspired replication in other regions of India. With equal emphasis on enforcement mechanisms and seizure and confiscation, the model has evolved over time, refining its mechanisms to effectively address the issue at hand. The historical background of the model can be traced back to the Bombay Prohibition Act of 1949, which aimed to regulate and control the consumption of alcohol. When Gujarat was formed as a state in 1960, it inherited this prohibitionist legislation and has since implemented a robust framework to enforce and maintain alcohol prohibition. The Gujarat Prohibition Model operates on a set of core principles to effectively address the issue of alcohol abuse:

- 1. Prevention:** The Gujarat Prohibition Model places a strong emphasis on prevention measures to effectively address alcohol abuse. Public education campaigns play a crucial role in creating awareness about the harmful consequences associated with alcohol consumption. These campaigns utilise various mediums such as television, radio, print media, and social platforms to reach a wide audience. The messages conveyed through these campaigns highlight the physical, social, and economic ramifications of alcohol abuse, aiming to discourage individuals from initiating alcohol consumption in the first place.

In addition to broader public awareness initiatives, the model also implements targeted programs in educational institutions. Schools play a vital role in shaping the behaviour and attitudes of young individuals, and the Gujarat Prohibition Model recognizes this by introducing alcohol education programs in schools. These programs provide age-appropriate

information about the risks and dangers of alcohol abuse, equipping students with the knowledge to make informed decisions and resist peer pressure.

Furthermore, the model extends its preventive efforts to the workplace environment. Comprehensive training initiatives are implemented to educate employees about the consequences of alcohol abuse and the importance of maintaining a substance-free workplace. These programs promote responsible behaviour and provide guidance on identifying signs of alcohol-related problems among employees. By integrating prevention measures into the workplace, the model seeks to create a supportive and healthy environment that discourages alcohol abuse.

The proactive approach of the Gujarat Prohibition Model in prioritising prevention measures is based on the recognition that preventing alcohol abuse is more effective and beneficial than solely focusing on enforcement and punitive measures. By investing in public education campaigns, school programs, and workplace training initiatives, the model aims to create a culture that values and promotes responsible alcohol consumption or abstinence. Through these efforts, it strives to reduce the prevalence of alcohol abuse and its associated negative consequences in society.

By fostering awareness and imparting knowledge about the detrimental effects of alcohol abuse, the Gujarat Prohibition Model aims to instil a sense of responsibility and empower individuals to make informed choices regarding alcohol consumption. By targeting prevention at multiple levels, from the general public to school students and employees, the model aims to create a society that recognizes the importance of alcohol control and actively works towards preventing alcohol abuse. Treatment The Gujarat Prohibition Model acknowledges the importance of supporting individuals who are already grappling with alcohol abuse and addiction. In line with this recognition, the model ensures the availability of comprehensive treatment services. These services are designed to cater to individuals with varying levels of alcohol-related problems and are accessible through diverse settings. Specialised inpatient treatment centres form a crucial

component of the model's approach. These centres provide a structured and supportive environment for individuals who require intensive care and supervision during their recovery journey. Inpatient treatment programs often include detoxification, counselling, therapy sessions, and medical support to address both the physical and psychological aspects of alcohol addiction. The goal is to help individuals safely withdraw from alcohol, manage withdrawal symptoms, and begin the process of rebuilding their lives without dependency on alcohol.

Additionally, outpatient treatment options are available to individuals who do not require round-the-clock care but still need professional support. Outpatient programs offer flexibility, allowing individuals to receive treatment while continuing with their daily responsibilities. These programs typically involve counselling, therapy, group support sessions, and regular check-ins with healthcare professionals. By providing ongoing support and guidance, outpatient treatment enables individuals to address their alcohol-related issues while maintaining their personal and professional commitments.

The Gujarat Prohibition Model also recognizes the importance of community-based programs in supporting individuals on their journey to recovery. These programs may include support groups, peer counselling, and community outreach initiatives. They provide a platform for individuals to connect with others who have faced similar challenges, share experiences, and receive encouragement and guidance. Community-based programs foster a sense of belonging, reduce isolation, and offer ongoing support to individuals throughout their recovery process.

By offering a range of treatment options, the Gujarat Prohibition Model ensures that individuals struggling with alcohol abuse can access the services that best suit their needs. Whether it's through specialised inpatient centres, outpatient programs, or community-based initiatives, the model recognizes the significance of personalised and comprehensive care. By providing accessible and diverse treatment services, the model aims to support individuals in their recovery journey, helping them regain control over their lives and overcome the challenges posed by alcohol addiction. Overall, the Gujarat Prohibition Model adopts a holistic approach

that combines prevention efforts with accessible and diverse treatment services. By addressing both the preventive and treatment aspects of alcohol abuse, the model aims to create a supportive and enabling environment for individuals to overcome their struggles, achieve recovery, and lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

2. **Enforcement:** The Gujarat Prohibition Model has indeed undergone a transformative journey over the span of six decades, adapting and evolving to meet the changing circumstances and requirements surrounding alcohol abuse. Initially, the model focused primarily on strict enforcement measures to combat the consumption of alcohol. This approach involved stringent laws, penalties, and efforts to reduce the availability and accessibility of alcoholic beverages.

However, as time progressed, it became evident that a more comprehensive approach was needed to address the root causes of alcohol abuse and provide support to individuals affected by it. The Gujarat Prohibition Model recognized the importance of prevention and treatment strategies in combating alcohol abuse effectively.

The model underwent a significant shift in its approach, placing greater emphasis on prevention initiatives, educational campaigns, and community engagement. These initiatives were aimed at creating an environment that discourages alcohol abuse from its onset. By targeting the population at large, including young people, and raising awareness about the risks and consequences of alcohol abuse, the model sought to prevent the initiation of alcohol consumption.

Furthermore, the Gujarat Prohibition Model established specialised treatment centres, both inpatient and outpatient, to provide comprehensive care to individuals seeking help for alcohol addiction. These treatment centres offered medical intervention, counselling, rehabilitation programs, and support services to address the physical, psychological, and social aspects of alcohol addiction.

In addition to treatment centres, community-based programs were implemented to extend support and care to individuals in their local environments. These programs focused on counselling, support groups, vocational training, and reintegration into society to ensure a holistic approach to recovery.

The Gujarat Prohibition Model's adaptability and willingness to refine its strategies have been instrumental in its success. It acknowledges that alcohol abuse is a complex issue with multifaceted causes, and addressing it requires a multi-pronged approach. By incorporating prevention, education, enforcement, and treatment measures, the model aims to tackle alcohol abuse comprehensively.

Overall, the Gujarat Prohibition Model stands as a testament to the importance of adapting and evolving strategies to effectively prevent and address alcohol abuse. Its transformative journey reflects a commitment to understanding the evolving nature of the problem and implementing evidence-based solutions. Through its comprehensive approach, the model strives to create a society that is aware, informed, and supportive, ultimately reducing the prevalence and impact of alcohol abuse in Gujarat. The Gujarat Prohibition Model enforces laws against alcohol abuse, discouraging illicit production, sale, and consumption. Close monitoring and decisive action establish a culture of compliance, deterring offenders. The model prioritises seizing and confiscating alcohol, preventing its entry and reducing availability. This proactive approach hinders access and curbs harmful drinking behaviours, reinforcing prohibition measures and promoting a safer environment.

B. Bihar Model of Prohibition

The Bihar Model of Prohibition, implemented in April 2016 by the state of Bihar in India, was a significant initiative aimed at curbing alcohol consumption and promoting a more sober society. This policy was implemented to address the social and health challenges associated with excessive alcohol consumption and to mitigate its negative impact on individuals, families, and communities.

While prohibition policies can have complex outcomes and varied results, the Bihar Model has demonstrated several positive aspects.

Firstly, the implementation of the Bihar Model has led to a reduction in alcohol-related issues within the state. By curbing the availability of alcohol, the model aimed to tackle problems such as domestic violence, road accidents, and public disorder associated with excessive alcohol consumption. This has resulted in a safer environment and a decrease in alcohol-related incidents.

Secondly, the Bihar Model has brought about significant health benefits. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to various physical and mental health problems. By reducing alcohol consumption, the model aimed to improve public health outcomes and mitigate the burden of alcohol-related diseases. This has potentially resulted in improved overall health and well-being among the population.

Another positive aspect of the Bihar Model is the economic empowerment it offers. By discouraging alcohol consumption, the model aimed to prevent the wastage of income on alcohol and redirect those resources towards essential needs, education, and economic development. This could potentially lead to improved financial stability and empowerment, particularly among economically vulnerable sections of society.

Additionally, the revenue saved from the ban on alcohol has been redirected towards social welfare programs and initiatives that benefit the population. These programs focus on education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and welfare schemes for marginalised communities. By utilising the funds previously spent on alcohol for social welfare purposes, the Bihar government aims to uplift and improve the overall well-being of its citizens.

Furthermore, the Bihar Model acknowledges the disproportionate impact of alcohol abuse on women and aims to empower women and promote gender equality. By curbing alcohol consumption, the model seeks to create an environment that is safer and more supportive for women, reducing instances of domestic violence and other related issues.

Overall, while prohibition policies can have mixed outcomes, the Bihar Model of Prohibition has shown several positive aspects. It has resulted in a reduction in alcohol-related issues, brought about health benefits, empowered economically vulnerable sections of society, directed funds towards social welfare programs, and aimed to empower women. It is important to continue monitoring and evaluating the long-term impact of the Bihar Model to assess its overall effectiveness and address any challenges that may arise.

- 1. Increased peace and prosperity:** The Bihar Model of Prohibition has had a positive impact on social well-being. The policy has restricted the availability of alcohol, which has led to a reduction in domestic violence, family disputes, and public disturbances related to alcohol abuse. As a result, families and communities have reported a greater sense of peace, harmony, and social cohesion.
- 2. Improved Health well-being:** The implementation of the prohibition policy under the Bihar Model has indeed had a positive impact on individual health and well-being. By curbing alcohol consumption, the policy has led to various health improvements, resulting in a decrease in alcohol-related illnesses and diseases.

Firstly, the reduction in alcohol consumption has contributed to a decrease in alcohol-related illnesses, particularly those affecting the liver. Excessive alcohol consumption is a major risk factor for liver cirrhosis, a chronic condition characterised by liver damage and scarring. By reducing alcohol intake, individuals are less likely to develop this serious liver disease. This improvement in liver health is crucial for overall well-being and longevity.

Furthermore, the prohibition policy has contributed to a decrease in alcohol-induced accidents. Alcohol impairs judgement, coordination, and reaction time, increasing the risk of accidents, particularly on the roads. By curbing alcohol consumption, the Bihar Model has led to a decline in alcohol-related accidents, making the roads safer for everyone. This has not only saved lives but has also prevented injuries and disabilities resulting from such accidents.

The positive impact on health indicators goes beyond specific diseases and accidents. Individuals who were previously heavy drinkers and have now reduced or quit alcohol altogether may experience improvements in their overall well-being. Alcohol abuse can have detrimental effects on mental health, including increased risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders. By reducing alcohol consumption, individuals may experience a positive shift in their mental health, leading to improved quality of life and well-being.

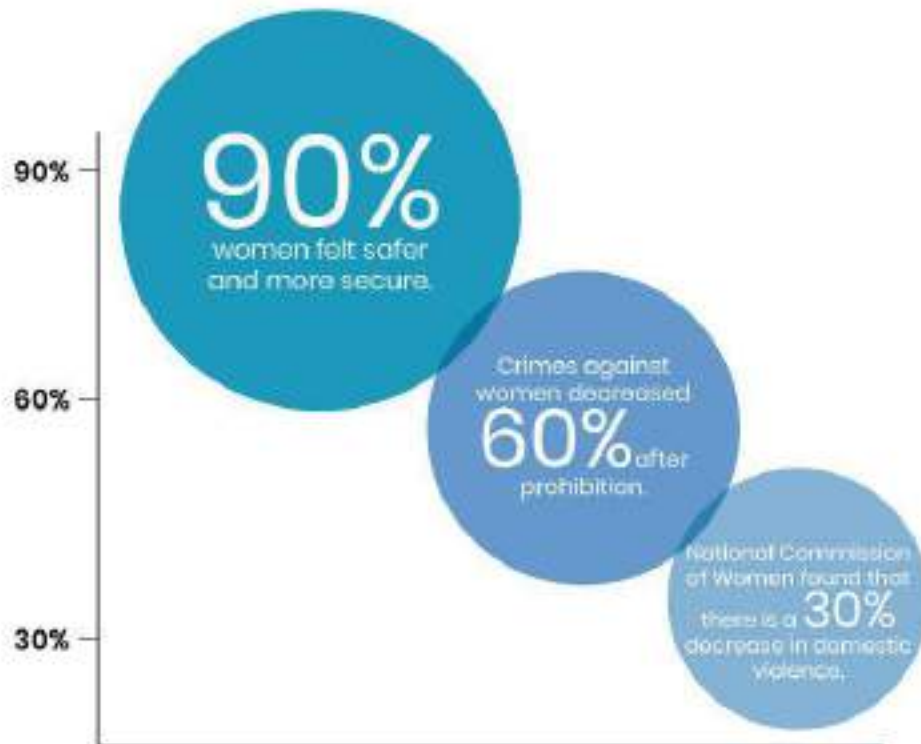
Moreover, the decrease in alcohol consumption can have indirect positive effects on various aspects of health. Alcohol abuse is often associated with unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and neglect of preventive healthcare measures. By reducing alcohol consumption, individuals may be more inclined to adopt healthier habits and take better care of their overall health. This can lead to improvements in general health indicators, such as blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and overall fitness.

In summary, the prohibition policy implemented under the Bihar Model has had a positive impact on individual health and well-being. By reducing alcohol consumption, the policy has resulted in a decrease in alcohol-related illnesses and diseases, particularly those affecting the liver, and a decline in alcohol-induced accidents. Moreover, individuals who were heavy drinkers may experience improvements in mental health and overall well-being. The policy's contribution to better health indicators and overall quality of life highlights the potential benefits of curbing alcohol consumption within a society.

3. **Enhanced Economic Security:** The Bihar Model of Prohibition has had a positive impact on economic empowerment. Families that were previously burdened by alcohol-related expenses have seen an increase in disposable income. This has allowed them to allocate resources to other essential needs, such as education, healthcare, and overall household development.
4. **Women's Empowerment:** Prohibition has had a positive impact on women's empowerment. The reduction in alcohol availability has led to a significant decrease in incidents of violence

against women, intimidation, and exploitation related to alcohol. This has resulted in greater empowerment for women, increased security, and more active engagement in social and economic activities.

- a. A study by the National Commission for Women found that the rate of domestic violence against women in Bihar decreased by 30% after the implementation of prohibition.¹²³
- b. A survey of women in Bihar found that 90% of respondents felt that prohibition had made them feel safer and more secure.¹²⁴
- c. The number of alcohol-related crimes against women in Bihar decreased by 60% in the first year after prohibition was implemented.¹²⁵



Infographic 7: Prohibition and its impact on Women in Bihar

¹²³ [National Commission of Women](#)

¹²⁴ [Impact of Prohibition](#)

¹²⁵ [SVRI](#)

5. Focus on Alternative Development: The Bihar Model of Prohibition has recognized the importance of shifting the focus towards alternative development activities, providing individuals previously engaged in the alcohol trade with sustainable livelihood options. The government has made significant investments in initiatives such as skill development programs, vocational training, and entrepreneurship opportunities. These efforts aim to equip individuals with the necessary skills and resources to pursue alternative avenues for income generation. Skill development programs offer training in diverse sectors, while vocational training provides specific skills for various trades and occupations. Moreover, the promotion of entrepreneurship opportunities empowers individuals to start their own businesses, with support and resources provided by the government. By facilitating the transition to alternative livelihoods, the Bihar Model not only promotes economic growth but also contributes to social development. It enables individuals to break free from the alcohol trade, find meaningful employment, and participate actively in the overall development of their communities. Prohibition in Bihar has indeed played a critical role in changing social norms and attitudes towards alcohol consumption. By implementing the prohibition policy, the state government aimed to create a culture of sobriety and responsible behaviour, promoting healthier lifestyles and leisure activities. This cultural shift has had a positive impact on society by reducing the normalisation of excessive drinking and fostering a more conscious approach to alcohol consumption.

One of the key outcomes of the prohibition policy is the reduction in the social acceptance of excessive drinking. Prior to the implementation of prohibition, alcohol consumption may have been normalised and even celebrated as a common part of social gatherings. However, with the enforcement of the ban and the associated awareness campaigns, people have become more aware of the negative consequences of alcohol abuse. This has led to a change in social norms, where responsible behaviour and moderation are valued over excessive drinking.

The cultural shift towards sobriety has also encouraged individuals to explore healthier alternatives for leisure activities and socialising. With the decrease in alcohol availability, people

have sought out alternative forms of entertainment and recreation that do not rely on alcohol. This shift has paved the way for the promotion of healthier lifestyles, fostering a sense of well-being and improved social interactions.

While acknowledging the potential unsustainability of the prohibition model, it is important to recognize the long-term positive impact it has had on society. By reducing the normalisation of excessive drinking, the Bihar Model of Prohibition has paved the way for a more harmonious and progressive society. The positive outcomes in terms of social well-being, health benefits, economic empowerment, women's empowerment, focus on alternative development, and transformation of social norms highlight the potential of such initiatives.

To ensure the success of the Bihar Model of Prohibition, effective implementation, monitoring, and public awareness campaigns are crucial. It is important to address potential downsides and challenges associated with the prohibition policy, such as the emergence of illegal alcohol trade or the potential diversion of resources towards other harmful substances. Regular evaluation and refinement of the policy can help mitigate these issues and maximise the positive impact on society.

In conclusion, while recognizing the need for further evaluation and refinement, the Bihar Model of Prohibition has demonstrated positive results in various aspects of social development. The cultural shift towards sobriety and responsible behaviour, coupled with the associated benefits in health, empowerment, and alternative development, has the potential to create a more sober, harmonious, and progressive society in Bihar.

C. Successful Models of Prohibition around the world

- 1. Saudi Arabia:** The strict prohibition of alcohol in Saudi Arabia is indeed deeply rooted in religious and cultural beliefs, with adherence to Islamic principles and values being a key factor. Islam considers alcohol consumption as prohibited, and this religious belief strongly influences the alcohol policies in the country. Supporters of the prohibition argue that the model serves to

safeguard individuals and families from the potential negative consequences associated with excessive alcohol consumption. Alcohol abuse can have detrimental effects on individuals, families, and communities, including health problems, social issues, and economic burdens. By eliminating the availability of alcohol, the prohibition aims to prevent these negative consequences and promote overall well-being.

One of the primary motivations behind the alcohol prohibition in Saudi Arabia is the aim to prevent addiction and its adverse effects. Addiction to alcohol can have severe physical, mental, and emotional implications for individuals. It can lead to dependence, health issues, impaired judgement, and strained relationships. By creating a barrier to alcohol consumption, the prohibition model seeks to protect individuals from the risks of addiction and the subsequent impact on their lives.

Moreover, the prohibition aligns with the cultural values of Saudi society, which emphasise modesty, self-discipline, and respect for religious teachings. The ban on alcohol serves as a means to preserve and reinforce these cultural values and maintain social order. It also promotes a sense of unity and social cohesion, as the prohibition is widely supported and adhered to by the majority of the population.

While the prohibition of alcohol is firmly established in Saudi Arabia, it is important to note that the country acknowledges the presence of alcohol-related issues among certain non-Muslim communities and visitors. To accommodate the needs of these individuals, alcohol is available in limited quantities and within designated areas, such as licensed hotels and compounds, catering to non-Muslim residents and tourists.

In conclusion, the strict prohibition of alcohol in Saudi Arabia is deeply rooted in religious and cultural beliefs, particularly in adherence to Islamic principles and values. The model aims to safeguard individuals and families from the potential negative consequences of excessive alcohol consumption, such as addiction and its adverse effects. By creating a barrier to alcohol

consumption, the prohibition seeks to protect individuals, promote well-being, and maintain cultural and social values within the Saudi Arabian society.

- a. Prohibition in Saudi Arabia is seen as a way to address social problems caused by alcohol. Alcohol is linked to domestic violence, public disturbances, and accidents. By removing alcohol, the model aims to create a safer and more peaceful society.
- b. Prohibition aims to reduce health risks from alcohol abuse. Alcohol abuse can lead to liver disease, heart problems, and mental health disorders. By eliminating alcohol, the model seeks to reduce these conditions and improve public health.
- c. Saudi Arabia's strict alcohol ban is rooted in religious and cultural beliefs. It aims to create a society that is spiritual, moral, and healthy. The ban also seeks to protect individuals and families from the harmful effects of alcohol, while promoting social harmony and cultural preservation.

2. **Kuwait:** The prohibition of alcohol in Kuwait is based on the country's cultural and religious values. This approach is seen as a way to maintain social harmony and a safe environment for families. Proponents of the prohibition argue that it helps to reduce social problems associated with alcohol abuse.

- a. Kuwait's alcohol ban aims to reduce social problems caused by alcohol abuse such as, violence, public disturbances, and family disputes. The ban seeks to address these issues by removing alcohol as a contributing factor.
- b. The prohibition of alcohol in Kuwait is seen as a way to promote healthier lifestyles and alternative leisure activities. By removing alcohol as an option, people are encouraged to find other activities that are more beneficial to their health and well-being.

- c. The prohibition of alcohol in Kuwait aims to protect public health by reducing the prevalence of health problems associated with alcohol abuse, such as liver disease, cardiovascular problems, and mental health disorders.
 - d. Alcohol prohibition in Kuwait is also seen as a way to preserve and strengthen the country's cultural heritage by discouraging alcohol consumption and promoting the values and traditions deeply ingrained in Kuwaiti society.
3. **Iran:** Iran's alcohol prohibition is rooted in Islamic law and aims to protect individuals and society from the negative impacts of alcohol. The prohibition in Iran is based on the belief that alcohol is harmful to both individuals and society. It is argued that alcohol can lead to addiction, health problems, and social disruption. By prohibiting alcohol, Iran seeks to create a society that is free from these negative impacts.
4. **Libya:** Libya's alcohol prohibition is based on religious and cultural values, and is seen as a way to create a more orderly and cohesive society. One of the unique aspects of this model is its strict enforcement. The government takes a zero-tolerance approach to alcohol, and those who are caught breaking the law can face severe penalties, including imprisonment. This strict enforcement helps to deter people from drinking alcohol, and it also sends a clear message that the prohibition is taken seriously.
5. **Sudan:** Sudan's alcohol prohibition is unique in several ways, despite being based on religious and cultural beliefs. First, it is one of the few countries in the world that has a complete ban on alcohol. Second, the prohibition is rooted in both religious and cultural beliefs, which gives it a strong foundation. Third, the prohibition is enforced through a combination of religious and legal sanctions, making it difficult to circumvent. Sudan's prohibition model is also enforced through social pressure. In Sudanese society, alcohol is seen as taboo, and those who drink it are often ostracised. This social pressure helps to keep people from drinking alcohol, even if they are not religious or afraid of legal consequences.

6. **Oman:** Oman's prohibition model is highly praised for its system of rationing.¹²⁶ The Omani government has made specific allowances to support the tourism sector. The Royal Oman Police, the government authority responsible for regulating alcohol prohibition, grants licences for the sale of alcoholic products in liquor shops, duty-free shops at airports, and certain hotels and restaurants, which are not accessible to the general public. The Royal Oman Police also oversees the marketing of liquor products, which is only permitted in the aforementioned establishments. Even the permits for selling alcohol come with various conditions, including the requirement that there be no mosque within a one-kilometre radius and the avoidance of residential areas, thereby prohibiting public alcohol consumption and similar activities. These stringent enforcement measures implemented by the Royal Oman Police enable the practical implementation of alcohol prohibition by the Omani government while also supporting the tourism industry.¹²⁷

By emphasising the religious foundation, Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, and Libya have effectively implemented prohibition, aiming to instil a sense of duty and obedience among the population. Religion plays a significant role in shaping the social and cultural fabric of these societies, particularly in relation to prohibition. Islamic countries invest in public awareness campaigns and educational programs to educate the population about the religious, health, and social implications of alcohol consumption. These efforts aim to raise awareness about the negative consequences and promote the virtues of abstaining from alcohol. TASMAC, the state-owned liquor retail chain in Tamil Nadu, can draw inspiration from the activities of these Islamic countries. It is crucial to revitalise the spiritual sense of the Tamil people and propagate the ill effects of alcoholism within a spiritual context.

¹²⁶ [Oman Liquor restrictions](#)

¹²⁷ [Omani Penal Law](#)

NATIVE BREWS AND CONCEPT OF CONTENTMENT/HAPPINESS

IX. Native Brews and Concept of Contentment/ Happiness

A. Concept of Contentment¹²⁸

The principle of moderation and responsible alcohol consumption has long been a part of the cultural wisdom of India's tribal communities. These communities recognize the importance of balance and self-control when it comes to consuming alcohol, viewing it as a means to maintain harmony within families and communities.

In the context of personal use and moderation, alcohol is often seen as a social lubricant and a part of celebratory occasions or religious rituals. It is consumed in controlled amounts and within specific cultural contexts, where its role is understood and respected. Tribal communities have developed a deep understanding of the potential risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption and the negative consequences it can have on individuals, families, and communities.

However, the dynamics surrounding alcohol consumption change when it transitions to an industrial scale, with increased production and distribution. The shift to large-scale production and the availability of alcohol at lower costs can inadvertently contribute to higher rates of consumption. As alcohol becomes more accessible and affordable, it may be consumed in larger quantities and more frequently, leading to potential addiction-related issues.

With the increased availability of alcohol, the potential for negative impacts on families, communities, and society as a whole is heightened. Excessive alcohol consumption can result in strained relationships, domestic violence, financial hardships, and health problems. It can also contribute to social issues such as crime, unemployment, and overall social disintegration.

The transition from traditional homemade alcohol production, which was often limited and consumed in moderation, to industrial-scale production brings forth new challenges in maintaining responsible consumption patterns. It becomes crucial to address the potential risks associated with

¹²⁸ [Top 10 reasons to Home brew](#)

increased availability and affordability. Implementing measures such as public awareness campaigns, education on responsible drinking, and regulatory frameworks to control alcohol sales and distribution can help mitigate the potential negative consequences.

Presently, in Tamil Nadu, the realm of home-brewing is expanding due to the widespread availability of craft beer kits and the promotion of healthier alternatives by urban clubs. Although these activities are currently limited, it is important for the government to support the farmers of Tamil Nadu in exploring diverse options. A notable example can be seen in Goa, where the Goan Feni, with the assistance of governmental support, has obtained a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This has not only enhanced the livelihood of farmers but has also successfully bolstered small-scale industries. The Government of Goa has additionally written to foreign embassies also to promote the ‘heritage’ drink.¹²⁹ In Tamil Nadu, the potential is even greater. The northern region is abundant in cashew plantations, while coconut cultivation thrives in the western belt. In the southern region, which possesses significant palm resources, there is untapped potential in the utilisation of toddy. Despite the all-encompassing possibilities offered by small-scale breweries in Tamil Nadu, it is regrettable that they are being underutilised due to the vested interests of a few political lobbyists.

B. History of Home-brewed Liquor¹³⁰

The history of homebrew fermentation in India is deeply intertwined with the country's rich cultural and traditional practices. For thousands of years, fermentation has played a significant role in the preparation of various foods and beverages, showcasing the diverse and vibrant culinary heritage of India.

One of the earliest recorded instances of homebrew fermentation in India can be traced back to the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. Flourishing around 2600-1900 BCE, this ancient civilization encompassed parts of present-day India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Archaeological excavations have

¹²⁹ [IE, March 2023](#)

¹³⁰ [History of Fermentation](#)

uncovered evidence of fermentation vessels and utensils, indicating that the inhabitants of the Indus Valley were skilled in the art of fermentation. They harnessed this technique to ferment grains, fruits, and honey, producing a range of alcoholic beverages.

Fermentation continued to be an integral part of Indian culinary traditions throughout history. Each region of India boasts its own distinct fermented delicacies, influenced by local ingredients, climate, and cultural practices. These fermented foods and beverages have not only served as nourishment but also held symbolic and ritualistic significance in religious and social ceremonies.

One prominent example of homebrew fermentation in India is the traditional rice wine known as "Handia" or "Handiya." This beverage is popular in the eastern states of Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. Handia is prepared by fermenting rice using a starter culture called "Ranu" or "Basi Bhaat." The process involves soaking the rice, allowing it to partially ferment, and then storing it in earthen pots for several days or weeks. The resulting Handia is a mildly alcoholic beverage with a unique flavour and aroma, often consumed during festivals and celebrations.

Another widely consumed fermented beverage in India is "Toddy" or "Palm Wine." Toddy is obtained by tapping the sap from various species of palm trees, such as the coconut palm or the Palmyra palm. The sap is collected in containers and naturally undergoes fermentation, resulting in a mildly alcoholic beverage. Toddy is enjoyed in different parts of India, particularly in southern states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. It is often consumed fresh and has a sweet and tangy taste.

In addition to beverages, Indian cuisine features a plethora of fermented foods that showcase the artistry and diversity of homebrew fermentation. Examples include "Idli" and "Dosa," popular South Indian fermented rice and lentil-based dishes, and "Dhokla," a fermented snack made from gram flour in Gujarat.

Throughout history, homebrew fermentation in India has evolved and adapted, incorporating new ingredients, techniques, and influences. While commercial production and availability of alcoholic

beverages have increased over time, many Indians continue to practise homebrew fermentation in their homes, preserving age-old traditions and passing them down through generations.

It is important to note that while homebrew fermentation holds cultural significance and is deeply rooted in Indian traditions, the consumption of alcohol, including homebrewed beverages, must be done responsibly and in accordance with legal regulations. Certainly! Throughout India's vast and diverse history, various regions and communities have developed their own unique methods of homebrew fermentation, resulting in a wide array of traditional beverages. These beverages showcase the rich cultural heritage and culinary traditions of the country.

In the northeastern states of India, such as Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, one popular rice-based brew is Handia. Handia is made by fermenting rice using a traditional starter culture called Ranu or Basi Bhaat. The partially fermented rice is stored in earthen pots for several days or weeks, allowing it to undergo further fermentation and develop its distinct flavour. Handia is often consumed during festivals and celebrations in these states.

Moving to the Himalayan region, specifically in Sikkim and parts of Himachal Pradesh, Chhang is a traditional fermented beverage enjoyed by the local communities. Chhang is typically made by fermenting barley or millet. The grains are cooked, mashed, and mixed with yeast or a starter culture called "Tumba." The mixture is then left to ferment for several days or weeks before being consumed. Chhang is often served warm and is an integral part of local festivities and gatherings.

In Andhra Pradesh, Tella is a traditional homebrew beverage that holds cultural significance. It is made by fermenting a mixture of jaggery (unrefined sugar), rice, and water. The fermentation process can take several days, resulting in a mildly alcoholic beverage with a sweet and tangy taste. Tella is enjoyed during festivals and special occasions in the region.

Another notable category of homebrewed beverages in India includes those derived from the sap of palm trees. Toddy, for example, is a popular fermented drink found in different parts of the country, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and parts of Maharashtra. The sap is obtained by tapping the flower

stalk of palm trees, such as coconut palms or Palmyra palms. The collected sap naturally undergoes fermentation, resulting in a mildly alcoholic beverage with a unique flavour profile. Toddy is often consumed fresh and is appreciated for its sweet and tangy taste.

Furthermore, various regions across India have their own versions of country liquor, also known as desi daru or country-made liquor. These alcoholic beverages are typically made from locally available ingredients like sugarcane, grains, or fruits. The production methods vary, but they often involve fermentation followed by distillation to increase the alcohol content. Country liquor is deeply ingrained in local traditions and cultural practices, often associated with rural communities.

While homebrew fermentation in India has a long-standing history, it has also witnessed shifts and adaptations over time. With the introduction of new ingredients, techniques, and influences, the landscape of traditional beverages continues to evolve. Commercial production and availability of alcoholic beverages have also increased, providing consumers with a wider range of choices. However, homebrew fermentation remains an important aspect of India's cultural heritage, preserving ancient traditions and reflecting the diversity of its culinary practices.

Indeed, modern innovations and scientific understanding have influenced the evolution of homebrew fermentation practices in India. While homebrewing remains rooted in tradition and cultural practices, advancements in technology, equipment, and knowledge have contributed to the refinement of the process.

One significant innovation is the use of commercial yeast strains. Traditionally, homebrewers relied on naturally occurring yeasts present in the environment or utilised homemade starter cultures for fermentation. However, the availability of commercial yeast strains has provided brewers with more control over the fermentation process, allowing for consistent and predictable results. These specially selected yeast strains offer various flavour profiles, fermentation characteristics, and efficiency, enhancing the quality and diversity of homebrewed beverages.

Improved fermentation vessels and equipment have also made an impact on homebrewing practices. Traditional methods often involved the use of clay pots, wooden barrels, or woven baskets for fermentation. While these methods are still practised in some regions for their cultural significance, modern homebrewers have access to a wider range of vessels specifically designed for fermentation. Food-grade plastic buckets, glass carboys, stainless steel fermenters, and temperature-controlled fermentation chambers are some examples of equipment that provide greater control over the brewing environment and contribute to the overall quality of the final product.

Scientific understanding of the fermentation process has also played a role in shaping homebrewing practices. With the advancement of knowledge in microbiology and biochemistry, homebrewers have access to resources and information regarding the optimal conditions for fermentation, yeast propagation, pH control, and temperature management. This scientific understanding helps homebrewers troubleshoot issues, improve fermentation efficiency, and produce more consistent and desirable flavours in their brews.

Beyond the technical aspects, homebrewing holds cultural and social significance in India. It is a non-commercial practice that is often passed down through generations within tribal pockets and rural communities. Homebrewing is seen as a way to connect with the land, preserve traditional knowledge, and foster a sense of community. The brewing process is often a communal affair, where family members, neighbours, and friends come together to share knowledge, experiences, and stories, strengthening social bonds.

Homebrewing also provides individuals with a sense of satisfaction and civility. Homebrewers have control over the ingredients used in their brews, allowing them to prioritise quality and authenticity. Many homebrewers source local ingredients, such as grains, fruits, or herbs, which adds a sense of terroir and reflects the unique flavours of their region. Additionally, the absence of chemicals or artificial ingredients in homebrewed liquor is often perceived as a healthier and more natural alternative to commercially-produced beverages.

Overall, while homebrewing in India remains deeply rooted in tradition and cultural practices, modern innovations have influenced the process, allowing for greater control, consistency, and quality. Homebrewing continues to provide a way for individuals to connect with their heritage, community, and the land while enjoying the satisfaction of producing their own unique beverages.

B. Indian Home-brewed Liquor¹³¹



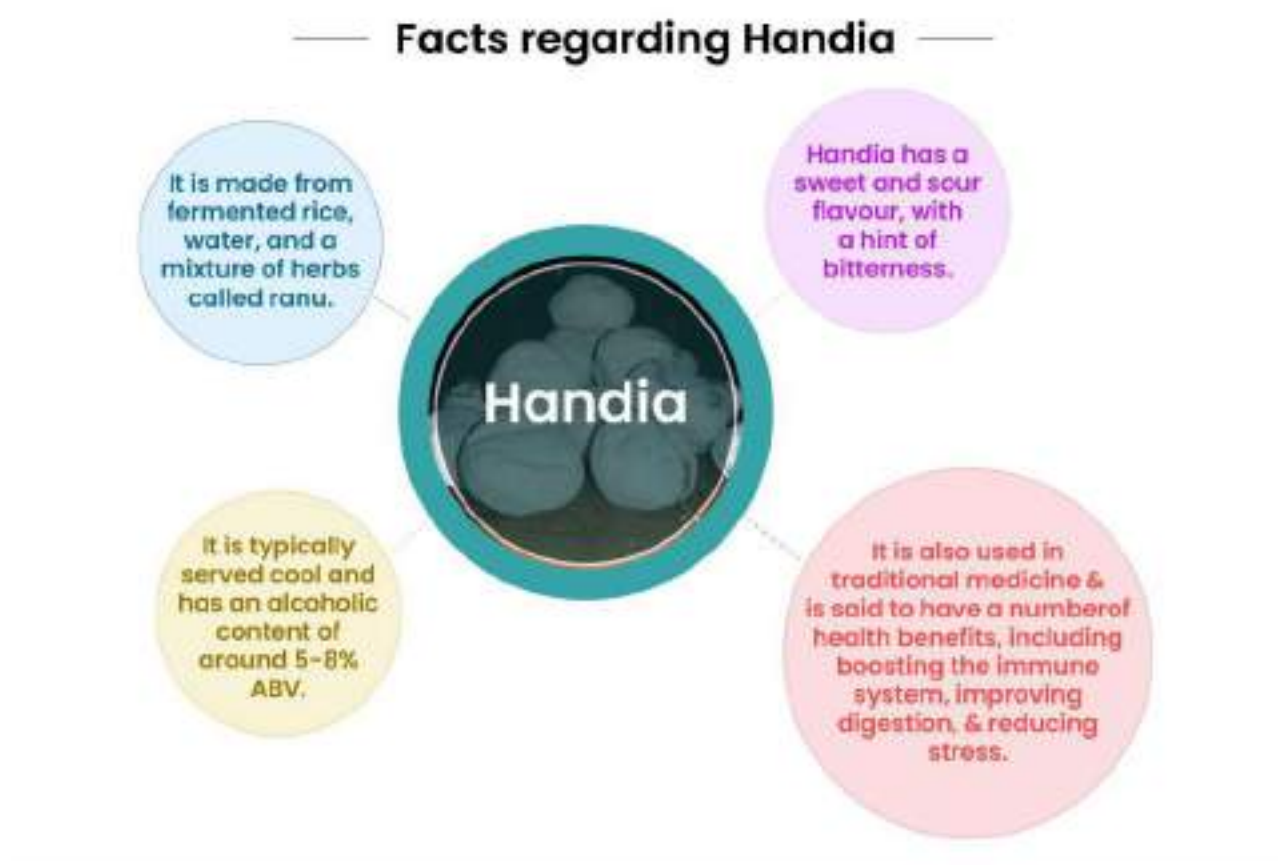
Infographic 8: Indian Map of Home-brewed Liquor

¹³¹ [Indian Traditional Alcoholic Beverages](#)

1. Handia/Apong

Handia, also known as Apong, is a traditional rice-beer that holds cultural significance in the northeastern states of India, particularly Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and parts of Odisha. This indigenous brew is deeply rooted in the local traditions and practices of these regions, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the communities.

The process of making Handia begins with soaking rice, often a local variety, in water overnight. The soaked rice is then coarsely ground to create a paste-like consistency. This rice paste is mixed with water to form a thick mixture, which is then transferred into earthenware pots called "handia" or "bhaza." These pots are traditionally used for fermentation due to their porous nature, allowing air circulation and maintaining an optimal environment for fermentation.



Infographic 9: Facts regarding Handia

The fermentation process of Handia relies on the natural yeast present on the rice, particularly a local variety called "joha bhat." This yeast initiates the fermentation by converting the rice starches into alcohol. The fermentation duration can vary from several days to a week, depending on factors such as temperature and desired flavour profile. During this time, the yeast converts the carbohydrates into alcohol, resulting in the characteristic milky-white appearance and alcohol content of Handia.

One of the distinguishing features of Handia is its unique sour and tangy flavour, which is derived from the fermentation process. The naturally occurring lactic acid bacteria contribute to this flavour profile, providing a refreshing and distinct taste experience. Handia is often enjoyed fresh, straight from the fermentation vessel, at room temperature. The slightly viscous texture and the balance between sourness and sweetness make it a favoured beverage among the local communities.

While Handia is typically consumed soon after fermentation, some variations may undergo additional ageing to enhance the flavour complexity. Aging can take place by storing Handia in earthen pots or bamboo containers for an extended period, allowing further fermentation and maturation. This ageing process can result in a stronger, more robust flavour profile, appreciated by connoisseurs of Handia.

In addition to its cultural significance, Handia plays a role in local festivals, rituals, and social gatherings. It is often shared among community members during celebrations and serves as a symbol of unity and togetherness. The brewing and consumption of Handia are intertwined with traditional customs, where the knowledge and techniques of its preparation are passed down from generation to generation, fostering a sense of cultural continuity.

Handia represents the rich tapestry of traditional homebrew fermentation in India, showcasing the diverse range of indigenous beverages that have evolved over centuries. Its unique production process, flavours, and cultural significance make Handia a prized part of the

northeastern region's culinary heritage, preserving age-old traditions and offering a taste of the local cultural identity.

2. Chhang

Chhang, a traditional rice-based beer, holds a significant place in the cultural fabric of Mizoram, a northeastern state in India. With its clear and light appearance and a subtly sweet flavour profile, Chhang has become a beloved beverage among the Mizo community and an intriguing discovery for visitors exploring the region.

The name "Chhang" is derived from the Mizo term "chang," which translates to the process of fermentation. This reflects the central role fermentation plays in the creation of this traditional brew. Chhang is crafted using various varieties of rice, including white, red, and black rice, each contributing its distinct characteristics to the final product. The choice of rice varieties adds diversity and complexity to the flavours and aromas of Chhang.

The brewing process of Chhang begins with the cooking of rice. The cooked rice is then spread out on bamboo mats or trays, allowing it to cool and dry. Once the rice has reached the desired temperature, it is transferred to fermentation vessels, which can be earthen pots or barrels made of bamboo. These vessels are specifically chosen for their ability to regulate temperature and maintain the ideal conditions for fermentation.

The fermentation stage of Chhang is a critical process that spans several days. During this period, the rice undergoes a transformation facilitated by natural yeast and bacteria present in the environment. These microorganisms convert the carbohydrates in the rice into alcohol, resulting in the fermentation of Chhang. The duration of fermentation can vary, influenced by factors such as temperature, humidity, and the desired flavour profile. The art of determining the optimal fermentation period is often passed down through generations, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural knowledge associated with Chhang production.

Once the fermentation process is complete, Chhang is ready to be enjoyed. It exhibits a clean and clear appearance, akin to a light-coloured beer, with a slightly effervescent quality. The flavour profile of Chhang is characterised by a delicate sweetness, balanced by the natural tartness resulting from the fermentation process. This unique combination of flavours creates a refreshing and enjoyable drinking experience, particularly in Mizoram's warm and humid climate.

Chhang holds considerable popularity among the Mizo community and frequently graces social gatherings and festive occasions. It is a symbol of celebration and togetherness, often shared among family members, friends, and community members. The act of partaking in Chhang strengthens social bonds and fosters a sense of unity within the community.

Additionally, Chhang has garnered attention among tourists exploring Mizoram. Its cultural significance, traditional brewing techniques, and distinct taste make it an intriguing beverage to discover and experience. Visitors are often intrigued by the artisanal nature of Chhang production, where the knowledge and techniques have been passed down through generations, preserving a rich cultural heritage.

While Chhang holds a special place in the hearts and traditions of the Mizo people, it is important to note that responsible consumption is emphasised. Chhang is deeply intertwined with the cultural fabric of Mizoram, and its appreciation goes beyond the mere consumption of alcohol. It is a testament to the community's pride in their heritage and their commitment to preserving their cultural identity.

In conclusion, Chhang, the traditional rice-based beer of Mizoram, represents the fusion of craftsmanship, cultural significance, and a unique flavour profile. Its clear and light appearance, subtly sweet taste, and cultural associations have made it a cherished beverage within the Mizo community. The tradition of Chhang brewing, passed down through generations, reflects the deep-rooted connection between the people of Mizoram and their cultural heritage. Chhang,

with its rich cultural heritage and unique taste, has become a point of interest for those seeking to explore the diverse traditions and flavours of Mizoram. As tourists discover the state's vibrant culture and picturesque landscapes, Chhang stands out as a quintessential aspect of the local experience.

The popularity of Chhang extends beyond the borders of Mizoram, with visitors from different parts of India and around the world expressing curiosity about this traditional brew. Tourists are often captivated by the process of Chhang production, which involves the use of locally available ingredients and traditional brewing techniques. The connection between Chhang and the land is evident, as the choice of rice varieties reflects the region's agricultural abundance and biodiversity.

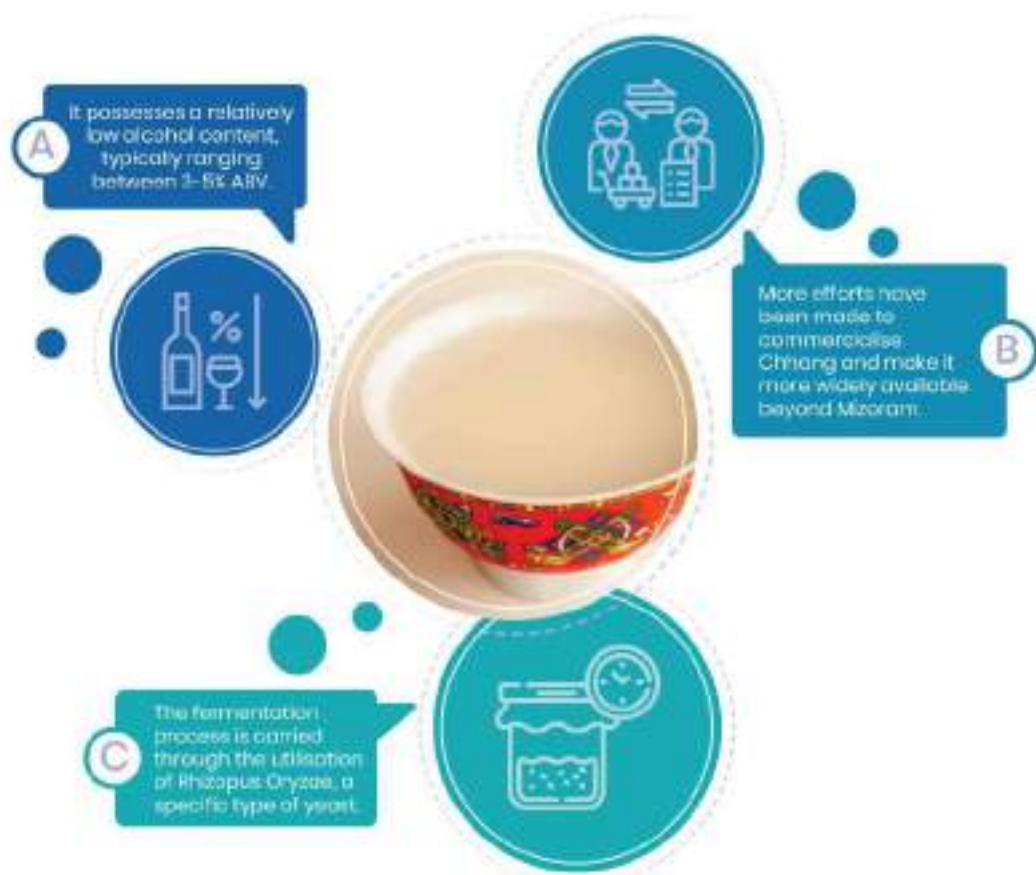
Visitors to Mizoram have the opportunity to witness firsthand the intricate craftsmanship and communal spirit associated with Chhang brewing. The brewing process itself often takes place in homes or community spaces, where family members and friends gather to participate in the preparations. This communal aspect of Chhang brewing fosters a sense of unity and belonging within the Mizo community and offers a glimpse into the rich social fabric of Mizoram.

For those who have the opportunity to taste Chhang, the experience is both refreshing and culturally enlightening. The mild sweetness, complemented by the subtle tanginess, creates a harmonious balance of flavours that is distinctively Chhang. The beverage is often served at room temperature, enhancing its natural aromas and allowing the nuances of the rice and fermentation process to shine through.

Moreover, Chhang is not merely a beverage but also a symbol of the Mizo people's deep-rooted cultural pride and identity. It represents their connection to the land, their agricultural traditions, and their commitment to preserving their heritage. The traditions associated with Chhang brewing are passed down through generations, ensuring the continuity of this cherished practice.

It is important to note that while Chhang holds cultural significance and is enjoyed by many, responsible consumption is paramount. The Mizo community emphasises moderation and the sharing of Chhang as a means of fostering social bonds rather than excessive indulgence. Visitors to Mizoram are encouraged to appreciate Chhang as part of the local culture and to engage in responsible and respectful participation.

In conclusion, Chhang, the traditional rice-based beer of Mizoram, offers a window into the rich cultural heritage and flavours of the region. It's clear appearance, mild sweetness, and communal brewing process make it a captivating beverage for both locals and tourists. By embracing Chhang, individuals can not only savour a unique taste but also gain insights into the traditions, values, and social dynamics of the Mizo community.



Infographic 10: Facts regarding Chhang

3. Mahua Liquor

Mahua liquor, also known as Mahua wine, is a traditional alcoholic beverage made from the flowers of the Mahua tree (*Madhuca longifolia*). It has been consumed for centuries in various regions of India, particularly in tribal communities. The Mahua tree is native to India, and the flowers are collected and fermented to produce the liquor. Mahua liquor has a unique taste profile with a sweet, fruity, and floral flavour.¹³² Mahua liquor, derived from the flowers of the Mahua tree, holds a significant place in the traditional alcoholic beverages of India, especially among tribal communities. The Mahua tree, scientifically known as *Madhuca longifolia*, is native to the Indian subcontinent and is revered for its various uses in indigenous practices, including the production of liquor.

The process of making Mahua liquor begins with the collection of the flowers during their blooming season. The flowers are plucked from the Mahua tree, which can reach heights of up to 20 metres, and then carefully sorted and cleaned. Once the flowers are prepared, they are typically sun-dried or lightly roasted to enhance their flavours and remove excess moisture.

After the preparation phase, the flowers are crushed or ground to create a paste or pulp. This pulp is then mixed with water and left to ferment in large containers, traditionally made from clay or other natural materials. Fermentation can take several days to a few weeks, allowing the natural sugars present in the flowers to convert into alcohol.

During the fermentation process, the Mahua liquor undergoes chemical changes, developing its distinct taste and aroma. The floral notes of the Mahua flowers infuse the beverage with a delicate fragrance, while the natural sugars contribute to its sweet and fruity flavour profile. The end result is a unique liquor with a rich amber or golden colour.

Mahua liquor is known for its smoothness and relatively low alcohol content, typically ranging from 15% to 20% ABV (alcohol by volume). This makes it a milder option compared to stronger

¹³² [Mahua Liquor](#)

spirits, appealing to those who prefer a more gentle drinking experience. The sweet and fruity taste of Mahua liquor adds to its allure, making it enjoyable for both casual drinkers and connoisseurs of traditional beverages.

The significance of Mahua liquor extends beyond its taste and cultural relevance. It holds a special place in the social fabric of tribal communities, where it is often associated with festivities, rituals, and celebrations. It is commonly shared during communal gatherings, weddings, and religious ceremonies, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among community members.

It is important to note that while Mahua liquor has a long-standing history and cultural significance, responsible consumption is crucial. As with any alcoholic beverage, moderation is key, and individuals are encouraged to consume Mahua liquor in a manner that respects personal health and social well-being.

In conclusion, Mahua liquor, crafted from the flowers of the Mahua tree, is a traditional alcoholic beverage that embodies the flavours and traditions of India's tribal communities. Its sweet, fruity, and floral taste profile, combined with its cultural significance, makes it a cherished part of the country's heritage. Whether enjoyed during festivities or as a testament to indigenous practices, Mahua liquor stands as a testament to the diverse range of traditional beverages found throughout India.



Image 6 : Mahua Tree

Source : [The Hindu](#), April 13, 2017

It is often enjoyed for its distinct aroma and the connection it holds to nature and local traditions. In many regions, Mahua liquor is consumed during festivals, weddings, and other celebratory occasions, bringing people together and enhancing the sense of community.



Infographic 11: Facts regarding Mahua Liquor

Mahua liquor is a popular drink in the tribal communities of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Maharashtra. These states are the largest producers of mahua in India. Aside from its cultural importance, Mahua liquor also plays a role in traditional medicine and folklore. It is believed to have medicinal properties and is used in Ayurvedic practices for various purposes.

4. Goan Feni¹³³

Goan Feni is a cherished and distinct traditional spirit that holds a special place in the cultural fabric of Goa, a coastal state in India. Feni is renowned for its authenticity, as it is a pure and natural alcoholic beverage free from artificial flavours and additives. The name "feni" is derived from the Sanskrit word "phena," which translates to "froth," highlighting the light frothy texture that forms when the liquor is shaken or poured.

For over 400 years, Feni has been deeply ingrained in Goan food culture, becoming an integral part of the local heritage. Recognizing its significance, Feni was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) certificate in 2009. This certification ensures that Feni can only be produced in the state of Goa and must adhere to specific standards of quality and authenticity. The GI status safeguards the traditional production methods, geographical origin, and unique characteristics of Goan Feni, protecting it from imitation or misrepresentation.

In further recognition of its cultural importance, the Goan government initiated the process of declaring Feni a heritage drink in 2016. This proposed designation aims to provide even greater protection and acknowledgment to Feni as an emblematic and irreplaceable part of Goan culture. By bestowing the status of a heritage drink, Feni would receive heightened recognition, preserving its cultural legacy and ensuring its continued significance for future generations.

Beyond its cultural significance, Feni is deeply intertwined with the social fabric of Goa. It is often enjoyed during celebrations, festivals, and family gatherings, adding a touch of tradition

¹³³ TOI

and festivity to the atmosphere. The craftsmanship and knowledge required for the production of Feni have been passed down through generations, fostering a sense of pride and expertise among local communities involved in its production.

Feni is primarily derived from two sources: cashew apples and coconut palms. Cashew Feni, the most common variant, is made by fermenting the juice extracted from cashew apples. The process involves crushing the fruit, collecting the juice, and allowing it to naturally ferment for a few days. Coconut Feni, on the other hand, is crafted by fermenting the sap obtained from the flowering stalks of coconut palms. The sap is collected in earthen pots and left to ferment over a period of time, resulting in the transformation of sugars into alcohol.

The distinct flavours and aromas of Feni make it a unique and sought-after spirit. It is known for its robust and fruity notes, reflecting the essence of the cashew apples or coconut palms from which it is derived. Feni can be enjoyed neat, on the rocks, or used as a base in various cocktails, showcasing its versatility and appeal.

In conclusion, Goan Feni stands as a treasured and culturally significant spirit in Goa. Its recognition as a Geographical Indication and the ongoing efforts to declare it a heritage drink highlight its authentic production methods, regional identity, and historical importance. Feni's pure and natural composition, coupled with its unique flavours and deep-rooted traditions, make it a symbol of Goan culture and a beloved part of the state's culinary heritage.

Goan Feni is a distinctive and traditional spirit of significant cultural value in the coastal state of Goa, India. Renowned for its authenticity and lack of artificial flavours, Feni is considered a safe alcoholic beverage. The name "feni" derives from the Sanskrit term "phena," which translates to "froth." This name aptly reflects the light froth that forms when the liquor is shaken or poured. With a history spanning over four centuries, Feni has become an integral part of Goan culinary heritage.

In recognition of its unique origin and characteristics, Feni was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) certificate in 2009. This certification ensures that Feni can only be produced within the geographical boundaries of Goa and must adhere to specific quality and authenticity standards. Such recognition highlights the significance of Feni as a product deeply rooted in Goan culture.

Furthermore, in 2016, the Goan government initiated the process of declaring Feni a heritage drink. This designation aims to provide enhanced protection and acknowledgment to Feni as a distinct and invaluable component of Goan cultural heritage. By granting Feni the status of a heritage drink, its historical, cultural, and traditional importance is further emphasised, safeguarding its authenticity for future generations.

The recognition and protection of Feni as a Geographical Indication and the ongoing efforts to declare it a heritage drink not only preserve the unique identity of this traditional spirit but also contribute to the promotion and preservation of Goan cultural heritage. These initiatives ensure that the production and consumption of Feni remain rooted in the rich traditions and practices that have shaped Goan society for centuries.

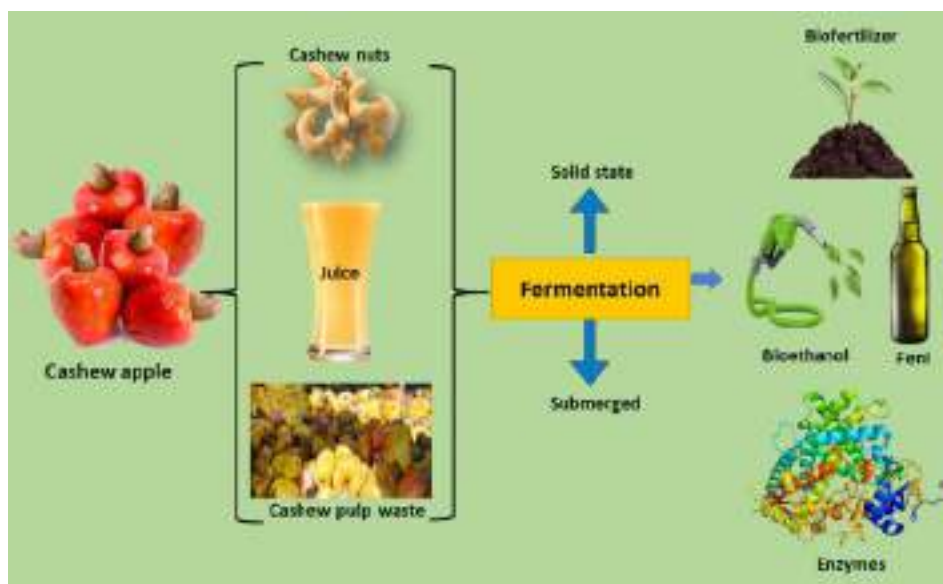


Image 7 : Cashew Apple, Distillation process

Source : [Microbiologyjournal.org](https://microbiologyjournal.org), November 24, 2021

Feni is indeed derived from the fermentation and distillation of either cashew or coconut palm sap, depending on the variant being produced. The production process of Feni involves several meticulous steps that contribute to its unique flavour profile.

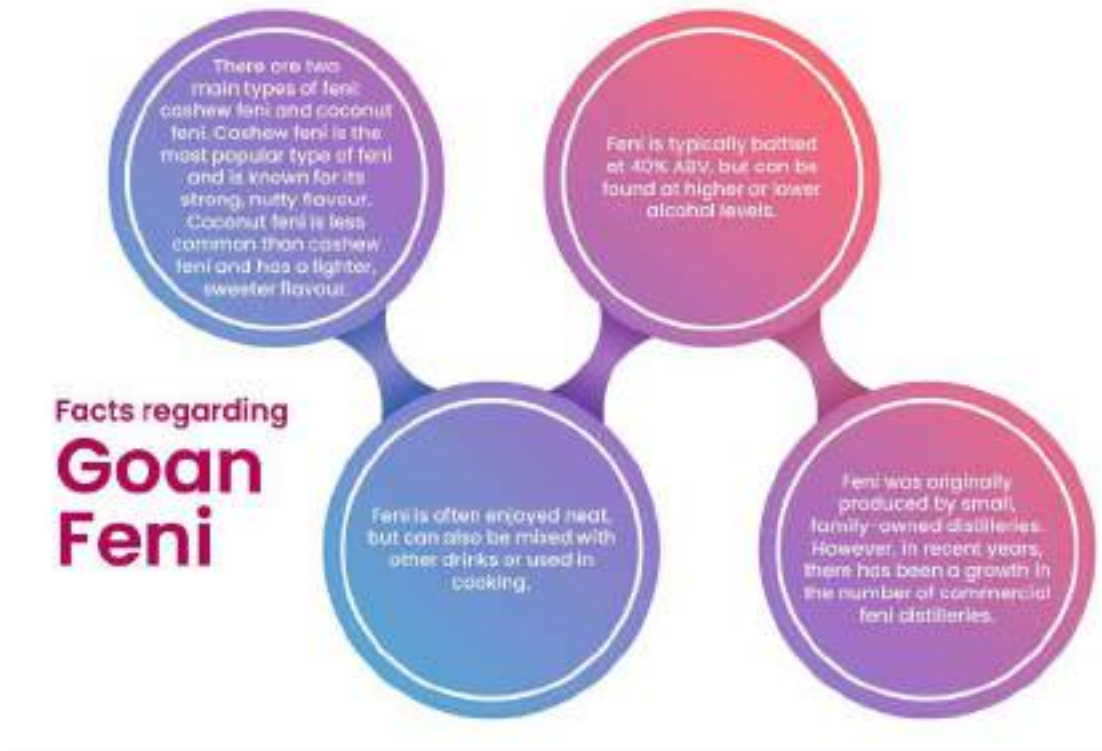
To begin the production of Feni, sap is collected from cashew or coconut palm trees. For cashew Feni, the sap is obtained by carefully tapping the swollen inflorescence of the cashew tree. In the case of coconut Feni, the sap is extracted by tapping the spadix of the coconut palm flower. This sap, also known as toddy or neera, is a sweet and translucent liquid.

Once collected, the sap is transferred into earthen pots or vats, where it is left to naturally ferment. During fermentation, natural yeasts present in the environment act upon the sugars present in the sap, converting them into alcohol. This fermentation process usually takes around 24 to 48 hours, during which the liquid undergoes a transformation and develops its characteristic flavours and aromas.

After fermentation, the fermented sap is subjected to distillation using traditional copper pot stills. The fermented liquid is heated, and the alcohol vapour rises and condenses as it passes through the copper still. This distillation process separates the alcohol from the liquid, resulting in a clear and potent spirit known as Feni.

One important aspect that contributes to the distinct flavour of Goan Feni is the choice of raw materials. Cashew Feni is known for its earthy, fruity, and slightly sweet flavour, with hints of tropical fruits and a subtle nuttiness. Coconut Feni, on the other hand, exhibits a more delicate and tropical flavour profile, with notes of coconut and a milder sweetness.

The entire process of Feni production, from sap collection to distillation, is carried out using traditional methods that have been passed down through generations. This traditional approach is considered vital in preserving the authenticity and quality of Goan Feni, ensuring that it retains its unique taste and cultural significance.



Infographic 12: Facts regarding Goan Feni

5. Zawlaidi

Zawlaidi, an indigenous liquor originating from the Indian state of Mizoram, is produced through a traditional homemade process. This colourless beverage is crafted from fermented rice, and its name, derived from the Mizo language, translates to "love potion." Legend has it that Zawlaidi was first concocted by a Mizo woman of the same name, renowned for her exceptional beauty. Her allure was so captivating that even the most apathetic individuals could not resist falling in love with her. Typically, Zawlaidi is brewed in small quantities by families or individuals, necessitating patience throughout the relatively simple brewing process. Initially, rice is cooked until it reaches a soft consistency, after which it is fermented using yeast.

This fermentation period spans several days, during which the rice undergoes the conversion to alcohol. Once fermentation is complete, Zawlaidi is ready for distillation, a step that further enhances its alcohol concentration. The distilled liquor is then bottled, awaiting the pleasure of

those who partake in its consumption. Mizoram's affinity for Zawlaidd renders it a popular choice for various social gatherings and festivals, where it is commonly served. Furthermore, this unique libation garners attention from tourists visiting the region, drawn to its distinct flavour and cultural significance.



Infographic 13: Facts regarding Zawlaidd

6. Yu¹³⁴

Yu, the traditional rice wine of Manipur, holds cultural significance in the region. The name "Yu" itself originates from the Meitei language, meaning "wine" or "liquor." To create this unique beverage, a specific type of rice known as "Yu maan" is selected. Yu maan is typically a sticky or glutinous variety of rice, favoured for its ability to impart rich flavours to the wine.

The process of making Yu begins with soaking the rice grains in water, which triggers the germination process. Once the germination is initiated, the rice is carefully spread out on woven

¹³⁴ [Live Mint](#)

bamboo mats to dry. This drying step is crucial as it prepares the rice for the subsequent stages of the brewing process.

After drying, the rice undergoes roasting to enhance its flavour and aroma. The roasting process adds depth and complexity to the final product. The roasted rice is then pounded or ground into a coarse powder, referred to as "yu paa." This powder forms the foundation for the fermentation of Yu. The coarse rice powder, yu paa, is mixed with water and placed in a large earthenware pot called a "yu phangba." The fermentation process relies on the wild yeast and bacteria present in the environment. Over the course of several days to a few weeks, the rice starches within the mixture gradually convert to sugars and then to alcohol, resulting in the formation of Yu.

Throughout the fermentation period, the yu phangba pot is carefully monitored to ensure optimal conditions for the transformation of the rice mixture into wine. The ambient temperature and the presence of natural microorganisms contribute to the unique flavours and character of the final product.

Once the fermentation process is complete, the liquid is strained and separated from any remaining solids. The resulting rice wine, Yu, embodies the cultural heritage of Manipur and is enjoyed during festive occasions, social gatherings, and traditional ceremonies.



Infographic 14: Facts regarding Yu

7. Tella

Tella is a traditional fermented beverage from Andhra Pradesh, India. It is made from palm sap and jaggery, and has a slightly sweet and tangy taste. Tella is often consumed during festive occasions and religious ceremonies, and is a symbol of togetherness in local communities.

— Facts regarding Tella —



Infographic 15: Facts regarding Tella

Tella is a cherished traditional fermented beverage that hails from the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. It holds a significant place in the cultural and social fabric of the region. This delightful beverage is crafted using two primary ingredients: palm sap and jaggery.

The process of making Tella begins with the extraction of palm sap, which is obtained from the trunks of certain palm trees. The sap is collected by making incisions in the tree and allowing the sweet, sap-like liquid to flow into containers. This process is usually done early in the morning when the sap flows most abundantly. Once the palm sap is collected, it is combined with jaggery, a type of unrefined sugar made from sugarcane juice or palm sap. Jaggery adds sweetness and depth to the flavour profile of Tella. The exact ratio of palm sap to jaggery may vary based on personal preferences and regional traditions.

The mixture of palm sap and jaggery is then carefully fermented. Traditionally, the fermentation is carried out in large earthenware pots or containers. The containers are covered to protect the mixture from dust and contaminants while allowing natural fermentation to occur.

The fermentation process of Tella is initiated by the natural yeasts and bacteria present in the environment. These microorganisms interact with the sugars in the palm sap and jaggery, converting them into alcohol and carbon dioxide. This transformative process can take several days to a couple of weeks, depending on the ambient temperature and the desired flavour profile.

During fermentation, the Tella develops a slightly sweet and tangy taste, with a gentle effervescence from the carbon dioxide produced. The unique flavour of Tella is derived from the intricate interplay between the sweetness of the jaggery and the tartness of the fermented palm sap.

Tella is often enjoyed during festive occasions, religious ceremonies, and community gatherings. It serves as a symbol of togetherness and unity within local communities, as it is commonly shared among family members, friends, and neighbours. The process of making Tella is not only a culinary tradition but also an important cultural practice that celebrates the rich heritage of Andhra Pradesh.

EMPLOYMENT REGENERATION PLAN FOR TASMAL EMPLOYEES

X. Employment Regeneration Plan for Existing TASMAL Employees

A. Background

Established in 1967, TASMAL is currently one of the largest employers in Tamil Nadu, providing livelihoods to more than 100,000 individuals. TASMAL holds a monopoly over the retail sale of liquor in the state, playing a crucial role in generating substantial revenue for the government. However, there has been an ongoing demand for alcohol prohibition in Tamil Nadu, echoing across all sections of society. The prevalence of liquor consumption is recognized as a significant contributor to social problems, including alcoholism, crime, and poverty.

The potential closure of TASMAL would not only impact the state's revenue but also have far-reaching consequences for the employees dependent on the organisation. Many TASMAL employees possess limited skills beyond the liquor trade, making it challenging for them to secure alternative employment opportunities. The closure of TASMAL would undoubtedly pose hardships for these individuals and their families, as they navigate the uncertainties associated with job loss.

It is important to consider the multifaceted implications of any decision regarding the existence of TASMAL. While the concerns regarding the negative effects of alcohol on society are valid, addressing them requires comprehensive measures beyond the mere closure of a state-owned retail outlet. The welfare of TASMAL employees and their families should be taken into account, ensuring suitable support and assistance during any potential transition or reforms in the alcohol industry.

The Employment Regeneration plan is a comprehensive plan to assist the TASMAL employees in finding jobs, when prohibition is implemented. The plan includes the following components



Infographic 16: Employment Regeneration Plan

B. Reskilling and Retraining

The closure of TASMAC could have a significant impact on its employees. To help them transition to new sectors, it is necessary for the government to have devised a comprehensive retraining and re-skilling plan. The plan emphasises a multi-faceted approach to training and development. Government agencies will take the lead in implementing tailored training programs, while private training institutes and non-profit organisations will also play a role.

- a. Government agencies can partner with vocational training institutes and technical schools to offer specialised courses in areas such as sales and marketing, customer service, inventory management, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy. This will ensure that employees have access to high-quality training resources and industry-relevant expertise.
- b. The Government can engage with NGOs and private training institutes to develop targeted programs that focus on building skills that are in demand in sectors such as retail, hospitality, logistics, and customer relationship management. This will ensure that TASMAC employees receive training that directly aligns with the evolving needs of the job market.

- c. Non-profit organisations will contribute to the retraining efforts by providing a range of support services, such as career counselling, job placement assistance, mentorship programs, and networking opportunities. They will also facilitate access to scholarships or financial aid for those seeking further education or skill development.

The retraining and re-skilling plan should not be a one-time intervention. Continuous learning and upskilling opportunities will be emphasised to ensure the long-term employability of TASMACH employees. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning, the plan aims to equip employees with the ability to adapt to changing job market dynamics throughout their careers.

Overall, the comprehensive retraining and re-skilling plan demonstrates a commitment to supporting TASMACH employees in their transition to new sectors. By providing them with the necessary training and resources, the plan not only mitigates the immediate impact of TASMACH's closure but also empowers employees to explore diverse career paths, and contribute to the growth and prosperity of the state's economy.

The training programme for TASMACH employees, must be aimed at skill development and improving the re-employment opportunities.



Infographic 17: Objectives of the Training program

C. Re-Employment

Re-employment should be a key component of the comprehensive plan aimed at supporting TASMAL employees in finding new employment opportunities across various sectors. Recognizing the importance of a smooth transition, the plan emphasises a proactive approach in collaboration with government agencies, employers, and the affected employees themselves. The government should plan to actively engage with employers in different sectors to identify job openings that align with the necessary skills and experience of TASMAL employees.

- a. One such alternative avenue for employment of the 25,000 TASMAL employees who may be affected by a liquor ban in the state is the retail toddy shops. Utilising their experience of supervising TASMAL liquor shops, the supervisors can be recruited to oversee the administration of these establishments while the salesmen and assistant salesmen can provide the required manpower to sell the toddy.
- b. Further, the Government should foster partnerships with businesses, industries, and local organisations, to facilitate a seamless match between job seekers and employers.
- c. The proactive approach should also include conducting job fairs, organising networking events, and establishing channels of communication to bridge the gap between available job positions and the skills of TASMAL employees.
- d. To incentivize employers to hire TASMAL employees, the government should offer financial incentives like tax benefits, subsidies, or grants to companies that demonstrate a commitment to employing and training former TASMAL workers.

D. Ensuring Social Security

The comprehensive plan should include a robust social safety net program to help TASMAL employees who may face challenges in finding new employment. The program aims to provide financial assistance and essential support services to ensure the well-being and stability of affected

individuals and their families during the transitional phase. The specific goals of the social safety net program are as follows:

- a. **Financial assistance:** The program provides financial support to TASMACH employees who are unable to immediately find new jobs. This assistance helps cover essential expenses, such as housing, utilities, and healthcare.
- b. **Bridging the income gap:** The program bridges the income gap for individuals who were previously reliant on their employment at TASMACH. Through unemployment benefits, eligible employees receive a regular income to meet their basic needs and maintain a decent standard of living while actively seeking new employment opportunities.
- c. **Ensuring access to basic necessities:** The program provides access to food and other essential items through Public Distribution Stores. This enables TASMACH employees and their families in ensuring their nutritional needs are met and the financial strain is reduced during the transition period.
- d. **Support services:** The program should provide a range of support services, such as career counselling, job placement assistance, and training programs to enhance employability in different sectors. Access to healthcare services, mental health support, and counselling is also made available to address the holistic well-being of affected individuals and their families.

The social safety net program is designed to be comprehensive and flexible, so that it can be adapted to the specific needs of TASMACH employees and their families. The program is essential to ensuring that affected individuals are able to weather the transition period and build a new future for themselves.

CREATING A ₹1 LAKH CRORE TODDY/PALM INDUSTRY

XI. Creating A ₹1 Lakh Crore Toddy/Palm Industry

A. Historical Significance

To understand the historical significance of toddy and palm in Tamil Nadu, one must delve into the rituals, food habits, attire, and literature of the society. The palm tree, also known as the Palmyra or state tree, has played a pivotal role in shaping the economic and cultural landscape of the region. Tamil Nadu has a rich ecosystem of tropical forests, which include various species of palm trees that hold significant economic importance. According to recent data, palm trees are found in 108 countries worldwide, with approximately 2,600 different species from 200 different genera. In India, there are around 105 species of palm trees in 22 genera, and Tamil Nadu is home to 50% of all Indian palm trees. While there were once 30 varieties of palm trees in the region, today only three main types, namely Naatupanai, Koonthapanai, and Thalipanai, are commonly identified.¹³⁵

In Tamil Nadu, palm leaves were widely used before the advent of paper. These leaves are known to be highly durable, with a lifespan of up to a hundred years. However, the growth of palm trees has significantly declined due to factors such as their use as fuel in brick kilns, conversion of palm groves into housing estates, and the destruction caused by jackals dispersing palm fruit seeds.

Palm trees hold immense value for the people of Tamil Nadu, providing a multitude of benefits from top to bottom. Palmyrah trees, in particular, are highly prized for their versatility. They yield fruits, toddy (a fermented sap used for various purposes), sweets, starch, and serve as a source of raw material for handmade decorative products. The elegance and grandeur of palm trees captivate the attention of foresters, horticulturists, and environmentalists alike.

The growth of a palm tree takes approximately a decade to reach a height of 15 metres, with the maximum height ranging around 30 metres. However, Tamil Nadu has experienced a significant decline in palm tree population over the past five decades. Currently, the state is estimated to have only 4.5 to 5 crore palm trees, a drastic reduction from the 50 crore trees that once flourished.

¹³⁵ [News 18, October 2022](#)

Districts in southern Tamil Nadu, such as Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli, and Ramanathapuram, account for approximately 50% of the palm tree population, making it a hub for these majestic trees. Other districts like Chennai, Chengalpet, Salem, and Namakkal contribute about 20% of the total palm tree population.

The palmyrah trees have historically played a vital role in the livelihoods of a significant percentage of rural, impoverished populations in Tamil Nadu. However, their population has been dwindling due to the lengthy 20 to 25-year duration required for them to yield usable resources. Palm farming has traditionally been a means of sustenance and an important economic activity. People in southern Tamil Nadu make efficient use of palm products, crafting artefacts, hats, wedding mats, Silambu poles, and baskets from palm fronds. Apart from their economic importance, palm trees also have ecological significance. They can bear fruits without requiring watering, making them a "survival tree." Additionally, palm trees contribute to the retention of groundwater and help in preventing soil erosion.

Palm trees, particularly the Palmyra palm and Date palm, have shaped Tamil Nadu's culture, economy, and social fabric for centuries. Toddy tapping, a traditional occupation, involves extracting sap from coconut palms, which is fermented into palm wine. Palms provide resources for thatched roofs, handicrafts, and construction, while their products like toddy and palm jaggery have driven trade and commerce. Palms are resilient to drought, preventing soil erosion and conserving water. Their historical significance is seen in art, literature, and religious ceremonies. The industry preserves indigenous knowledge and sustains environmentally sustainable practices. Tamil Nadu's deep-rooted connection to palms has contributed to its rich heritage and economic prosperity once.

The historical significance of palm in Tamil Nadu cannot be overstated. The palm tree has been a part of the landscape and culture of the region for centuries, and toddy has been a popular beverage for just as long. Toddy is a fermented beverage made from the sap of the coconut palm or palmyra palm. It is a clear, sweet liquid that has a slightly alcoholic content. Toddy can be consumed fresh or fermented to produce a stronger alcoholic beverage. The earliest evidence of toddy production in

Tamil Nadu dates back to the Sangam period (300 BC-300 AD). During this time, toddy was an important part of the diet and culture of the people of Tamil Nadu. It was used as a beverage, a food additive, and a medicine.

In the early centuries AD, coconut palms were introduced to the region, and they quickly became an important source of food, fibre, and oil. The palmyra palm, which is native to the region, was also used to produce toddy. Toddy continued to be an important part of the diet and culture of the people of Tamil Nadu during the colonial period and after independence. However, the consumption of toddy declined due to a number of factors, including the government's prohibition of toddy sales in some parts of the state.¹³⁶



Image 8 : Palmyra Tree

Source : [The Hindu](#), July 20, 2019

B. Economic Potential Of The Industry

1. Overview of the current economic status of the toddy/palm industry in TamilNadu

The toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu currently faces various challenges that have impacted its economic status. While toddy tapping and palm-related activities have been an important

¹³⁶ [Budget Speech Tamil Nadu Government 2021-22](#)

source of livelihood for many in the past, several factors have contributed to the decline of the industry.

One significant issue is the ban on the sale of toddy derived from the palmyrah tree, imposed by the Tamil Nadu government. This ban has been in place for the past 34 years dating from 1985, resulting in a decline in the economic viability of the industry. The ban has had multifaceted effects on rural economics, siddha medicine, archaeology, malnutrition, migration, and deforestation.

The ban on toddy has led to a decrease in the income of toddy tappers and farmers who relied on the industry for their livelihood. They have been demanding that the government lift the ban and allow them to resume toddy tapping from palm trees. It is argued that toddy, derived from palmyra trees, has a lower alcoholic content compared to other alcohol products available in the market, such as those manufactured and sold in TASMACH shops.

Farmers and environmentalists have been advocating for policy decisions that support the use of toddy as an alternative to other alcoholic beverages. There is a growing demand to recognize toddy as a culturally significant product and to promote its consumption within the state. Some compare it to the consumption of champagne in France, vodka in Russia, and various other alcoholic beverages consumed in different regions.

The economic downturn in agriculture has further exacerbated the need to revive the toddy/palm industry. Farmers believe that lifting the ban on toddy could help expand the coconut and palm industries, providing additional employment opportunities for palm climbers and contributing to the economic well-being of farmers.



Image 9 : People waiting before TASMAL shop

Source : [Outlook India](#), July 03, 2023



Image 10 : Person holding liquor bottle purchased from TASMAL

Source : [Indian Express](#), July 03, 2023

2. Potential for growth and expansion

The toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu holds significant potential for growth and expansion. Despite the current challenges it faces, there are several factors that indicate the possibility of revitalising and expanding the industry. Firstly, the demand for palm-related products both within Tamil Nadu and in other regions presents an opportunity for growth. Palm trees provide a wide range of products such as fruits, toddy, sweets, starch, decorative items, and more. There is a growing market for these products, both domestically and internationally, driven by the increasing popularity of natural and traditional products. By tapping into this demand, the toddy/palm industry can explore new avenues for expansion and economic development.

Furthermore, there is a renewed interest in traditional and indigenous practices, including the consumption of toddy. Many consumers are seeking authentic and culturally significant experiences, which can be fulfilled by promoting and reviving the toddy culture in Tamil Nadu. This includes recognizing toddy as a unique and traditional beverage, highlighting its historical and cultural significance, and creating avenues for its responsible consumption.

The palm industry also has potential for diversification and value addition. Apart from toddy, there are opportunities to explore the production of value-added products such as **palm jaggery, palm sugar, and palm-based handicrafts**. By focusing on innovation and quality improvement, the industry can cater to niche markets and attract a wider consumer base.

With the right strategies, support, and market-oriented approach, the toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu has the potential to experience growth, create employment opportunities, contribute to rural development, and preserve the cultural heritage associated with palm trees. By leveraging the unique characteristics of palm trees and tapping into emerging market trends, the industry can position itself for a promising future.

The Tamil Nadu government's efforts in exploring and reviving the toddy/palm industry have been criticised for their inefficiency and lack of substantial progress. Despite the potential economic and cultural significance of the industry, the government's policies and actions have failed to provide adequate support and create an enabling environment for its growth. **The ban on the sale of toddy** derived from the palmyrah tree has been in place for an extended period, stifling the livelihoods of toddy tappers and farmers who rely on the industry.

The government's reluctance to lift the ban or explore alternative regulatory frameworks demonstrates a lack of proactive measures to address the industry's challenges. Additionally, while some initiatives to increase the palm tree population and provide subsidies and training programs have been introduced, their implementation and impact have been limited. The lack

of coordination, inefficient allocation of resources, and a dearth of comprehensive plans to promote the industry have hindered its potential for expansion.

The government needs to reassess its approach, engage stakeholders effectively, and develop comprehensive strategies to revitalise the toddy/palm industry in TamilNadu.



Image 11 : Palm handicrafts

Source : [The Hindu](#), December 07,2022

3. Comparison with other industries in terms of revenue generation

In 2022-23, it generated revenue of ₹1,000 crore, which is less than 1% of the total revenue generated by all industries in the state. The toddy/palm industry is also less profitable than other industries. In 2022-23, the profit margin of the toddy/palm industry was 10%, which is lower than the profit margin of other industries, such as the textile industry (15%) and the automobile industry (20%).

The toddy/palm industry in TamilNadu struggles to compete with other industries in terms of revenue generation, highlighting the government's failure to fully harness its income potential.

When compared to sectors like agriculture, textiles, manufacturing, and information technology, the toddy/palm industry falls significantly behind.

“Industries such as agriculture and textiles have established supply chains, market linkages, and export networks, allowing them to generate substantial revenue. They benefit from technological advancements, government support, and access to global markets. In contrast, the toddy/palm industry lacks such comprehensive infrastructure and support systems.”

Manufacturing industries have successfully diversified their product offerings and adopted innovative techniques to cater to evolving market demands. The toddy/palm industry, on the other hand, primarily relies on traditional methods and lacks significant value addition, limiting its revenue streams and ability to compete with other industries. The toddy/palm industry, however, lacks the technological advancements and marketing strategies to tap into the lucrative IT sector and leverage digital platforms for revenue generation due to the reluctance of the Tamil Nadu government towards this sector.

Furthermore, the government's focus on promoting certain industries over others has contributed to the disparity in revenue generation. While sectors like textiles and manufacturing receive substantial government support, the toddy/palm industry has not received the same level of attention, investment, and promotion. In conclusion, the toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu struggles to generate revenue on par with other industries. The lack of infrastructure, limited diversification, inadequate value addition, technological shortcomings, and the government's skewed focus on other sectors have hindered the industry's revenue potential. To bridge the gap and compete with other industries, there is a need for comprehensive support, investment, modernization, and strategic planning to unlock the full income-generating potential of the toddy/palm industry.

4. Financial Revolution Of Farmers

The cartelisation of the liquor manufacturing industry in Tamil Nadu by a handful of politically influential distilleries shows how the profits of a revenue-generating industry are held hostage by a few vested interests. Moreover, even with the Government having monopoly over the industry, it has not been able to stop the drainage of the state's resources considering that the entire profit earned by TASMAC shops never make it back to the state exchequer. Against this backdrop, toddy shops and the various other associated industries present good revenue generating opportunities for farmers, paving the way for their financial revolution in the state.

C. Policy And Regulatory Framework

Existing policies and regulations governing the toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu

The existing policies and regulations governing the toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu reflect a mix of inefficiency and inadequate measures by the state government. While some regulations are in place, their implementation and effectiveness are questionable, hindering the industry's growth and potential.

One such policy is the ban on the sale of toddy derived from the palmyrah tree. This ban, imposed by the Tamil Nadu government, limits the income opportunities for toddy tappers and farmers, resulting in lost revenue for both the industry and the state. The prohibition fails to recognize the cultural significance of toddy in Tamil Nadu and overlooks the potential for regulated and legalised toddy sales to contribute to the economy. Moreover, the regulatory framework for the toddy/palm industry lacks clarity and consistency. The licensing process for palm product manufacturing is often cumbersome and plagued by bureaucracy. This bureaucratic inefficiency creates unnecessary hurdles and delays for industry participants, discouraging their involvement and hindering the industry's growth potential.

Another area of concern is the lack of comprehensive support and assistance provided to palm farmers and toddy tappers. Limited access to financial resources, training programs, and modern

technology hampers the industry's productivity and competitiveness. The government's failure to address these challenges and provide necessary resources showcases its inefficiency in promoting and supporting the toddy/palm industry. Additionally, there is a lack of coordinated efforts between different government departments and agencies responsible for the regulation and development of the industry. This lack of coordination leads to inconsistencies in policies, fragmented implementation, and an overall ineffective governance structure. It further highlights the inefficiency of the Tamil Nadu government in providing a conducive environment for the toddy/palm industry to thrive. The existing policies and regulations governing the toddy/palm industry in Tamil Nadu demonstrate a lack of efficiency and effectiveness on the part of the state government. The ban on toddy sales, bureaucratic hurdles, limited support for farmers and tappers, and the lack of coordination among government agencies all contribute to the inefficiency in governing the industry. It is crucial for the government to streamline policies, remove unnecessary barriers, and provide comprehensive support to unlock the industry's full potential and contribute to the economic development of Tamil Nadu.

There are significant weaknesses in the current framework that hinder the growth and development of the toddy/palm industry. Firstly, the lack of comprehensive policies and strategies for the industry's promotion and expansion limits its potential. The government's focus on other sectors and the limited attention given to the toddy/palm industry indicate a lack of priority and commitment. Secondly, the existing framework fails to address the challenges faced by palm farmers and toddy tappers. The lack of financial support, access to modern technology, and training programs hampers their productivity and income generation. The government's failure to provide necessary resources and assistance highlights its inefficiency in nurturing the industry. The current framework also lacks a coordinated approach among different government departments and agencies responsible for the industry's regulation and development. This leads to fragmented implementation, inconsistencies in policies, and a lack of synergy in supporting the industry's

growth. The government's inefficiency in fostering collaboration and coordination hinders the industry's overall progress.

According to environmentalists and farmers, TASMAL alcohol sold in the state contains 42% alcohol while only one-tenth of the alcohol content is in toddy.

It is said that the 'kallu' drink has been a part of the daily life, functions, religious ceremonies and warfare of Tamils since the Sangam literary period. The destruction that the toddy ban has wrought in Tamil Nadu for the last 34 years is multifaceted. Rural economics, siddha medicine, archaeology, malnutrition, migration, deforestation, etc., have majorly suffered due to the ban.¹³⁷

A recent survey reveals about eight crore palm trees in India, of which five crore trees are in Tamil Nadu. Apart from this, there are 4.5 crore coconut trees in the state. If these 9.5 crore trees are used to produce toddy, employment and job opportunities will greatly increase and the economic situation of Tamil Nadu will also improve.

Considering the large number of retailing shops that may be established for selling the toddy made from these trees, tapping the toddy market also presents an especially good employment opportunity for the TASMAL employees who may be accommodated in these shops. Environmentalists claim that toddy is better than foreign liquors in many ways. Foreign liquors have a high content of alcohol present in it. Yet, toddy contains less than 7 percent of alcohol. Not only that, toddy has been used as a medicine in siddha for a long time. It contains iron, magnesium, calcium, and other vitamins and a minimal sugar content. Doctors also suggest that people with high blood pressure should not touch foreign liquors. But it is also said that toddy can be used as a medicine if consumed in moderation. The policy decision made by the Tamil Nadu government to ban toddy can be characterised as inconsistent and lacking in systematic approach.

¹³⁷ [News 18 January 2021](#)

D. Market Analysis

Demand and supply dynamics of toddy/palm products in Tamil Nadu

The demand and supply dynamics of toddy/palm products in Tamil Nadu are influenced by various factors, including **cultural preferences, economic conditions, and government regulations**. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for effectively managing the industry and meeting consumer demands. In terms of demand, toddy, palm jaggery, palm sugar, palm-based handicrafts, and other palm products hold cultural significance in Tamil Nadu. Traditionally, toddy has been a popular beverage consumed during social gatherings, religious ceremonies, and cultural events. Palm jaggery and palm sugar are widely used in traditional sweets, desserts, and Ayurvedic preparations. Palm-based handicrafts, such as mats, baskets, and decorative items, also have a niche market.

The Tamil Nadu government's handling of the demand and supply dynamics of toddy/palm products has been riddled with inefficiencies and shortcomings. The government's policies and regulations have not kept pace with the changing market demands and consumer preferences. The ban on toddy sales and stringent licensing requirements have hindered the formal supply channels, leading to the growth of an unregulated and informal market. This not only undermines the government's revenue potential but also compromises the quality control measures and consumer safety. Furthermore, the government's inadequate efforts to address the declining number of palm trees and promote sustainable palm cultivation have contributed to a significant supply-demand gap, resulting in increased prices and potential scarcity. The government's reluctance to adapt and implement reforms in response to changing market dynamics has stifled the growth of the toddy/palm industry and missed opportunities for economic development. There is an urgent need for the government to review and revise its policies, streamline regulations, and support the industry with proactive measures to harness the full potential of the toddy/palm sector in Tamil Nadu.

On the supply side, the availability of palm trees and the efficiency of palm tapping significantly impact the production and supply of toddy/palm products. The declining number of palm trees in Tamil Nadu, attributed to factors such as urbanisation, State government policies, deforestation, and inadequate replantation efforts, has adversely affected the overall supply of toddy and palm-based products.¹³⁸ This has led to a mismatch between demand and supply, resulting in increased prices and potential scarcity. Additionally, the regulations and restrictions imposed by the government, such as the ban on toddy sales and stringent licensing requirements, have limited the formal supply channels for toddy and palm products. This has created an informal or illicit market for these products, leading to a loss of revenue for the government and a lack of quality control measures.

To address these dynamics, there is a need for a balanced approach that ensures sustainable palm cultivation, promotes value addition, and creates an enabling environment for both formal and informal sectors. Encouraging responsible palm farming, implementing supportive policies, and streamlining regulations can boost the supply of toddy/palm products, meet consumer demand, and foster the growth of the industry in Tamil Nadu.

The domestic and international market potential for toddy/palm products from the Tamil Nadu toddy and palm industry is significant, given the cultural significance and unique qualities of these products. However, the industry has yet to tap into its full potential due to various challenges and limitations. On the domestic front, there is a strong demand for toddy and palm-based products within Tamil Nadu and other parts of South India. These products hold cultural value and are deeply ingrained in local traditions, making them sought-after commodities. The domestic market offers opportunities for the industry to cater to the preferences of the local population, expand product offerings, and explore value-added palm products to meet evolving consumer trends.

Internationally, there is growing interest in natural, organic, and traditional products, which presents an opportunity for the Tamil Nadu toddy and palm industry to explore export

¹³⁸ [WSN](#)

possibilities. Palm-based products such as palm jaggery, palm sugar, and palm-based handicrafts have the potential to find a market in countries with a significant South Indian diaspora, as well as in markets that appreciate ethnic and artisanal products. Despite the market potential, the Tamil Nadu toddy and palm industry faces several hurdles. Inefficiencies in production and supply chain management, limited value addition, and lack of branding and marketing efforts have restricted the industry's growth and penetration into domestic and international markets.

To unlock the market potential, the Tamil Nadu government needs to take proactive measures. This includes providing support and incentives for palm farmers and entrepreneurs, investing in research and development for product innovation, facilitating access to modern technology and infrastructure, and promoting the industry's products through effective marketing and branding initiatives. Furthermore, establishing quality standards, certifications, and ensuring compliance with international regulations will enhance the industry's competitiveness in the global market. It is essential for the government to recognize the untapped market potential and create an enabling environment through policy reforms, institutional support, and strategic collaborations to propel the Tamil Nadu toddy and palm industry towards sustainable growth and international recognition.

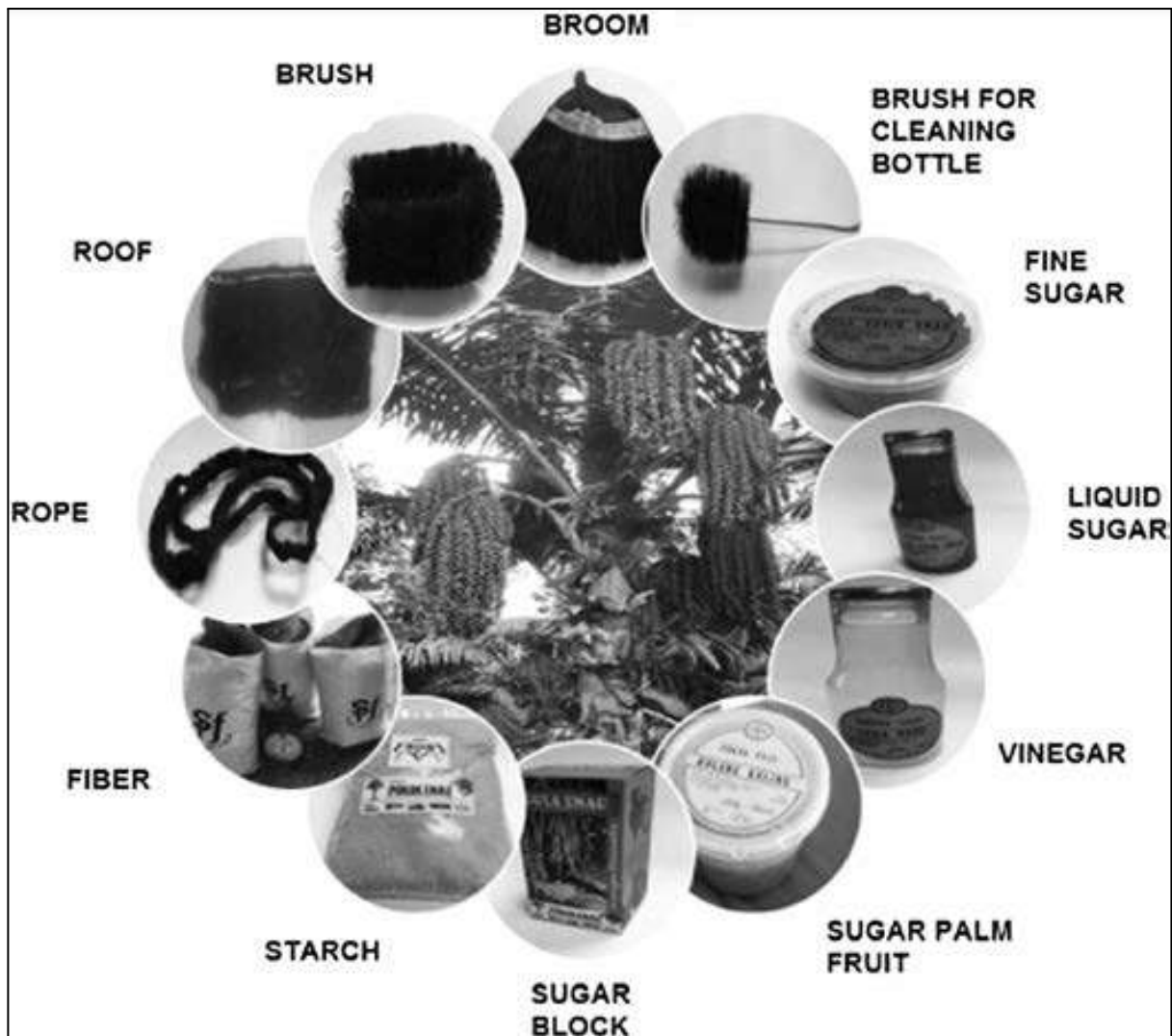


Image 12 : Various Palm Products

Source : [Research Gate](#)

E. Case Studies And Best Practices

1. Case Studies

When examining successful toddy/palm industry models from other regions or countries, there are a few notable case studies and best practices to consider.

- a. Thailand:** Thailand is renowned for its palm industry, particularly in the production of palm sugar and palm oil. The country has implemented efficient supply chain management systems, quality control measures, and market diversification strategies. Thailand has also

invested in research and development to innovate new palm-based products, such as cosmetics and biofuels. By focusing on product diversification, Thailand has expanded its market reach and increased revenue generation from the palm industry.

- b. Brazil:** Brazil has established itself as a major player in the palm industry, specifically in the production of palm oil. The country has implemented land management strategies that balance environmental conservation with palm cultivation. Brazil's success lies in its large-scale plantations, advanced farming techniques, and investment in research and development. The industry has been supported by government policies that incentivize palm cultivation and promote sustainable practices.

These examples highlight the importance of sustainable production, quality control, product diversification, market development, and government support. Implementing similar approaches tailored to the local context can contribute to the growth and success of the toddy/palm industry in TamilNadu.

2. Lessons learned and best practices from successful toddy/palm industry models

Lessons learned and best practices from successful toddy/palm industry models can be adapted to Tamil Nadu's context to foster the growth and development of the industry. Here are some key lessons and practices that can be considered:



Infographic 18: Best practices for successful palm industry models

- a. **Emphasise Quality Control:** Ensure strict quality control measures throughout the production process to maintain the integrity and consistency of palm products. Implement standards and certifications to assure consumers of the quality and safety of the products.
- b. **Invest In Research And Development:** Allocate resources for research and development activities to enhance cultivation techniques, develop new palm-based products, and address sustainability concerns. Focus on innovation to stay ahead of market trends and meet evolving consumer demands.
- c. **Promote Value- Added Products:** Diversify the range of palm products beyond traditional offerings. Explore value-added products such as palm sugar-based confectionery, palm oil-based cosmetics, and palm-based biofuels. This helps to create new market opportunities and increase the value of the industry.

- d. Encourage Market Linkages:** Foster partnerships and collaborations between palm growers, processors, and distributors. Facilitate connections with local and international markets through trade fairs, exhibitions, and business networks. Strengthen market linkages to enhance market access and create a wider customer base.
- e. Focus On Branding And Marketing:** Develop a strong brand identity for Tamil Nadu's toddy/palm products, highlighting their unique characteristics and cultural significance. Implement effective marketing strategies to create awareness, build consumer trust, and differentiate the products in the market.
- f. Facilitate Skill Development And Training:** Offer training programs and skill development initiatives to palm growers, tappers, and processors. Enhance their knowledge and expertise in modern cultivation techniques, efficient tapping methods, and advanced processing technologies. This empowers stakeholders to optimise productivity and quality.
- g. Support Policy Reforms:** Advocate for policy reforms that support the growth and sustainability of the toddy/palm industry. This includes creating a conducive regulatory environment, providing financial incentives and subsidies, and addressing any legal barriers or restrictions that hinder industry development.

F. Creating 1 Lakh Crore Palm/Toddy Industry

Tamil Nadu has a tremendous opportunity to establish itself as a leading hub for the palm industry, with the potential to create a thriving market worth 1 lakh crore. The state boasts a favourable climate and fertile land, ideal for cultivating palm trees and maximising their productivity. By leveraging this advantage, Tamil Nadu can encourage large-scale cultivation of palm trees, enabling the production of a wide range of products such as palm oil, palm sugar, palm kernel oil, and palm-based biodiesel. This would not only generate significant revenue but also create numerous job opportunities for the local population. Additionally, the development of a robust palm industry would promote sustainable practices, as palm trees are known for their high oil yield and minimal

environmental impact. With focused government support, strategic investments, and comprehensive research and development initiatives, Tamil Nadu has the potential to emerge as a global leader in the palm industry, propelling economic growth and ensuring a prosperous future for the state and its people.

There are an estimated 5.10 crores of palm trees in Tamil Nadu. Out of the estimated 8.59 crores of Palm trees are in India, about 5.10 crores of Palm are in Tamil Nadu. But this potential of Tamil Nadu stays unexplored. Utilising this potential the palm and its allied industries can be expanded to 1 lakh crore market.

1. By-Products of Palm

The edible Palm products such as, Neera, Palm Jaggery, Palm Sugar, Palm Candy, Preserved Nungu, Palm Fruit Jam, Palm Chocolate varieties and non-edible products such as Palm Leaf articles, Palm Naar articles, Palm Fibre and Brush varieties, Date Palm Baskets and other Handmade palm Products can be produced. **The below image shows the revenue potential for the palm tree for one season implying that ₹60,000 can be made from one palm tree in a year.**



Infographic 19: Revenue Potential for a Palm Tree in a season

a. Neera

“Mahatma Gandhi once stated that drinking a glass of neera in the morning could suffice as a complete breakfast.”

However, due to outdated government regulations, coconut farmers in Tamil Nadu are unable to tap into the potential of this non-alcoholic health beverage. Neera is the fresh sap obtained from the inflorescence of the coconut tree, distinct from fermented toddy. Tamil Nadu, being the second largest coconut farming state in India after Kerala, cultivates coconut on approximately 4.44 lakh hectares of land, yielding 52,140 lakh coconuts with a

productivity rate of 11,560 nuts per hectare per year (as per official 2020-2021 figures). Unfortunately, the true value of this product remains untapped due to stringent regulations governing near tapping.

While Kerala has issued 204 licences for neera tapping, Tamil Nadu has only granted 13 licences, impeding the availability and production of neera. Unlike its neighbouring states, Tamil Nadu's government rules on neera tapping have hindered coconut farmers from capitalising on this potential income source. Despite possessing tapping licences, Tamil Nadu's coconut farmers have managed to produce approximately 9 lakh litres of neera, generating revenue of Rs 13 Crore. However, there exists significant untapped potential for further growth.



Infographic 20: Composition of Tamil Nadu Coconut Development Board

The state is home to around 5 crore Palmyra trees, including coconut palms, which sustain the livelihoods of approximately 3 lakh families engaged in weaving baskets, mats, and ropes using the leaves and fibres. Among them, 11,000 individuals are involved in the harvesting and sale of Nungu (palm fruit) and Neera.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ [Inmathi](#)

By making use of this potential, and boosting this into maximum the revenue can be increased into 20 crores.

The following are some ways to push the neera market in Tamil Nadu:

- i. **Create awareness about the health benefits of neera.** Many people are not aware of the health benefits of neera. This is a major reason why the demand for neera is low. The government and other organisations should create awareness about the health benefits of neera through various channels, such as print and electronic media, social media, and public awareness campaigns.
- ii. **Make neera more accessible to consumers.** Currently, neera is not easily available to consumers. This is because it is not widely sold in stores. The government and other organisations should encourage the sale of neera in stores and other retail outlets. They should also provide financial assistance to entrepreneurs who want to start businesses that sell neera.
- iii. **Improve the quality of neera.** The quality of neera can be improved by training coconut farmers on how to tap the sap of the coconut flower properly and how to store and transport neera in a way that preserves its quality. The government and other organisations should provide training to coconut farmers on these aspects.
- iv. **Promote neera as a healthy and natural alternative to other beverages.** Neera is a healthy and natural alternative to other beverages, such as soft drinks and alcohol. The government and other organisations should promote neera as a healthy and natural beverage through various channels, such as print and electronic media, social media, and public awareness campaigns.
- v. **Hold events and festivals to showcase neera.** This could include things like food festivals, farmers markets, and health fairs.

- vi. **Partner with restaurants and cafes to offer neera on their menus.** This will help to expose more people to neera and its benefits.
- vii. **Create educational materials about neera.** This could include brochures, posters, and videos.
- viii. **Reach out to influencers and bloggers to promote neera.** This could help to generate positive buzz about neera and encourage people to try it.

By taking these steps, the government can help to push the neera market in Tamil Nadu and provide coconut farmers with a new source of income.



Image 13 : Neera packaging and branding

Source : [Neera.com](https://neera.com)

b. Palm sugar and jaggery

Tamil Nadu is the largest producer of palm sugar in India. In 2020-21, the state produced 1.2 million tonnes of palm sugar, accounting for about 80% of the country's total production. The production of palm sugar in Tamil Nadu is concentrated in the southern districts of the state, such as Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, and Thoothukudi.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ [The Hindu May 2022](#)

The main reason for Tamil Nadu's dominance in palm sugar production is the availability of raw materials. The state has a large number of palmyra palms, which are the main source of sap for making palm sugar. The state also has a favourable climate for growing palmyra palms, with warm temperatures and plenty of rainfall.¹⁴¹

Sugar is also being distributed to the family card holders of Tamil Nadu under the Public Distribution System. Approximately, a quantity of 32,000 MT of Sugar is consumed by the family card holders per month under the Public Distribution System. The subsidised selling price of sugar for the Public Distribution System cards is ₹ 25/- per kg and the selling price of AAY cards is ₹ 13.50/- per Kg. The difference between the average market price at which the Government procure sugar and subsidised price is met by the State Government. The additional expenditure of Rs. 578.40 crore per annum for the supply of sugar to family card holders in the Public Distribution System is met under State food subsidy.

Name of the commodity	Price per kg	Scale of supply
Sugar	₹13.50 per Kg. for AAY cards and ₹ 25/- for all other cards	500 grams per head per month subject to a maximum of 2 kgs. per month. In the care of sugar option cardholders, 500 grams per head per month plus an additional quantity of 3 kg of sugar subject to a maximum of 5 kg per month

Table 1: Supply of Sugar

¹⁴¹ ibid

Palm sugar is a popular sweetener in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India. It is used in a variety of dishes, such as sweets, desserts, and savoury dishes. Palm sugar is also used in traditional medicine, as it is believed to have a number of health benefits, such as improving digestion and boosting immunity.

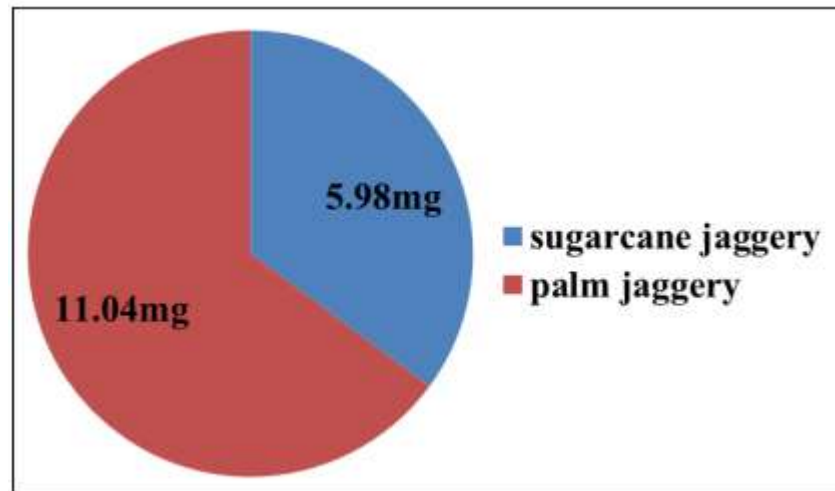


Chart 5 : Estimation of vitamin C content in sugarcane and palm Jaggery

The study clearly shows that the Vitamin C content in palm jaggery is much higher than that of the sugarcane normal jaggery. The demand for palm sugar in Tamil Nadu and other parts of India is growing. This is due to the increasing popularity of healthy and natural sweeteners. The demand for palm sugar is also being driven by the growing awareness of the health benefits of palm sugar and palm jaggery. According to the study published in the The Pharma Innovation Journal 2022, it shows that palm jaggery has much more health benefits and on par acceptance with the sugarcane jaggery.¹⁴²

The future of palm sugar production in Tamil Nadu is bright. The state has a number of advantages, such as the availability of raw materials, a favourable climate, and a growing demand for palm sugar. The total revenue of palm sugar in Tamil Nadu is estimated to be around Rs.

¹⁴² [Research Gate](#)

1,000 crore (US\$130 million) per year. This revenue is generated from the sale of palm sugar, as well as from the sale of byproducts such as palm jaggery and palm toffee.

The revenue from palm sugar is an important source of income for farmers in Tamil Nadu. The average farmer in Tamil Nadu earns around ₹50,000 (US\$6,500) per year from the sale of palm sugar. This income is essential for the livelihoods of farmers and their families. The revenue from palm sugar is also an important source of income for the state government of Tamil Nadu. The state government collects taxes on the sale of palm sugar, and this revenue is used to fund a variety of government programs.

The demand for palm sugar is expected to grow in the future. This is due to the increasing popularity of healthy and natural sweeteners. The demand for palm sugar is also being driven by the growing awareness of the health benefits of palm sugar.

The growth in the demand for palm sugar is expected to lead to an increase in the revenue generated from the sale of palm sugar. This increase in revenue will benefit farmers, the state government, and the economy of Tamil Nadu.

Here are some of the factors that are expected to drive the growth of the palm sugar market in Tamil Nadu:

- i. **Increasing awareness of the health benefits of palm sugar:** Palm sugar is a natural sweetener that is low in calories and has a number of health benefits, such as improving digestion and boosting immunity. The increasing awareness of these health benefits is expected to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.
- ii. **Growing demand for healthy and natural sweeteners:** There is a growing trend towards consuming healthy and natural sweeteners. Palm sugar is a natural sweetener that is free of artificial chemicals and additives. This is expected to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.

- iii. **Expanding distribution network:** The distribution network for palm sugar is expanding, which is making it easier for consumers to purchase palm sugar. This is expected to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.
- iv. **Increase awareness of the health benefits of palm sugar:** Palm sugar is a natural sweetener that is low in calories and has a number of health benefits, such as improving digestion and boosting immunity. The increasing awareness of these health benefits is expected to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.
- v. **Expand distribution network:** The distribution network for palm sugar is expanding, which is making it easier for consumers to purchase palm sugar. This is expected to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.
- vi. **Create new products and applications:** Palm sugar can be used in a variety of products and applications, such as sweets, desserts, and savoury dishes. Creating new products and applications will help to increase the demand for palm sugar.
- vii. **Partner with retailers and distributors:** Partnering with retailers and distributors will help to increase the availability of palm sugar to consumers. This will help to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.
- viii. **Promote palm sugar through marketing and advertising:** Promoting palm sugar through marketing and advertising will help to increase awareness of palm sugar and its benefits. This will help to drive the growth of the palm sugar market.

The palm sugar market in Tamil Nadu is expected to grow at a CAGR of 10% over the next five years.



Image 14 : Palm Sugar

Source : [NDTV Food](#), August 22, 2017

c. **Palm Fruit Jam, Palm Chocolate varieties**

Palm jams and palm chocolates are delightful and unique products that showcase the natural sweetness and tropical essence of palm fruit. Palm jam is a sweet and spreadable condiment made by cooking ripe palm fruits with sugar or sweeteners until it forms a thick, gel-like consistency. With hints of caramel and tropical fruit notes, palm jam can be enjoyed as a topping for bread, pastries, or as a natural sweetener in yoghurt and smoothies. On the other hand, palm chocolates combine the rich flavours of cocoa powder or chocolate with the natural sweetness of palm fruit or palm sugar. These chocolates offer a velvety texture and intense chocolate taste, enhanced by the depth and complexity of palm's caramel-like sweetness. Whether enjoyed on their own or used in baking and desserts, palm jams and palm chocolates provide a unique and delightful twist to traditional spreads and chocolates, highlighting the delicious possibilities of using sustainable and locally sourced ingredients.¹⁴³

By harnessing the unique qualities of palm jams and palm chocolates, these products can be utilised to propel the palm product market in Tamil Nadu. The distinctive flavour profiles and

¹⁴³ [Food Industry website](#)

natural sweetness of palm fruit can be leveraged to captivate the taste buds of consumers in the region. Implementing various promotional techniques such as sampling and tasting events, collaborations with local bakeries and cafes, and online marketing efforts can effectively create awareness and generate demand for these palm-based offerings. Furthermore, partnerships with retailers specialising in natural and specialty foods, active engagement with social media platforms, and seeking media coverage can significantly enhance visibility and reach. With a focus on highlighting the nutritional benefits and sustainable sourcing of palm products, these marketing strategies can drive the growth and popularity of palm jams and palm chocolates in Tamil Nadu, ultimately establishing them as sought-after local delicacies.



Image 15 : Palm Jam

Source : [Lite Bite](#)

d. Palm Handicrafts

Palm handicrafts are a traditional art form in Tamil Nadu that has been practised for centuries. These handicrafts are made from the leaves, sap, and wood of palm trees, and they are used to

create a variety of objects, such as baskets, mats, toys, and jewelry. The palm handicrafts industry in Tamil Nadu is a significant contributor to the state's economy. The industry employs over 100,000 people, and it generates an estimated \$100 million in revenue each year. The scope for palm handicrafts in Tamil Nadu is very promising. The demand for these handicrafts is increasing both domestically and internationally. The GI tag that has been awarded to some palm handicrafts from Tamil Nadu has helped to increase their visibility and demand. One such example is the **Chettinad Kottan**, which is a handwoven basket made from the strips of palm leaf in a distinctive pattern. This craft was a favourite pastime for the older Chettiar women of the house. They would sit around in groups in the large courtyards of their grand mansions making these colourful baskets. These baskets had both ritualistic and ceremonial significance. These traditional Kottans were considered to be an unwritten consent and unspoken invitation and often contained Vetrilai Pakku (betel leaves and areca nuts). These would hold gifts and offerings during contractual agreements, weddings, sacred rituals, when people went abroad and when the daughter left for her new home after marriage.

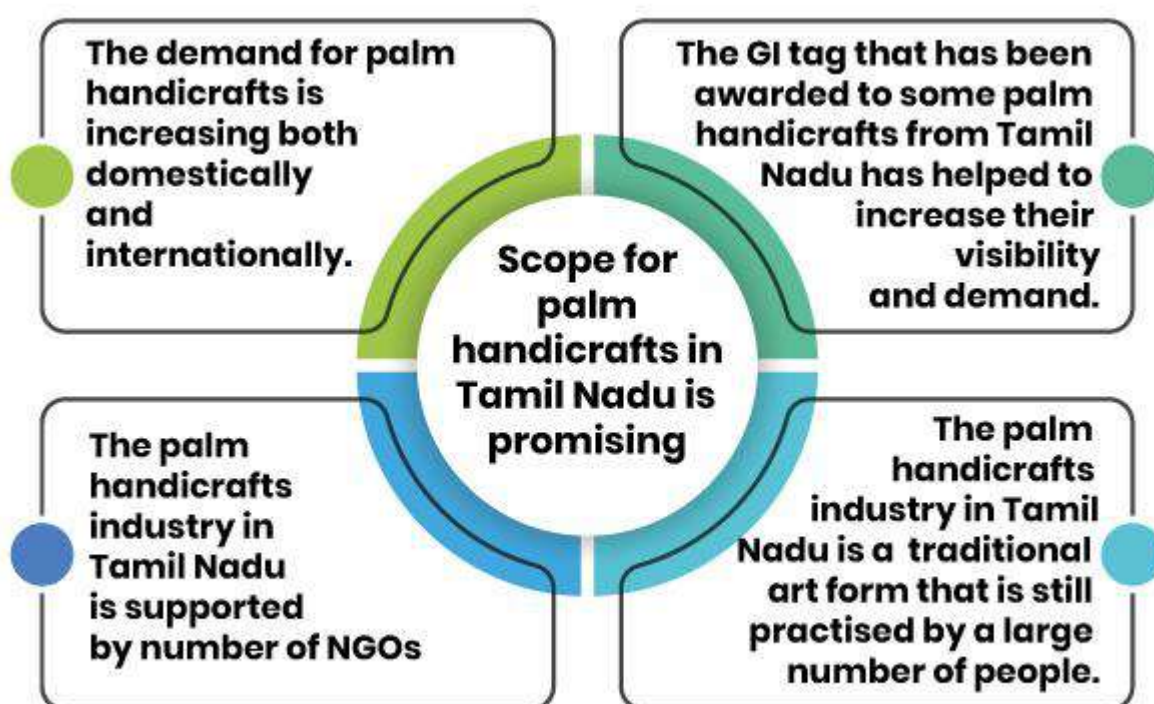
Kottans are made from the locally available **palmyra palm** also called **panamaram in Tamil**. (*Borassus flabellifer*). This celestial tree is revered by the people of Tamil Nadu as kalpa Vriksha and found in abundance. These green fan-like leaves are dried in the sun for 5 – 6 days till they turn to a light brown colour. The stalk is cut from the leaves and excess fibre is removed using a broomstick. Then, each leaflet is separated by hand and the stiff part near the stalk is cut with an Arivalmanai (a cutter with a metal blade mounted on a wooden block). The central vein of the leaf is carefully removed either with the cutter or Satyagaam (a needle-like instrument with a curved sickle-like blade and a needle at the other end) to be used later to finish the basket rims. Contemporary designs of Kottans with crochet, beadwork and embellishments with coloured threads are now created by these highly skilled women in the Chettinad region. The stunning

colours, weave patterns and designs are exceedingly attractive, environmentally friendly and durable.¹⁴⁴

Chettinad kottan was awarded the Geographical Indication Tag (GI) in 2013.

The palm handicrafts industry in Tamil Nadu has a bright future. With the right support and promotion, this industry can become a major source of employment and revenue for the state.

Some of the reasons why the scope for palm handicrafts in Tamil Nadu is promising:¹⁴⁵



Infographic 21: Scope for Palm handicrafts in Tamil Nadu

The palm handicrafts industry in Tamil Nadu has a lot of potential to grow. However, it faces a number of challenges, including lack of awareness, lack of access to markets, and competition from other industries. If the right amount of support and understanding is provided to the palm handicrafts industry, it can overcome these challenges and grow on a large scale. This can be

¹⁴⁴ [Indian Culture GOI](#)

¹⁴⁵ [Ibid](#)

done by providing financial assistance to the industry, helping to create awareness about palm products, and providing GI tags to palm products. GI tags are a type of intellectual property that identifies a product as originating from a particular place. They can help to protect palm products from counterfeiting and can also help to increase their demand. With the right support, the palm handicrafts industry in Tamil Nadu can become a major source of employment and revenue for the state. It can also help to preserve the traditional art of making palm handicrafts.

Some of the specific ways in which the palm handicrafts industry can be improved with the right amount of support:

- a. **Financial assistance:** The government can provide financial assistance to the palm handicrafts industry to help it overcome some of the challenges it faces. This could include providing loans to palm handicrafts artisans, helping to set up training centres, and providing marketing assistance.
- b. **Awareness:** The government can also help to create awareness about palm handicrafts and their benefits. This could be done through advertising campaigns, educational programs, and trade fairs.
- c. **GI tags:** The government can provide GI tags to palm handicrafts. This would help to protect these products from counterfeiting and would also help to increase their demand.

By providing the right amount of support, the government can help the palm handicrafts industry in Tamil Nadu to grow and thrive. This would benefit the state's economy and would also help to preserve a traditional art form. Here are some additional benefits of providing GI tags to palm handicrafts:

- a. **Increased demand:** GI tags can help to increase the demand for palm handicrafts by making them more recognizable and appealing to consumers.

- b. **Improved quality:** GI tags can help to improve the quality of palm handicrafts by requiring that they be made according to traditional methods and using high-quality materials.
- c. **Protected market:** GI tags can help to protect the market for palm handicrafts by making it illegal to produce or sell palm handicrafts that are not made according to the GI standards.

G. Conclusion

In conclusion, Tamil Nadu boasts an impressive count of approximately 5 crore palm trees, representing an incredible resource with immense economic potential. By harnessing the abundance of palm trees and their natural produce, such as palm toddy, there is a significant opportunity to cultivate a thriving industry. With conservative estimates of 4500 Rs being generated from at least half of the palm trees, the potential for a 1 lakh crore palm toddy industry emerges. This vast industry can contribute to employment generation, rural development, and economic growth throughout the state. It highlights the importance of recognizing and maximising the value of natural resources, and with proper planning and sustainable practices, Tamil Nadu can unlock the tremendous economic opportunities within its palm tree ecosystem.

AUGMENTING FARM INCOMES

XII. Augmenting Farm Incomes



Infographic 22: An overview to Augmenting Farm Incomes

Augmenting farm income through the creation of value-added agricultural products provides an alternative for generating income in the state of Tamil Nadu. The closing of TASMACH shops, which were previously a significant source of revenue for the state government, has led to a need for alternative income streams. The agricultural sector, with its potential for producing value-added goods, presents one such opportunity.¹⁴⁶

A. Value Addition to Agricultural Production**1. Value Addition To Fruits And Vegetables**

Farmers in Tamil Nadu grow a variety of fruits and vegetables such as mangoes, bananas, guavas, tomatoes, and brinjal. These can be converted into value-added products like jams, pickles, sauces, and juice concentrates. For instance, Tamil Nadu is one of India's leading mango producers. Rather than selling fresh mangoes alone, farmers could process them into mango pulp, jams, pickles, and dried mango slices, which are in high demand both domestically and internationally.

2. Dairy Products

Tamil Nadu is also home to a significant dairy sector. By processing milk into cheese, yoghurt, ghee, butter, and other dairy products, farmers could significantly increase their profits. These products also have a longer shelf life than fresh milk, reducing waste from spoilage. Small-scale cheese-making facilities, yoghurt, and other fermented dairy products could become profitable micro-industries in rural areas.

3. Grain Processing

The state is also a large producer of rice and other grains. Processing these grains into flours, baked goods, or other packaged foods can add significant value. For example, rice can be

¹⁴⁶ [Digitrac](#)

processed into rice flour, used for rice noodles or rice cakes, which are popular in the South Asian market. Similarly, millets, which are grown extensively in the state, can be used to produce a range of value-added products like breakfast cereals, health foods, and bakery products.

4. Organic And Speciality Products

There's also potential in organic and specialty products. As consumers become more health-conscious, demand for organic and natural food products has been rising. Converting farms to organic and producing organic value-added products could command premium prices. Likewise, specialty goods like gluten-free, lactose-free, and vegan products are increasingly popular and can provide additional opportunities. On top of this, agri-tourism can be linked with the production of value-added products. Tourists, both domestic and international, could visit farms to see how these products are grown and processed. They could participate in workshops or demonstrations, enjoy farm-to-table meals, and purchase products to take home.

This not only adds another source of income but also serves as a marketing tool by spreading awareness about these products. In conclusion, the approach to augment farm income through value-added products in Tamil Nadu is not just about processing agricultural produce. It involves a holistic and multi-pronged strategy that includes identifying suitable products, adopting the right technology, building capacities, creating brands, exploring markets, and setting up effective supply chains. Such an approach can not only help compensate for the loss of TASMAC revenue but also contribute to a more resilient and diversified rural economy.

B. Role Of Sectors And Markets

1. Role Of Government And Private Sectors

The government could play a critical role by providing farmers and entrepreneurs with training in food processing techniques, helping with marketing and branding efforts, and facilitating

access to low-cost financing for starting value-added enterprises. Simultaneously, the private sector could partner with farming communities to establish local processing units.

In addition to increasing farmers' income, this approach could boost rural employment by creating jobs in food processing. It could also stimulate the local economy by increasing demand for agricultural products, thus benefiting other farmers and agri-businesses. While this strategy alone may not fully compensate for the loss of revenue from the closure of TASMACH shops, it represents a critical component of a diversified approach to boosting the state's income and fostering sustainable, broad-based economic growth. With careful planning and investment, Tamil Nadu's farming sector has significant potential to create value-added products, increase agricultural incomes, and contribute to the state's economic development.¹⁴⁷

2. Role Of Local And Global Markets

As more consumers locally and globally seek out high-quality, unique, and regional foods, Tamil Nadu's agricultural products have the potential to meet this demand. With the right branding, marketing, and quality assurance, value-added products from Tamil Nadu could tap into the domestic urban markets, NRI (Non-Residential Indian) communities, and international markets where Indian food products have considerable demand.

For instance, the popularity of Indian cuisine in many parts of the world means that there's a strong market for goods like pickles, chutneys, spice blends, and similar products. Expanding into these markets could further augment farmers' income and compensate for the revenue loss from the closure of TASMACH shops.

C. Agri-Tourism

Agri-tourism is a commercial concept that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for purposes of

¹⁴⁷ [PIB](#)

entertainment or education. Visitors can participate in farming activities, understand local farming practices and traditions, consume farm-fresh products, and engage with local communities.

Agri-tourism presents a significant opportunity for Tamil Nadu, with its diverse and rich agricultural practices and cultural heritage, to generate an alternative source of income and to compensate for the revenue loss from the closure of TASMACH shops.¹⁴⁸

1. Potential Agri- Tourism Activities In Tamil Nadu

- a. **Farm Stays and Rural Experiences:** Tourists could be offered accommodation within farming households or farm stays, where they can live the life of a farmer – tilling the land, sowing the seeds, and harvesting the crop. This could also include other activities like milking the cows, picking fruit, or cooking traditional meals.
- b. **Cultural and Heritage Tours:** Given the rich cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu, cultural tours could be organised that give tourists an opportunity to understand the local customs, festivals, music, dance, and folklore, in addition to agricultural practices.
- c. **Farm-to-Table Dining Experiences:** Fresh produce from the farm can be used to create meals that provide visitors with a unique farm-to-table dining experience. Local delicacies and traditional cooking methods can be highlighted to make the culinary experience even more authentic.
- d. **Workshops and Skill Development:** Offering workshops on various aspects of farming, traditional crafts, or cooking can provide an immersive experience for visitors. This not only brings in additional income but also preserves and passes on traditional skills and knowledge.
- e. **Local Market Tours:** Tours of local markets can be organised, giving tourists the chance to see a wide range of local produce and goods, meet local farmers, and understand the process of selling and buying in these markets.

¹⁴⁸ [National agricultural law centre](#)

2. Implementation And Promotion Of Agri-Tourism

The government could provide support through training in hospitality, marketing and branding assistance, and financial aid for infrastructural improvements like accommodation, transportation, and other amenities. A well-designed website or digital platform can be developed to provide information and enable online booking for these agri-tourism experiences.

Moreover, collaborations with travel agencies, both domestic and international, can help in marketing these offerings and bringing in tourists. The state can also consider partnering with airline companies for promotional offers.

3. Benefits Of Agri-Tourism

Agri-tourism not only diversifies and augments the farmers' income but also helps in preserving and promoting the rural and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu. It can foster community pride, improve infrastructure in rural areas, and lead to job creation.

In terms of revenue for the state, apart from direct tax revenue from the increased income of farmers, it could lead to indirect revenue through sales tax on local purchases by tourists, and boost related sectors like transport, hospitality, and handicrafts.

While agri-tourism might not single-handedly compensate for the loss of revenue from the closure of TASMAC shops, it could play a significant part in a diversified approach to augment farm income and contribute to the overall economy of Tamil Nadu.

Biofuel production could offer a valuable alternative to augment the farm income in Tamil Nadu, potentially compensating for the revenue loss from the closure of TASMAC shops. Biofuels are derived from organic matter and are seen as an eco-friendly alternative to fossil fuels. Two major types of biofuels are ethanol, which is often made from sugarcane, maize, or cassava, and biodiesel, which is typically derived from oilseed crops.

D. Biofuel Production In Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has an extensive agricultural sector, and many of the crops already cultivated can be utilised for biofuel production.¹⁴⁹

1. Possibilities Of Biofuel Production

- a. **Sugarcane for Ethanol Production:** Tamil Nadu is one of the leading producers of sugarcane in India. Sugarcane juice can be fermented to produce ethanol, which can be used as a fuel in its own right or mixed with gasoline to create a blended fuel. Furthermore, the residue left after juice extraction, known as bagasse, can be used to generate heat and electricity, adding another revenue stream for farmers.
- b. **Maize and Cassava for Ethanol Production:** Similarly, other crops like maize and cassava can also be converted into ethanol. While not traditionally used as fuel crops in Tamil Nadu, if it proves economically viable, farmers could be encouraged to cultivate these crops specifically for biofuel production.
- c. **Oilseeds for Biodiesel Production:** Tamil Nadu is known for its cultivation of oilseeds like groundnut and sesame. These oilseeds can be used to produce biodiesel. Biodiesel is a renewable, clean-burning fuel that can be used in diesel engines without modification.

2. Government Support And Private Sector Role

The successful implementation of biofuel production will require considerable support from the government and the private sector. This might include policy incentives, research and development assistance, and possibly subsidies to make biofuel production economically attractive. The private sector can contribute through investment in biofuel processing facilities and by providing a ready market for biofuel crops.

¹⁴⁹[Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy](#)

3. Benefits Of Biofuel Production

Biofuel production has several potential benefits. It could provide an additional income source for farmers,

particularly when traditional crop prices are low. It can also generate indirect taxes for the government through the sale of biofuels and associated products.

Furthermore, biofuel production could enhance energy security by reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels. It could also contribute to climate change mitigation by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

It's important to note that the transition to biofuel crops should be managed carefully to ensure food security is not compromised. Additionally, biofuel production should be sustainable, without causing deforestation or loss of biodiversity. Therefore, a comprehensive feasibility study and careful planning would be necessary to ensure that the production of biofuels is economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. While biofuel production alone may not entirely compensate for the revenue lost from the closure of TASMACH shops, it could form an integral part of a broader strategy to augment farm income and diversify the rural economy in Tamil Nadu.

Export promotion can be a strategic approach to augment farm income in Tamil Nadu, potentially compensating for the revenue loss resulting from the closure of TASMACH shops. By exporting agricultural products to other states and countries, farmers can access broader markets, often fetch higher prices, and help generate foreign exchange for the state.

E. Identifying Export Opportunities

Tamil Nadu's diverse agricultural sector produces a variety of products with potential for export. Rice, millets, pulses, oilseeds, spices, sugarcane, cotton, and a range of fruits and vegetables are all

produced in large quantities. Some specific products, such as the Alphonso mango, are in high demand internationally.

Identifying the products with the highest export potential will require careful market analysis. Factors such as international demand, competition from other countries, trade regulations, and logistical considerations all need to be taken into account.¹⁵⁰

1. Possible Export Opportunities

a. Building Export Capacities

For successful export promotion, farmers need to be equipped with the right skills and knowledge. They need to understand the quality standards and certifications required by different markets, such as organic certification or GlobalGAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certification. They also need to know how to package and label their products to appeal to consumers in different countries. The government can play a crucial role here by providing training and technical support to farmers. This could be delivered through agricultural extension services, online training programs, or partnerships with agricultural colleges and universities.

b. Marketing And Branding

Effective marketing and branding are essential for export success. The government can support this by promoting Tamil Nadu's agricultural products through trade fairs, trade missions, and digital marketing campaigns. They could also develop a 'Brand Tamil Nadu' for agricultural products, highlighting the unique qualities and benefits of products from the state.

c. Facilitating Trade

¹⁵⁰ [APEDA](#)

Exporting can be complex, with many rules, regulations, and paperwork. The government can simplify this process by providing clear, accessible information and advice on export procedures. They could also negotiate trade agreements with other countries to open up new markets and reduce trade barriers.

In addition, investments in infrastructure, such as roads, ports, and cold storage facilities, can make it easier and cheaper for farmers to export their products.

2. Facilities Needed For Exports

a. Adopting Technology

Technology can play a crucial role in promoting exports. Digital platforms can connect farmers directly with international buyers, bypassing traditional intermediaries. They can also provide real-time information about market prices and demand, helping farmers make informed decisions.

Furthermore, technology can be used to improve product traceability, which is becoming increasingly important in international markets. For instance, blockchain technology can provide transparent and secure traceability systems, boosting consumer confidence and potentially fetching higher prices for the products.

b. Sustainable Farming Practices

Sustainable and environmentally friendly farming practices can enhance the appeal of Tamil Nadu's agricultural exports. There is growing demand internationally for products that are organic, fair-trade, or produced using environmentally friendly methods. The government can encourage and assist farmers in adopting these practices and obtaining the necessary certifications. This could not only increase farmers' incomes but also contribute to environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change. In conclusion, export promotion is a multifaceted strategy that requires a coordinated effort from farmers,

government, businesses, and other stakeholders. It has the potential to significantly augment farm income in Tamil Nadu, diversifying the rural economy and contributing to sustainable development. However, it is also a long-term strategy that requires investment, capacity building, and careful planning.

c. Efficient Transport System

Good transport infrastructure is vital to connect farms with local, national, and international markets. The construction of quality roads, the development of efficient logistics services, and investments in port facilities can all help to reduce transportation costs, improve the speed of delivery, and ensure the freshness and quality of agricultural products.

By enhancing accessibility to markets, it allows farmers to sell their produce more broadly and at better prices, directly contributing to an increase in their income. Moreover, infrastructure development in transportation not only supports the agricultural sector but also stimulates overall economic activity and generates revenue for the state through tolls, levies, and indirect job creation.

While infrastructure development presents significant opportunities, it's crucial to ensure that investments are made strategically. Understanding the specific needs of different regions and different types of produce is vital. For instance, regions producing more perishable goods might require larger investments in cold storage facilities.

Additionally, farmers and other stakeholders should be involved in the planning and decision-making process to ensure that investments are targeted effectively and address real needs. Finally, sustainability and environmental impact should also be considered to ensure that infrastructure development does not harm the environment or deplete natural resources. In conclusion, infrastructure development, while requiring substantial upfront investment, can create a strong foundation for sustainable agricultural growth, contributing

to the augmentation of farm income in Tamil Nadu, and potentially compensating for the revenue lost from the closure of TASMAC shops.

3. Benefits Of Export Promotion

Export promotion can increase farmers' incomes by giving them access to larger markets and higher prices. It can also stimulate the local economy, as increased demand for agricultural products can benefit other businesses in the supply chain, such as transport companies, packaging suppliers, and exporters.

In terms of government revenue, exports can generate foreign exchange and boost tax revenues through export duties and taxes on increased incomes.

Overall, while export promotion requires significant effort and investment, it has the potential to augment farm income significantly, making it a viable strategy to help compensate for the revenue loss from the closure of TASMAC shops in Tamil Nadu.

a. Developing Cooperative Farming

Small and medium farmers often face significant barriers when trying to access export markets. These may include lack of knowledge about market requirements, inability to meet large order volumes, and the high cost of certification and marketing. Encouraging the formation of farmer cooperatives can help overcome these barriers.

Cooperatives can pool resources to invest in necessary infrastructure and equipment. They can also provide training to members, share information about market opportunities, and negotiate better terms with buyers. The government can support the formation and operation of these cooperatives through policies, training, and financial assistance.

b. Expanding Value- Added Exports

Value-added products like processed foods and beverages have high export potential. For example, converting fruits into jams or juices, processing rice into snacks, or creating spice mixes can significantly increase the value of agricultural products. In addition to increasing farmers' incomes, these value-added products can create jobs in food processing, packaging, and marketing, contributing to rural development.

F. Agricultural Infrastructure

Investment in agricultural infrastructure plays a crucial role in augmenting farmers' income and can significantly contribute towards compensating the revenue loss resulting from the closure of TASMACH shops in Tamil Nadu. Improving infrastructure like storage facilities, processing units, and efficient transport systems can help reduce post-harvest losses, ensure better prices for farmers, add value to agricultural products, and potentially generate additional tax revenue for the state.¹⁵¹

1. Storage Facilities

Improving storage infrastructure is critical for reducing post-harvest losses, especially for perishable goods like fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. Investments in modern cold storage facilities, warehouses, and silos can ensure that produce is stored properly, reducing spoilage and waste.

Additionally, better storage facilities can help farmers store their produce until market conditions are favourable, allowing them to sell when prices are high, rather than being forced to sell immediately after harvest at lower prices. This aspect is especially crucial in the face of price volatility and can directly contribute to increasing the farmers' income.

2. Processing Units

Investment in local processing units can provide significant benefits. Processing raw agricultural produce into higher-value products not only generates additional income for farmers but also creates employment opportunities within rural areas.

For instance, converting fruits into jams, pickles, or juice concentrates; transforming milk into cheese, yoghurt, butter, and other dairy products; or processing grains and flours, baked goods, or other packaged foods can significantly increase the value of these products.

The government can incentivize private sector participation in setting up these units through schemes like subsidised loans, tax breaks, or grants. Additionally, these processing units can generate tax revenue for the state through sales tax and income tax.

G. Policy Reforms

Policy reforms can be instrumental in augmenting farm income in Tamil Nadu and potentially compensating for the revenue loss resulting from the closure of TASMAC shops. By implementing reforms that enhance agricultural productivity and income, such as more supportive land tenure laws, improved access to credit and insurance for farmers, and strengthening agricultural research and education, the government can create a conducive environment for the farming sector to thrive.

1. Supportive Land Tenure Laws

Land is the primary asset for farmers, and secure land tenure is critical for agricultural productivity. Insecure land tenure can discourage farmers from investing in their land and adopting improved farming practices. The government could consider policy reforms to clarify and secure land rights, streamline the process of land registration, and address issues related to land fragmentation. These measures can provide farmers with greater security, encourage investment in land improvement, and potentially enhance productivity and income.

2. Improved Access To Credit And Insurance

Access to affordable credit is essential for farmers to invest in inputs like seeds, fertilisers, and equipment, while insurance can protect them from losses due to unpredictable factors such as weather or disease outbreaks. The government could implement policy reforms to encourage financial institutions to offer more farmer-friendly loan and insurance products. This might include offering government-backed loan guarantees, subsidies for insurance premiums, or setting up dedicated agricultural banks. Improved access to credit and insurance can reduce farmers' financial risks, enable them to invest in improving productivity, and lead to increased income.

3. Strengthening Agricultural Education And Research

Strengthening agricultural research and education can be pivotal in improving farm productivity and income. The government can increase funding for agricultural research to develop new technologies, improved crop varieties, and more efficient farming practices. At the same time, strengthening agricultural education and extension services can help ensure that these innovations reach farmers and that farmers have the knowledge and skills to adopt them effectively.

The establishment of farmer field schools could facilitate better exchange of knowledge and information. These schools provide hands-on training to farmers about the latest in farming technology, sustainable practices, and other relevant subjects. The government can also encourage public-private partnerships for research into crop varieties that are more resistant to pests and changing climate conditions.

4. Farmers' Rights And Market Access

Policy reforms could also focus on ensuring farmers' rights and improving their access to markets. This could include reforms to ensure fair prices for farmers' produce, reducing the role

of middlemen, and improving transparency in the agricultural supply chain. The government could also work to open up new markets for farmers, both domestically and internationally, through trade agreements and export promotion efforts.

Creating and maintaining robust infrastructure like rural roads and marketplaces can go a long way in ensuring farmers have good access to local and regional markets. The government can also facilitate online marketplaces that can provide farmers with a wider reach, bypassing middlemen. Policy measures to standardise and improve packaging, and ensure transparency and fair practices in grading and quality checks will also help farmers fetch better prices for their produce.

5. Sustainability And Resilience

Given the growing impacts of climate change on agriculture, policy reforms should also consider sustainability and resilience. This might include policies to encourage sustainable farming practices, support for farmers to adapt to climate change, and efforts to protect and restore natural resources. In conclusion, implementing policy reforms in these areas can create an enabling environment that empowers farmers, improves productivity, and augments farm income. While policy reforms may take time to implement and show results, they can provide a long-term, sustainable solution to augmenting farm income and compensating for the loss of revenue from the closure of TASMAC shops in Tamil Nadu.

The government can incentivize sustainable farming practices, like organic farming and permaculture, by providing subsidies and premium market links. They can also set up local weather stations and develop mobile apps to provide farmers with real-time weather data, helping them make informed decisions about planting and harvesting. Policies to promote crop rotation and diversification can also help enhance soil health and farm resilience.

Overall, it's clear that comprehensive and well-thought-out policy reforms can have a significant impact on augmenting farm income in Tamil Nadu, and compensate for the loss of revenue from

the closure of TASMACH shops. However, for these reforms to be successful, they must be designed and implemented in a manner that is responsive to the unique context and needs of Tamil Nadu's farming communities. It's also essential to involve farmers in the decision-making process and provide them with the necessary support and resources to adapt to these changes.

INEFFECTIVENESS OF PEW AND THE NEED FOR STRENGTHENING ENFORCEMENT

XIII. Ineffectiveness of PEW And The Need For Strengthening Enforcement

The Home, Prohibition and Excise Department of the Tamil Nadu Government holds the responsibility of implementing liquor and prohibition policies within the state. Under its administrative control, four wings operate to effectively carry out these duties.¹⁵²

The Commissionerate of Prohibition and Excise, headed by the Commissioner of Prohibition and Excise, is primarily tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937. This act serves as the regulatory framework governing the production, distribution, and sale of alcohol for human consumption. The Commissionerate holds the authority to grant licences for establishing distilleries that manufacture alcohol, as well as for Indian Made Foreign Spirit (IMFS) and beer manufacturing units in the state. It plays a pivotal role in ensuring compliance with the Prohibition Act and maintaining proper regulation within the alcohol industry.¹⁵³

The Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) functions as a specialised unit within the Tamil Nadu state police, led by the Additional Director General of Police. Its primary objective is to combat activities associated with illicit liquor across the state. The PEW conducts targeted raids, investigations, and enforcement actions to identify and dismantle illegal liquor production and distribution networks. By working in close coordination with other law enforcement agencies, the PEW strives to enforce prohibition laws, eliminate the illicit liquor trade, and uphold public order.

Under the purview of the Home, Prohibition and Excise Department, the Narcotic Intelligence Bureau (NIB) operates as a critical unit headed by the Superintendent of Police. The NIB specialises in gathering intelligence related to narcotics and illicit substances, including drugs and illegal liquor. It plays a crucial role in collecting, analysing, and disseminating information to aid in the prevention and control of narcotics-related crimes. Collaborating with other law enforcement agencies, the NIB works

¹⁵² [Prohibition and Excise Department Website](#)

¹⁵³ [Handbook Published By The Home, Prohibition And Excise Department, p. No. 9](#)

towards combating drug trafficking and monitoring the circulation of illicit substances within the state.¹⁵⁴

The Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (TASMAC), headed by the Managing Director, operates as a state-owned enterprise within the Home, Prohibition and Excise Department. TASMAC is responsible for the wholesale and retail distribution of alcoholic beverages in Tamil Nadu. It manages a network of retail outlets known as "TASMAC shops" that legally sell liquor throughout the state. TASMAC works in alignment with the department's objectives to ensure the regulated and controlled availability of alcoholic beverages to consumers.

By integrating the efforts of these four wings, the Home, Prohibition and Excise Department aims to enforce liquor and prohibition policies, combat illegal activities, and maintain public safety and order within Tamil Nadu.

A. Organisational And Functions of PEW

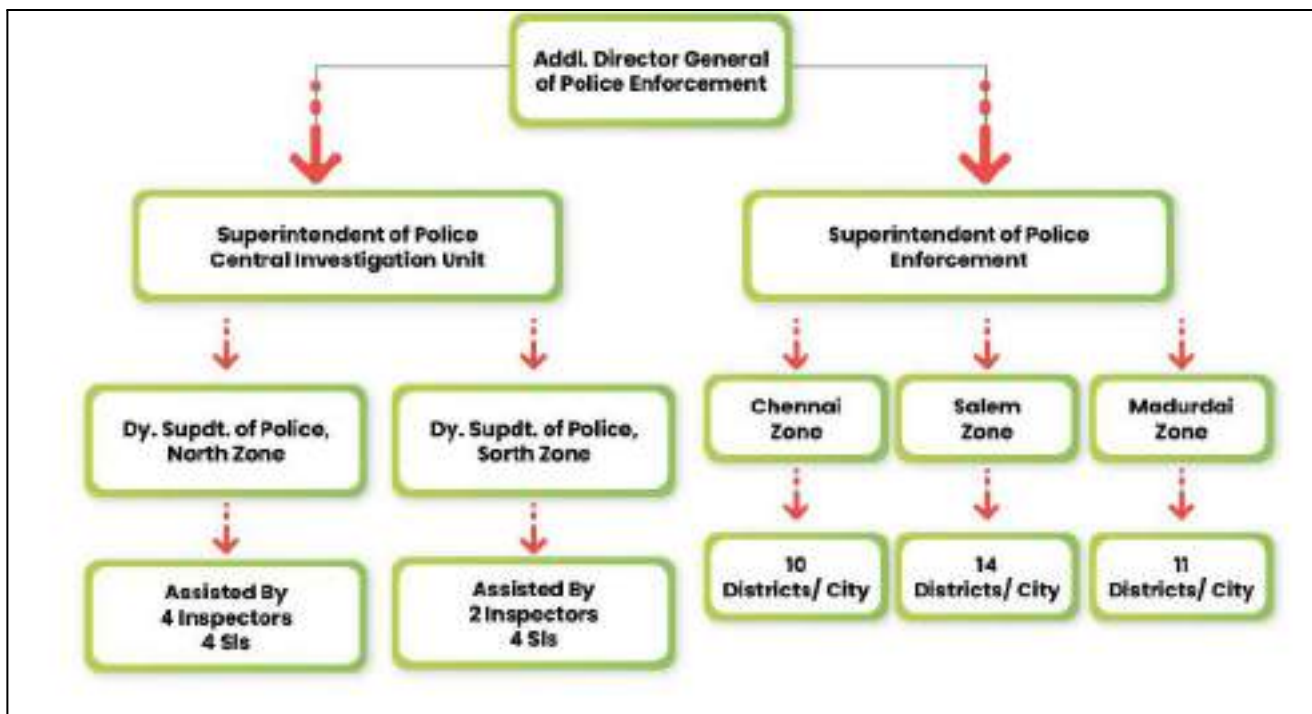


Chart 6: Organisational Structure of the PEW¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ [Policy Note 2023-24, p. No. 20](#)

¹⁵⁵ [E-service TN Police](#)

The Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) units in Tamil Nadu are designated as police stations to effectively carry out the responsibilities outlined in the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937. These units are entrusted with eradicating activities related to the distillation, transportation, possession, and sale of illicit liquor. They also play a vital role in preventing the smuggling of spurious liquor from other states. The PEW units are headed by Inspectors of Police who are supervised by Deputy Superintendents of Police in cities and districts, while in selected areas, they are supervised by Additional Superintendents of Police. Currently, there are 101 PEW units distributed across Tamil Nadu, operating under the administrative and operational control of the Commissioner of Police at the city level and the Superintendent of Police at the district level.

The PEW units are specifically established to enforce prohibition laws and maintain public order in relation to the consumption and sale of alcohol. Their primary objective is to combat the production and distribution of illicit liquor within the state. To achieve this, the units conduct targeted raids, investigations, and enforcement actions to identify and dismantle illegal liquor production and distribution networks. They work in close collaboration with other law enforcement agencies, such as the local police, to effectively enforce prohibition laws and eradicate the illicit liquor trade.

The responsibilities of the PEW units encompass a wide range of activities, including gathering intelligence on illicit liquor operations, conducting surveillance and monitoring, carrying out raids on suspected locations, seizing illicit liquor and related materials, arresting individuals involved in illegal activities, and initiating legal proceedings against offenders. These units play a crucial role in disrupting and dismantling the illegal liquor supply chain, thereby ensuring the safety and well-being of the public.

The PEW units are integral to maintaining the integrity of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937, and its provisions related to the regulation of alcohol production, distribution, and consumption. By actively preventing the manufacturing and sale of illicit liquor, the PEW units contribute to safeguarding public health and safety. Additionally, they strive to prevent the smuggling of spurious liquor from other states, which poses significant risks to consumers.

The coordination and supervision of the PEW units occur at both the city and district levels. The Commissioner of Police at the city level and the Superintendent of Police at the district level oversee the administrative and operational aspects of the PEW units. These senior officers provide guidance, strategic direction, and resources to ensure the effective functioning of the units. They play a pivotal role in setting priorities, coordinating joint operations with other law enforcement agencies, and evaluating the performance of the PEW units under their purview.

In conclusion, the Prohibition Enforcement Wing units in Tamil Nadu are designated police stations responsible for enforcing prohibition laws and combating illicit liquor activities. With their specialised focus and dedicated personnel, these units contribute significantly to maintaining public order, eradicating illegal liquor operations, and upholding the provisions of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937. Through their efforts, they strive to protect public health and safety, prevent the smuggling of spurious liquor, and ensure the regulated consumption and distribution of alcohol within the state.

B. PEW In Light Of The Recent Tragedy

The recent twin hooch tragedies in Tamil Nadu have exposed a significant failure in the Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) and its inability to effectively eradicate illicit liquor. The suspension of PEW officers, including the District Superintendents of Police (SPs) in Villupuram and Chengalpattu, by the state Home Department is a clear indication of this failure. However, it is important to recognize that this failure is merely a symptom of a larger and more systemic issue—the overall ineffectiveness of the PEW. Several factors have contributed to the rot within the system, and these factors need to be examined in order to understand the depth of the problem.¹⁵⁶

One of the key factors that have hindered the PEW's effectiveness is the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure. Insufficient allocation of resources, including funding, personnel, training facilities, and modern equipment, has severely handicapped the agency's ability to combat illicit liquor activities. Without the necessary tools and support, the PEW struggles to effectively carry out its mandate. The

¹⁵⁶ [Indian Express, May 2023](#); [South First, May 2023](#)

absence of essential infrastructure such as forensic laboratories and specialised units further undermines their investigative capabilities and the prosecution of offenders.

Corruption and political interference have also played a detrimental role in the effectiveness of the PEW. The presence of corruption within the enforcement agency, as well as its interaction with politicians and bootleggers, has created an environment conducive to the flourishing of illicit liquor operations. This undermines the agency's ability to take decisive action against those involved in the illegal liquor trade. Political interference can impede fair investigations, obstruct the arrest of influential offenders, and erode public trust in the enforcement efforts.

Furthermore, inadequate intelligence gathering and coordination have posed significant challenges for the PEW. The lack of timely and accurate intelligence on illicit liquor networks has hampered their ability to proactively identify and dismantle such operations. Additionally, coordination between the PEW and other law enforcement agencies, such as local police, customs, and excise departments, has been inadequate. This lack of information sharing and collaboration prevents a comprehensive and united approach to tackling the issue of illicit liquor.

In conclusion, the recent hooch tragedies in Tamil Nadu have exposed the failure of the PEW and highlighted its ineffectiveness in eradicating illicit liquor. However, it is crucial to recognize that this failure is symptomatic of larger systemic issues. The lack of adequate resources and infrastructure, corruption, political interference, and inadequate intelligence gathering and coordination have all contributed to the decay within the enforcement agency. Addressing these systemic issues and implementing comprehensive reforms are essential to improving the effectiveness of the PEW and ensuring the successful eradication of illicit liquor in Tamil Nadu.

1. Ineffective Enforcement In The State

The recent twin hooch tragedies in Tamil Nadu have shed light on the failure of the Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) to effectively eradicate illicit liquor, as evidenced by the suspension of PEW officers, including District Superintendents of Police (SPs). However, this failure is just a

symptom of a larger problem, namely, the overall ineffectiveness of the PEW. Several factors have contributed to the rot within the system.¹⁵⁷

One significant factor is the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure. The PEW has long suffered from constraints such as a shortage of personnel, inadequate training facilities, and a lack of modern equipment and technologies. Insufficient funding and support from the government have severely hindered the agency's ability to combat illicit liquor activities effectively. The absence of essential infrastructure, including forensic laboratories and specialised units, further impedes investigations and the prosecution of offenders.¹⁵⁸

Corruption and political interference also play a detrimental role in undermining the functioning of the PEW. Illicit liquor operations often thrive due to collusion between law enforcement officials, politicians, and bootleggers. This nexus creates an environment where decisive action against those involved in the illegal liquor trade is compromised. Political influence can obstruct fair investigations, impede the arrest of influential offenders, and undermine the overall effectiveness of enforcement efforts.¹⁵⁹

Another critical factor contributing to the inefficiency of the PEW is the lack of adequate intelligence and coordination. Timely and accurate intelligence on illicit liquor networks is essential, but the PEW has struggled to gather and utilise such information effectively. Additionally, coordination between the PEW and other law enforcement agencies, such as local police, customs, and excise departments, has been insufficient. This lack of information sharing and collaboration hampers the overall effectiveness of enforcement efforts.¹⁶⁰

Overall, the recent hooch tragedies in Tamil Nadu have highlighted the deep-rooted issues plaguing the PEW. Inadequate resources and infrastructure, corruption, political interference, and a lack of intelligence and coordination all contribute to the ineffectiveness of the agency in eradicating illicit

¹⁵⁷ [TOL, April 2020](#)

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

liquor. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial to improving the PEW's capabilities and ensuring the successful enforcement of prohibition laws in the state. The failure of the Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) in eradicating illicit liquor, as evidenced by the recent twin hooch tragedies and subsequent suspension of PEW officers, is indicative of a deeply rooted and systemic issue within the enforcement agency. While the suspensions highlight the immediate failures, it is essential to delve into the underlying factors that have contributed to the overall ineffectiveness of the PEW.

a. Back-To-Back Hooch Tragedies During The DMK Regime

The recurrence of illicit brewing cases in certain regions, despite their history of such activities, highlights the weak law enforcement in those areas. An example of this is the twin hooch tragedy that occurred in Krishnagiri in 2008, during Thiru M Karunanidhi's tenure as the Chief Minister. In this incident, 40 people lost their lives in Krishnagiri alone, and an additional 56 individuals were admitted to hospitals in Dharmapuri, Salem, Hosur, Krishnagiri, and Denkanikottai. The victims, primarily construction workers, had consumed illicit brew containing high levels of methanol, which had been brought into Tamil Nadu from the neighbouring state of Karnataka.¹⁶¹ Within a month of the tragedy, the DMK Government was compelled to suspend 21 police personnel, including 15 members of the Harur Prohibition Enforcement Wing, in connection with another liquor tragedy that claimed three lives and hospitalised 40 people in Kukkalmalai village, Dharmapuri. This incident further highlighted the ineffectiveness of the Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW), especially as the suspension occurred merely two days after the state Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) of the PEW had revealed that over 30,000 people were involved in the distillation and sale of arrack in the Harur and Pappireddipatti areas of Dharmapuri.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ [OneIndia, May 2008](#)

¹⁶² Ibid.

The fact that the police and PEW personnel turned a blind eye to the plight of the villagers in Dharmapuri is evident from an incident where a group of residents took matters into their own hands. Frustrated by the lack of action, they ransacked an illegal liquor shop located in Boothinatham near Papparapatti, Dharmapuri. Since there were no Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation Limited (TASMAC) shops in Boothinatham, villagers had to travel 15 kilometres to Papparapatti to purchase liquor. Exploiting this situation, a villager in Boothinatham had stockpiled TASMAC bottles at his house and sold them to the villagers at exorbitant prices. Despite repeated complaints to the police, no action was taken. Consequently, the villagers resorted to taking matters into their own hands by ransacking the said villager's house and destroying all the bottles.¹⁶³ This incident exemplifies the deep-rooted issues within the enforcement system, including a lack of responsiveness to the concerns of the villagers and the persistence of illicit liquor activities in the¹⁶⁴ area. It showcases the failure of the PEW and local law enforcement to address the grievances and protect the communities affected by such tragedies. The incident also underscores the desperate¹⁶⁵ measures that communities may resort to when they feel neglected by the authorities entrusted with their safety.¹⁶⁶ In order to tackle the pervasive issue of illicit liquor, it is crucial for law enforcement agencies, including the PEW, to strengthen their efforts, enhance coordination with local communities, and proactively address the challenges posed by illicit brewing and sale. This entails improving intelligence gathering, increasing the presence of law enforcement personnel, addressing corruption, and ensuring timely and effective action against offenders. By addressing these systemic issues, the authorities can work towards preventing future tragedies and safeguarding the well-being of the people of Tamil Nadu.

¹⁶³ [TOL, June 2008](#)

¹⁶⁴ [TOL, April 2023](#)

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

2. Ineffective Enforcement Across The Border

To prevent or check the import, export, transport or transit of liquor without obtaining a licence or permit and to regularly monitor the movement of illicit liquor across the border, Section 32-A of the Act of 1937 empowers the State Government to establish check posts or barriers in the places so notified by the Government. This Section of the Act also lays down the procedure to be followed for inspection which is as elucidated below -

- a. The Prohibition Officer or the officer-in-charge of the checkpost can keep the vehicle that he has intercepted, stationary, for as long as reasonably necessary to inspect the licence or permit obtained.
- b. If the officer is satisfied that the person carrying the liquor has the necessary permit, he may release the vehicle.
- c. If not, he may seize and confiscate the liquor. He may also ask the driver to produce his driver's licence. The officer may also ask for the name and address of the driver, the consignor and consignee.

As per the Policy Note of 2023-24 published by the Tamil Nadu Government, a total of 45 permanent prohibition checkpoints and 7 mobile checkpoints have been set up across the state to restrain infiltration of spurious, non-duty paid IMFL, rectified spirit, arrack sachets from neighbouring states into Tamil Nadu.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, temporary check posts are also set up from time to time during festivals and dry days.¹⁶⁸ The PEW conducts special raids in places where cases of illicit liquor have been frequently reported and surprise vehicle checks are also regularly conducted throughout the state.

a. Ground Reality

¹⁶⁷ [Policy Note, 2023-24, p.22](#)

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Puducherry, a union territory located in close proximity to Tamil Nadu, presents a unique case in the analysis of the smuggling and transportation of illicit liquor. The porous borders between TamilNadu and Puducherry have been exploited by bootleggers, making it a significant route for the cross-border smuggling of illicit liquor into Tamil Nadu. This has led to numerous incidents of hooch tragedies and highlighted the challenges faced in curbing this illegal activity.¹⁶⁹

In the context of illicit liquor incidents, Puducherry has been linked to the sourcing of methanol, a toxic substance used in the brewing of illicit liquor. The recent deaths in Villupuram and Chengalpattu, resulting from the consumption of spurious liquor containing methanol, once again underscore the issue of cross-border smuggling from Puducherry. The easy availability of methanol in Puducherry and its transportation to Tamil Nadu poses a grave threat to public health and safety.

One of the contributing factors to this problem is the geographical proximity and the porous nature of the borders between Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The ease with which individuals and illicit goods can cross these borders creates an unfortunate reality for Tamil Nadu. The absence of strict border control measures and inadequate surveillance infrastructure allows for the transportation of illicit liquor from Puducherry to Tamil Nadu, aggravating the illicit liquor problem in the state.

Furthermore, the jurisdictional complexities between the two regions pose challenges in terms of law enforcement and legal action. Smugglers take advantage of the differences in legal frameworks and enforcement agencies operating in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, making it difficult to effectively address the issue. Cooperation and coordination between the law enforcement agencies of both regions are crucial to combat cross-border smuggling and ensure effective enforcement of prohibition policies.

¹⁶⁹ [Business Standard, April 2014](#)

It is worth noting that the routing of methanol through Puducherry for the brewing of illicit liquor is not a recent phenomenon. In 1998, a tragic incident occurred where 46 people lost their lives and 282 individuals across nine villages in Tamil Nadu were affected due to the consumption of spurious liquor containing methanol, which was illegally purchased in and transported from Bengaluru. However, despite the magnitude of the tragedy, the lower court in Tamil Nadu acquitted all 21 accused in the case 16 years later, citing a lack of evidence. This highlights the challenges in gathering robust evidence and securing convictions in cases related to illicit liquor, further complicating efforts to combat the smuggling activities.

To address the issue of cross-border smuggling and the unique case of Puducherry, it is crucial to strengthen inter-state cooperation and collaboration between law enforcement agencies. Enhanced border security measures, including increased surveillance, intelligence sharing, and joint operations, are needed to curb the transportation of illicit liquor across the Tamil Nadu-Puducherry borders. Additionally, there is a need for stricter enforcement of laws, improved forensic capabilities, and streamlined legal processes to ensure that those involved in illicit liquor activities are brought to justice.

In conclusion, Puducherry presents a unique case in the analysis of cross-border smuggling of illicit liquor into Tamil Nadu. The porous borders between the two regions, combined with the availability of methanol and jurisdictional complexities, contribute to the challenges faced in curbing this illegal activity. Strengthening inter-state cooperation, enhancing border security measures, and addressing legal and enforcement gaps are vital steps in effectively tackling the issue of cross-border smuggling and ensuring public safety in Tamil Nadu.

b. Tamil Nadu's Secret Tryst With Puducherry

Puducherry stands out as a unique source for the smuggling of illicit liquor into Tamil Nadu due to the availability of liquor at significantly cheaper prices compared to neighbouring states. This affordability makes Puducherry an attractive destination for individuals involved

in the illicit liquor trade. The smuggling of rectified spirit, commonly used in the production of illicit liquor, is prevalent from both Karnataka and Puducherry. However, the latter holds a distinct advantage in terms of the availability of cheap liquor, creating a fertile ground for smuggling activities.¹⁷⁰

The demand for liquor from Puducherry has shown consistent growth, and this became particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Puducherry Government took measures to mobilise finances for the Union Territory's fight against the virus by imposing a Special Excise Duty (SED) of 25% and 20% at different times during the pandemic. One of the reasons behind this decision was to bring liquor prices on par with those in Tamil Nadu, thereby discouraging people from crossing the border and potentially increasing the spread of the infection.

Despite the imposition of a high SED, the price of liquor in Puducherry remained cheaper than in neighbouring states. This price differential further fueled the demand for smuggled illicit liquor from Puducherry into Tamil Nadu. The affordability and availability of cheap liquor in Puducherry contributed to the continuous smuggling activities and the failure to effectively control the flow of illicit liquor across the border.¹⁷¹

Furthermore, the imposition of the SED on liquor in Puducherry resulted in boosted revenue for the Union Territory. Despite the challenging circumstances posed by the raging pandemic, the excise duty revenue for the fiscal year 2021-22 crossed the significant milestone of ₹1,000 crore. This indicates the substantial demand for liquor and the thriving nature of the industry in Puducherry, even during difficult times.

The combination of cheap liquor prices and the financial benefits derived from the liquor industry has created a conducive environment for illicit liquor smuggling in Puducherry. The high demand for affordable liquor, both within the Union Territory and from

¹⁷⁰ [TOI, April 2021](#); [TNIE, July 2021](#)

¹⁷¹ [The Hindu, April 2022](#)

neighbouring states like Tamil Nadu, has perpetuated the cycle of smuggling and illegal activities.

To address this issue, it is essential to take comprehensive measures such as stringent enforcement actions, increased surveillance, and enhanced cooperation between law enforcement agencies of Puducherry and Tamil Nadu. Additionally, efforts should be directed towards reducing the price differentials between neighbouring states, discouraging the smuggling of illicit liquor, and promoting responsible alcohol consumption.

Overall, the unique combination of cheap liquor availability, high demand, and favourable pricing policies in Puducherry has made it a hotspot for the smuggling of illicit liquor into Tamil Nadu. Addressing this issue requires a multi-faceted approach that tackles both the supply and demand aspects, while also focusing on effective law enforcement, cross-border cooperation, and public awareness campaigns.

The availability of cheap liquor in Puducherry has created a significant market for illicit liquor smuggling, particularly into Tamil Nadu. Despite efforts to regulate the pricing through the imposition of a Special Excise Duty (SED) during the COVID-19 pandemic, the price differential between Puducherry and neighbouring states remained substantial. This price advantage fueled the demand for smuggled liquor, as consumers sought to benefit from the lower prices offered in Puducherry.

During the pandemic, when movement was restricted and liquor sales were affected, the demand for alcohol remained high. This led to an increase in smuggling activities, with individuals looking for alternative sources to satisfy their cravings. Puducherry, with its lower-priced liquor, became an attractive option for those seeking affordable alcohol, thereby contributing to the flourishing illicit liquor trade.

The revenue generated through the excise duty on liquor in Puducherry has witnessed significant growth, surpassing the ₹1,000 crore mark for the first time in the fiscal year

2021-22. This indicates the thriving nature of the liquor industry in the Union Territory, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. The substantial revenue generated highlights the scale of the demand for alcohol and the financial incentives that exist for the continuation of smuggling activities.

To effectively address the issue of illicit liquor smuggling from Puducherry into Tamil Nadu, it is necessary to tackle the root causes driving this illegal trade. This includes implementing stricter enforcement measures, strengthening border security, and enhancing inter-state cooperation between law enforcement agencies. Efforts should also focus on reducing the price differentials between neighbouring states, discouraging the demand for illicit liquor, and promoting legal and responsible alcohol consumption.

Public awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives can play a crucial role in educating the public about the dangers of consuming illicit liquor and the associated health risks. Additionally, efforts should be made to improve the availability and accessibility of legal liquor outlets, providing consumers with a viable and regulated option for purchasing alcohol. The following chart represents the Puducherry's Excise Duty Revenue,¹⁷²

¹⁷² Ibid.

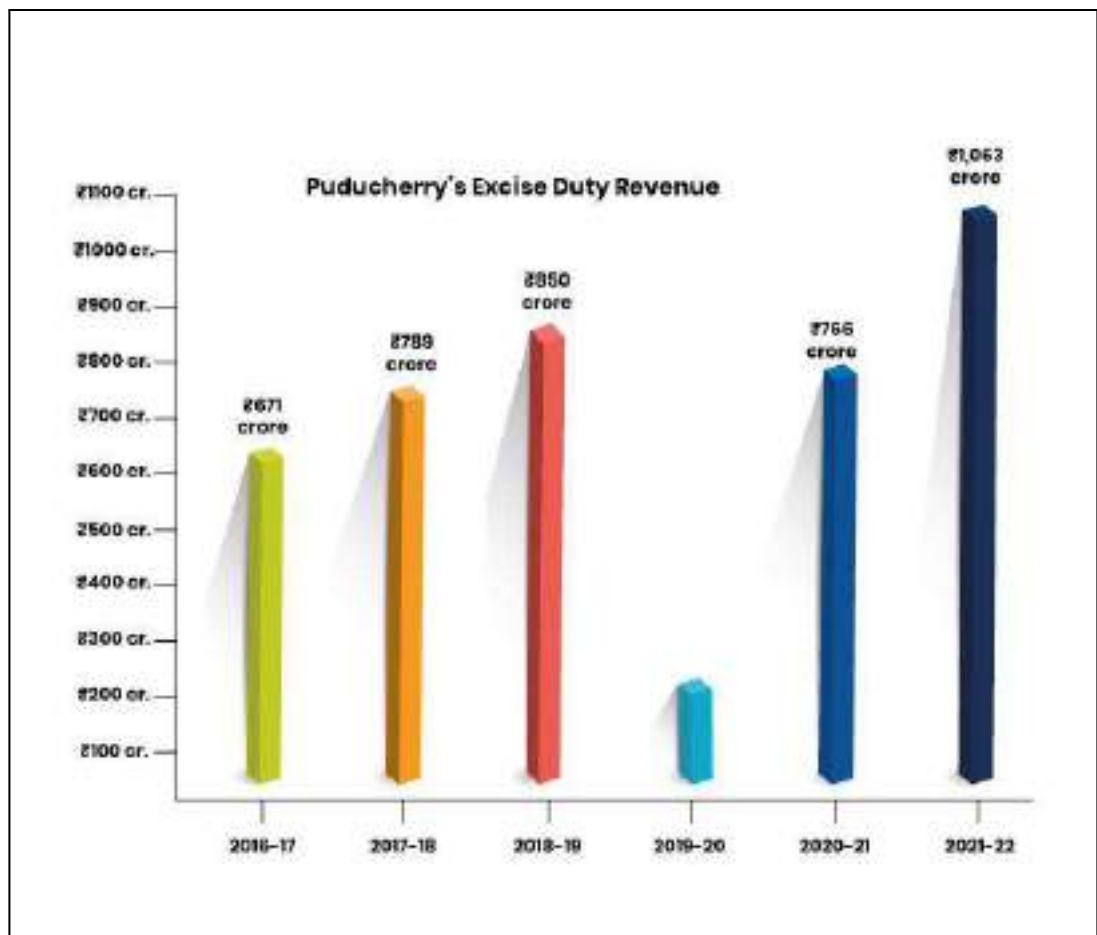


Chart 7: Year-wise revenue generated from Puducherry's excise duty

After the relaxation of the lockdown measures and the reopening of liquor shops in Puducherry, there was a surge in sales, with unprecedented figures recorded within just three days. On the opening day alone, sales worth ₹7.6 crore were registered, which was twice the usual amount. This surge in sales attracted not only local consumers but also individuals from Tamil Nadu, as TASMACH shops in the neighbouring state remained closed at that time. People queued up to purchase liquor from Puducherry due to the availability of cheap alcohol.¹⁷³

During this period, incidents of liquor smuggling from Puducherry into Tamil Nadu also came to light. Three individuals were apprehended while smuggling nearly 173 litres of liquor in an ambulance. This incident indicates a possible scenario where liquor is purchased

¹⁷³ [TNIE, June 2021](#)

legally at lower prices in Puducherry and then smuggled into Tamil Nadu to be sold at inflated prices. The seizure of a significant number of liquor bottles being smuggled from Puducherry into the state further strengthens this possibility. For instance, in July 2021, 641 bottles of Indian Made Foreign Liquor were intercepted while being smuggled into Trichy via a truck from Puducherry. Similar instances have been reported in the past, highlighting a recurring problem in the region.¹⁷⁴

Unfortunately, despite¹⁷⁵ The evident smuggling activities and the detrimental impact they have on society, the state police and the Prohibition Enforcement Wing have failed to take appropriate measures to prevent such activities. Moreover, there have been allegations of corruption and collusion, suggesting that some law enforcement officials may have overlooked the smuggling operations in exchange for monetary benefits. The lack of action against the accused and the failure to effectively curb smuggling activities raises concerns about the integrity and effectiveness of the enforcement agencies responsible for tackling the issue.¹⁷⁶

These circumstances¹⁷⁷ highlight the urgent need for stronger enforcement measures, including increased surveillance, stricter border control, and improved coordination between law enforcement agencies in both Puducherry and Tamil Nadu. Efforts should focus on dismantling the networks involved in smuggling and ensuring that those responsible for facilitating such illegal activities face strict legal consequences. Transparency, accountability, and zero tolerance for corruption are essential in addressing the challenges posed by liquor smuggling and maintaining the rule of law.

Moreover, public awareness campaigns should emphasise the risks associated with consuming illicit liquor and discourage individuals from participating in or supporting

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ [TNIE, June 2021](#)

¹⁷⁶ [TOI, July 2021](#)

¹⁷⁷ [TOI, November 2017](#)

smuggling operations. By promoting responsible alcohol consumption and providing accessible legal avenues for purchasing liquor, the demand for illicit alcohol can be reduced, thereby undermining the profitability of smuggling activities.

Overall, addressing the issue of liquor smuggling requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the systemic challenges, enhances enforcement mechanisms, and fosters a culture of integrity within the law enforcement agencies. By tackling corruption, strengthening border control, and raising public awareness, it is possible to combat liquor smuggling effectively and protect the well-being of the people in both Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

The failure of the state police and the Prohibition Enforcement Wing to take appropriate measures against liquor smuggling and the alleged involvement of some officials in corrupt practices have further exacerbated the problem. The lack of action not only allows the illicit liquor trade to thrive but also undermines public trust in law enforcement agencies.

The profitability of liquor smuggling from Puducherry into Tamil Nadu can be attributed to the significant price difference between the two regions. With liquor available at cheaper rates in Puducherry, individuals involved in smuggling operations exploit this opportunity to make substantial profits by selling the smuggled alcohol at inflated prices in Tamil Nadu. This illicit trade not only undermines legal businesses but also poses serious health risks to consumers, as the quality and safety of the smuggled liquor cannot be guaranteed.

The seizure of a large number of liquor bottles being smuggled from Puducherry into Tamil Nadu indicates the scale of the problem. It suggests that the smuggling network is well-organised and operates with relative impunity, taking advantage of weak enforcement measures and potential corruption within the system.

To effectively address the issue, there is a need for a multi-pronged approach. First and foremost, there must be a thorough investigation into the alleged involvement of law

enforcement officials in corrupt practices. Those found guilty must face severe consequences to deter others from engaging in similar activities.

Additionally, efforts should focus on strengthening border control measures and improving intelligence gathering to identify and disrupt smuggling networks. This can be achieved through enhanced cooperation and information sharing between law enforcement agencies in Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and other neighbouring states. Strengthening inter-state coordination will facilitate joint operations and the exchange of crucial information, leading to more successful interceptions and arrests.

Public awareness campaigns should be intensified to educate individuals about the dangers of consuming illicit liquor and the negative impact of supporting the illicit trade. This will help in reducing the demand for smuggled alcohol and encourage responsible alcohol consumption.

Moreover, the government should consider reviewing and revising the pricing policies for liquor to minimise the price differentials between neighbouring states. By aligning prices and ensuring affordability, the incentive for individuals to engage in smuggling activities will be significantly reduced.

Combating liquor smuggling requires a comprehensive approach involving strong enforcement, corruption-free governance, inter-state collaboration, public awareness, and policy reforms. By addressing these factors, the authorities can make significant progress in curbing the illicit liquor trade and safeguarding the well-being of the people in both Puducherry and Tamil Nadu.

3. Inadequate Crackdown On Methanol Production, Possession And Sale

Regrettably, shortly after the DMK Government boasted of zero deaths due to illicit liquor on the floor of the State Assembly, a tragic incident unfolded in Villupuram and Chengalpattu

districts. Initially, 17 deaths were reported, but the number later rose to a total of 23 deaths. This unfortunate event serves as a stark reminder that the problem of spurious liquor remains prevalent and requires immediate attention.

The occurrence of such incidents underscores the urgency for effective measures to combat the production, distribution, and consumption of illicit liquor in Tamil Nadu. It is crucial for the government and law enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts in identifying and dismantling illicit liquor networks, strengthening the enforcement of prohibition laws, and raising public awareness about the dangers associated with consuming spurious liquor.

Recent incidents, such as the tragedy in Villupuram and Chengalpattu districts, serve as a reminder that the issue persists and demands immediate and effective action to protect public health and safety.

a. Methanol Deaths During The Pandemic

In 2020, the cases of methanol poisoning in Tamil Nadu were a cause for great concern, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the lockdown measures in place, the TASMAC shops, which are the authorised liquor outlets in the state, had to be shut down, leading to a decline in legal liquor sales. This situation created an opportunity for bootleggers to exploit the demand for alcohol by offering cheaper alternatives, resulting in an increase in the consumption of spurious liquor.¹⁷⁸

During the pandemic¹⁷⁹, the number of cases related to illicit liquor witnessed a significant surge. Between 26 March 2020 and 13 April¹⁸⁰ 2020 alone, a staggering 1,689 liquor cases were registered, and 2,119 individuals were arrested across nine districts of Tamil Nadu. It is

¹⁷⁸ [TOI, April 2020](#)

¹⁷⁹ [Mumbai Mirror, April 2020](#)

¹⁸⁰ [TOI, May 2013](#)

important to note that while these cases involved mostly arrack, which is a low-quality illicit liquor, the consumption of such beverages can still have detrimental effects on health.¹⁸¹

One disturbing aspect of the illicit liquor trade during the pandemic was the use of aftershave containing methanol. Aftershave became a preferred choice for selling illegally obtained methanol to produce spurious liquor. In 2013, Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) officers uncovered a racket in Chennai where 405 litres of diluted methanol, worth ₹23 lakh, were sold as aftershave to salons. This highlights the organised nature of the illicit liquor trade and the risks associated with consuming such products.

In some instances, individuals desperate for a quick high during the pandemic resorted to consuming methanol directly. Tragically, this led to fatal consequences. For example, in Pudukkottai, three people died after consuming soft drinks mixed with aftershave containing methanol. Similarly, in Cuddalore, one person lost their life, and three others were hospitalised after consuming one litre of stolen methanol, which had been obtained from a pesticide factory. It is worth noting that cases of the illegal sale of methanol had been reported even before the pandemic, indicating a pre-existing issue within the state. These incidents underscore the need for stricter regulation and enforcement to prevent the illegal sale and consumption of methanol and spurious liquor. In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the problem of illicit liquor in Tamil Nadu. The closure of TASMACH shops and the subsequent demand for cheaper alternatives led to an increase in the consumption of spurious liquor. Methanol, often obtained through illegal means, became a dangerous ingredient in the production of such illicit beverages. The incidents of methanol poisoning during the pandemic serve as a reminder of the risks associated with the consumption of spurious liquor and highlight the necessity for stronger measures to combat the illegal sale and distribution of such substances.

c. Tamil Nadu's Unfortunate History With Methanol Poisoning

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

The hooch tragedies that occurred in Tamil Nadu, particularly in 2008 and 2001, highlight the persistent issue of deaths resulting from the consumption of liquor mixed with methanol. These incidents serve as stark reminders of the dangers posed by the sale and consumption of illegal liquor.¹⁸² One of the worst hooch tragedies in the history of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka occurred on 18 May 2008. A total of 180 people lost their lives due to methanol poisoning after consuming liquor that contained methyl alcohol. This incident shook the region and raised concerns about the widespread availability of illicit liquor.¹⁸³

According to a former ADGP (Prohibition), the state had experienced 50 hooch tragedies since 1991, resulting in 271 deaths attributed to methanol. These numbers underscore the recurring nature of the problem and the urgent need for effective measures to tackle the sale and distribution of illegal liquor.

Furthermore, in 2001, Tamil Nadu witnessed a series of hooch tragedies within a short span of three months. These incidents occurred in different parts of the state and involved the consumption of liquor mixed with methanol. One notable case took place in October of that year, where 32 people lost their lives, and 50 others were injured after consuming such contaminated liquor. These tragic events highlighted the grave consequences of the illicit liquor trade and the dangers posed to public health.

Despite these incidents and the subsequent loss of lives, the sale of illegal liquor continued to persist in Tamil Nadu. This indicates the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies in effectively curbing the illicit liquor trade and preventing such tragedies from recurring.

The hooch tragedies that occurred in Tamil Nadu, including the significant incidents in 2008 and 2001, demonstrate the long-standing problem of deaths resulting from the consumption of liquor mixed with methanol. These tragedies underscore the need for

¹⁸² [Outlook India, July 2022](#)

¹⁸³ [TOI, October 2001](#)

rigorous enforcement and preventive measures to combat the sale and distribution of illegal liquor, ensuring the safety and well-being of the population.

d. Methanol And Not Hooch Behind Tamil Nadu Tragedies

“In every hooch tragedy in the history of India and of the world since 1945, the poison has been methanol.”

Former DGP C Sylendra Babu's statement attributing the recent deaths in Tamil Nadu to methanol rather than hooch aligns with the findings of investigations into the incidents. It is important to note that methanol is a type of alcohol that is not meant for human consumption due to its toxic nature. James Manor, an emeritus professor of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London, has highlighted in his writings that methanol has been the common poison in hooch tragedies in India and around the world since 1945.

In the case of the Villupuram and Chengalpattu deaths, the investigations revealed that the victims had indeed consumed liquor that contained methanol. Methanol is known to be a highly dangerous substance when ingested, leading to severe health complications and even fatalities. Its presence in the illicit liquor points to the use of cheap and dangerous additives that can have devastating consequences for consumers.

The use of methanol in the production of illegal liquor is not unique to Tamil Nadu but has been observed in hooch tragedies across the country and globally. The illicit nature of the production process and the lack of quality control measures make it easier for unscrupulous individuals to adulterate liquor with substances like methanol to increase its potency or quantity.

The fact that methanol has consistently been the common poison in hooch tragedies underscores the need for stringent regulation and enforcement to combat the illicit liquor

trade. Authorities should prioritise measures to curb the production, distribution, and consumption of illicit liquor, including targeted efforts to dismantle the networks involved in its trade. Public awareness campaigns and education on the dangers of consuming illicit liquor, especially those containing methanol, are also crucial in preventing such tragedies. Strengthening law enforcement, improving surveillance, and ensuring the availability of safe and affordable alternatives can all contribute to mitigating the risks associated with the consumption of illicit liquor.

In summary, the recent deaths in Villupuram and Chengalpattu, like many hooch tragedies in India and around the world, were caused by the consumption of liquor contaminated with methanol. This reinforces the urgent need for comprehensive efforts to combat the production and sale of illicit liquor, protect public health, and prevent future incidents of this nature.

C. Reasons For Inadequate And Ineffective Enforcement

1. Compromise In Law Enforcement

Following the unfortunate events of 2001, methanol was brought within the ambit of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition Act, 1937.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, relevant amendments were made in the Tamil Nadu Denatured Spirit, Methyl Alcohol and Varnish (French Polish) Rules, 1959 to maintain strict control over possession, use, transportation, import, sales etc., of methanol. Further, to ensure that the liquor sold in state-owned TASMAC is not harmful, the Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations 2018 establishes the maximum permissible quantity of methanol in different liquors.¹⁸⁵ However, as discussed in the subsequent section on corruption in TASMAC, samples of liquor from the shops are not regularly taken for testing.

In addition to the abovementioned statutory mechanisms, PEW also has certain internal mechanisms to track the production of methanol to stop hooch tragedies and also track

¹⁸⁴ [Policy Note, 2023-24, p.27](#)

¹⁸⁵ [The Hindu, May 2023](#)

those who purchase Tasmac liquor in bulk and sell it at high rates.¹⁸⁶ District Superintendents of Police are also required to check all methanol manufacturing units, end-users, factories, industries that have licence to possess methanol in the State, monthly reports of which are closely to be analysed at the PEW Headquarters.¹⁸⁷ That this has not had the intended effect is clear not only from the deaths due to illicit liquor that continue to be reported in the state but also from Chief Minister, Thiru M K Stalin's last ditch attempt at bringing some semblance of regular monitoring and control in the system by instructing officials to submit weekly reports, in the aftermath of the Villupuram and Chengalpattu deaths.¹⁸⁸ The absence of any improvement in the situation reinforces the failure of the law enforcement machinery in the state to effectively deal with the more nefarious reasons underlying the deaths in Tamil Nadu.

2. Police-Bootlegger Nexus

The presence of a deep nexus between local police and bootleggers poses a significant challenge to the crackdown on illicit liquor networks in Tamil Nadu. Retired Deputy Superintendent of Police Thiru A Nagarajan's observation sheds light on the practical difficulties faced by the Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) officers in carrying out effective raids.

According to the existing protocols, PEW officers are required to inform the local police of a particular jurisdiction before conducting a raid. However, the unfortunate reality is that some members of the local police force are involved in corrupt practices and maintain close ties with bootleggers. As a result, when they receive information about an impending raid, they tip off the bootleggers, enabling them to escape before the authorities arrive. This collusion between local police and bootleggers severely hampers the efforts of PEW officers to effectively dismantle illicit liquor networks. The advance warning given to bootleggers allows them to evade arrest and continue their illegal activities, perpetuating the cycle of illicit liquor production and distribution. To address this issue, it is imperative to take decisive action against police officers

¹⁸⁶ [TNIE, March 2022](#)

¹⁸⁷ [Policy Note, 2023-24, p.27](#)

¹⁸⁸ [The Hindu, May 2023](#)

found to be involved in such corrupt practices. Strict disciplinary measures, including suspensions, dismissals, and legal proceedings, should be initiated against those who betray their duty and collude with criminals. Additionally, there is a need to enhance coordination and communication between PEW and other law enforcement agencies. This can help minimise the risk of information leaks and ensure that raids are conducted swiftly and effectively, leaving little time for bootleggers to escape. Moreover, whistleblower protection mechanisms should be established to encourage individuals with knowledge of police-bootlegger collusion to come forward and provide information. Ensuring the safety and anonymity of whistleblowers is crucial in breaking the cycle of corruption and strengthening law enforcement efforts.

Public trust in law enforcement agencies also needs to be rebuilt through community engagement initiatives and awareness campaigns. By fostering a sense of responsibility and cooperation among the public, it becomes more challenging for corrupt officials to operate with impunity. The deep nexus between local police and bootleggers presents a significant hurdle in the crackdown on illicit liquor networks in Tamil Nadu. Overcoming this challenge requires proactive measures such as strict action against corrupt police officers, improved coordination among law enforcement agencies, whistleblower protection, and community engagement initiatives. By addressing these issues head-on, authorities can work towards dismantling illicit liquor networks and ensuring the safety and well-being of the people of Tamil Nadu. In fact, in 2021, the Tamil Nadu police published a list called the 'Bribe Rate Card' containing 61 activities for which station-level officers from inspector to constable are known to take bribes in a range of ₹100 to over ₹1 lakh. As per this rate card, police officers have received ₹10,000 to ₹60,000 from those involved in the sale of illicit liquor.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ [TOI, October 2021](#)

An Inspector's Commission Per Month As Per The Circular Issued By TN Police	
Civil Dispute	₹10,000 - ₹1 lakh
Granite Quarried	₹10,000
Sand Smugglers	₹20,000
Illegal Liquor Sale	₹10,000 - ₹60,000
Banned Lottery	₹1 lakh
Gambling	₹10,000
Issuing Missing Documents	₹25,000

Table 2: An Inspector's Commission Per Month

3. Corruption In PEW

Not just the local police but PEW officers themselves stand to gain from the illicit liquor trade thanks to institutionalised corruption which has led to many instances in the past where officers have ignored legitimate tip offs in exchange for money (bribe). In 2017, seven police officers including the Head Constable, two serving inspectors and a sub inspector of PEW in Athur were sentenced to imprisonment for taking a bribe from bootleggers in Salem around 17 years ago.¹⁹⁰ The Head Constable demanded ₹15,000 as bribe for releasing a vehicle he had intercepted during his raid. Having received multiple complaints against the officers of the PEW

¹⁹⁰ [Deccan Chronicle, May 2017](#)

police station in Athur, the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti Corruption (DVAC) raided the station and seized unaccounted money worth ₹1.15 lakh which was kept hidden at 17 different places. Documents seized during the raid confirmed that all PEW officers in Athur police station had received bribes. In 2022, on the eve of Diwali, in anticipation of the possible exchange of bribes under the guise of ‘gifts’ received by government servants, the DVAC conducted 46 raiding operations across 27 offices under 16 departments including the Prohibition Enforcement Wing and seized ₹1.12 crore in unaccounted cash.¹⁹¹

4. Dereliction Of Duty And Frequent Transfers

Five police personnel in PEW at Thiruvannamalai were also issued suspension orders for failing to act despite having received specific tip-offs on sale of illegal liquor and arrack.¹⁹² However, this was not the first time that action was taken against PEW officers for negligence. There have been multiple occasions in the past where officers have been pulled up for dereliction of duty and transferred to ‘non-sensitive duties’ which makes it clear that the menace of illicit liquor was not only out of control but was downright ignored. For instance, in July 2021, six PEW officers in Tiruvarur were suspended for collectively failing to take action against two persons who were found smuggling from Puducherry.¹⁹³ Although they intercepted the vehicle, they were allegedly let off by the head of the team. Even when officers are transferred for dereliction of duty, reasons for the transfer are not made public. In August 2022, in spite of repeated complaints against an illegal bar run by an influential politician just outside the PEW police station at Alangulam in Tenkasi, no action was taken.¹⁹⁴ Seeing that PEW was reluctant to resolve the nuisance, the matter was escalated to DGP, Sylendra Babu and IG (South Zone) Asra Garg directly through WhatsApp after which the police seized the bottles, closed down the bar and transferred the PEW inspector for ‘unknown reasons’. Five police personnel in PEW at Thiruvannamalai were

¹⁹¹ [TOI, October 2022](#)

¹⁹² [The Hindu, May 2023](#)

¹⁹³ [The Hindu, July 2021](#)

¹⁹⁴ [TNIE, August 2022](#)

also issued suspension orders for failing to act despite having received specific tip-offs on sale of illegal liquor and arrack.¹⁹⁵ However, this was not the first time that action was taken against PEW officers for negligence. There have been multiple occasions in the past where officers have been pulled up for dereliction of duty and transferred to ‘non-sensitive duties’ which makes it clear that the menace of illicit liquor was not only not under control but was downright ignored. For instance, in July 2021, six PEW officers in Tiruvarur were suspended for collectively failing to take action against two persons who were found smuggling from Puducherry.¹⁹⁶ Although they intercepted the vehicle, they were allegedly let off by the head of the team. Even when officers are transferred for dereliction of duty, reasons for the transfer are not made public. In August 2022, in spite of repeated complaints against an illegal bar run by an influential politician just outside the PEW police station at Alangulam in Tenkasi, no action was taken.¹⁹⁷ Seeing that PEW was reluctant to resolve the nuisance, the matter was escalated to DGP, Sylendra Babu and IG (South Zone) Asra Garg directly through WhatsApp after which the police seized the bottles, closed down the bar and transferred the PEW inspector for ‘unknown reasons’.

5. Mismanagement Of Personnel

Following the twin hooch tragedies, highlighting the lapses in Tamil Nadu police, a senior official in the Home Department of the state opined that “The force’s attention had been disproportionately directed towards ganja peddlers in recent years.”¹⁹⁸ In August of 2022, Chief Minister Thiru MK Stalin announced the creation of a new ‘Enforcement Bureau Crime Investigation’ Department formed after merging the Prohibition Enforcement Wing and the Narcotics Intelligence Bureau CID to pursue cases of drug peddling more aggressively.¹⁹⁹ Hundreds of PEW personnel were put on the task of eradicating the drug menace. Although

¹⁹⁵ [The Hindu, May 2023](#)

¹⁹⁶ [The Hindu, July 2021](#)

¹⁹⁷ [TNIE, August 2022](#)

¹⁹⁸ [Indian Express, May 2023](#)

¹⁹⁹ [TOI, August 2022](#)

sources within the state police justified this decision as a personnel decision since PEW has units in all cities and districts²⁰⁰, it would not be unreasonable to presume that there is more to the story considering the senior Home Department's statement. Monitoring the drug smuggling activities, while important, cannot be at the cost of preventing an equally dangerous menace - smuggling of spurious liquor. Diverting resources is justified only if the intentions are legitimate and bona fide. Given the disproportionate focus on drug smuggling, it would not be wholly unreasonable to presume that there were other considerations that influenced the decision - for instance, the unholy nexus between politicians/political parties, liquor manufacturers and TASMAL (explained in subsequent sections of the whitepaper) is reason enough to divert resources away from a cash cow like TASMAL and its activities.

The creation of the 'Enforcement Bureau Crime Investigation' Department by Chief Minister Thiru MK Stalin, merging the Prohibition Enforcement Wing (PEW) and the Narcotics Intelligence Bureau CID, indicates a shift in focus towards tackling drug peddling and related crimes in Tamil Nadu. This decision was made with the aim of addressing the growing problem of drug smuggling and ensuring a more aggressive approach in combating it. However, the statement by a senior official in the Home Department, suggesting that the police force's attention had been disproportionately directed towards ganja peddlers in recent years, raises questions about the allocation of resources and priorities within law enforcement agencies. It highlights the need for a balanced approach that addresses not only drug smuggling but also other significant issues, such as the smuggling of spurious liquor.

The diversion of resources and personnel from the PEW to focus on drug smuggling may have multiple implications. While monitoring drug activities is crucial for public safety and health, it should not come at the expense of neglecting the equally dangerous problem of spurious liquor. The potential reasons behind this reallocation of resources, as hinted in the statement, could

²⁰⁰ [The Hindu, June 2022](#)

include political influence, the involvement of political parties, liquor manufacturers, and the revenue generated by the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAL).

TASMAL, being a major source of revenue for the state, has often been surrounded by allegations of corruption and collusion. The nexus between politicians, political parties, liquor manufacturers, and TASMAL creates an environment where diverting attention and resources from the liquor trade could serve certain vested interests. These interests may prioritise the profitability of TASMAL and its activities over the prevention of illicit liquor and associated risks to public health.

While the creation of the Enforcement Bureau Crime Investigation Department shows a commitment to addressing the issue of drug peddling, it is essential to ensure that the intentions behind this decision are genuine and not influenced by ulterior motives. Maintaining a balanced approach to tackle both drug smuggling and the smuggling of spurious liquor is crucial to safeguard public health and safety.

Efforts to combat illicit liquor should not be overshadowed by other priorities or compromised due to political or financial considerations. It is important for law enforcement agencies to address the challenges associated with spurious liquor effectively, including corruption within the system, by strengthening enforcement measures, enhancing coordination among agencies, and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability.

In conclusion, while the creation of the Enforcement Bureau Crime Investigation Department reflects a shift in focus towards combating drug peddling in Tamil Nadu, it is important to ensure that adequate attention and resources are also allocated to address the issue of spurious liquor. Any reallocation of resources should be based on legitimate and bona fide intentions, free from any undue influence or compromise. A comprehensive and balanced approach is necessary to tackle both drug smuggling and the smuggling of spurious liquor, ensuring the well-being and safety of the public.

MODEL DE-ADDICTION PROGRAM

XIV. Model De-Addiction Program

De-Addiction Methods

An embargo on the sale of alcohol would restrict the availability of alcohol but not alcoholism per se, which merits a long term approach. Globally, regulations on the sale of alcohol have been accompanied by state policies which educate citizens about the ill effects of alcoholism. Unfortunately, in India, while drinking is considered a moral weakness, it is still not seen as a health hazard. **As per a 2019 study on the pattern of alcohol consumption and associated morbidity in urban Tamil Nadu, 67% of alcohol consumers had a problematic drinking pattern, with 52.5% having a hazardous/harmful drinking pattern and 14.7% were found to be dependent alcoholics.**

Furthermore, the study found that factors associated with problematic drinking patterns were illiteracy, having a history of tobacco use, being unmarried/divorced and consuming alcohol in wine shops. The study concluded that alcohol consumption significantly added to health morbidities, with the most common morbidities being hypertension, gastritis/peptic ulcer disease, and psychiatric illnesses.

In this light, there needs to be a strong focus on rehabilitating individuals addicted to alcohol. Increased spending on awareness programs would help reduce the societal demand for alcohol over time. A recent report from the World Health Organisation talks about the importance of rehabilitation as central to holistic healthcare.²⁰¹ It, in fact, considered the unmet need for rehabilitation in low and middle income countries so dire that it launched an initiative called the Rehabilitation 2030 and raised a “Call to Action”. It identified six building blocks of the health system amenable to rehabilitation, which have been also broadly suggested in this white paper. These are: Leadership and Governance, Financing , Health Workforce, Service Delivery, Medicine and Technology as well as Health Information System.²⁰² In light of these factors , the following measures gain significance.

²⁰¹ [WHO, Rehabilitation in Health Systems Guide For Action, 2019](#)

²⁰² [WHO, Rehabilitation in Health Systems Guide For Action, 2019, pg 4](#)

A. Medical Detoxification: Pharmacological approaches for managing alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

Alcohol Withdrawal Syndrome (AWS) is a potentially severe condition that occurs when individuals with alcohol use disorder abruptly stop or reduce their alcohol consumption. The withdrawal process can lead to a range of distressing symptoms, including tremors, anxiety, hallucinations, and seizures. Medical detoxification, which involves the administration of pharmacological interventions, plays a crucial role in managing these withdrawal symptoms and ensuring a safe transition towards sobriety. This section explores the pharmacological approaches used in medical detoxification for alcohol withdrawal, highlighting their mechanisms of action and effectiveness.

a. Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines are the most commonly prescribed medications for managing alcohol withdrawal symptoms. They act by enhancing the inhibitory effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), an important neurotransmitter that helps regulate brain activity. Benzodiazepines such as diazepam, lorazepam, and chlordiazepoxide effectively alleviate symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, and seizures. These medications are usually administered in a tapered dose regimen, gradually reducing the dosage over a defined period to prevent dependence or withdrawal symptoms.

b. Anticonvulsants

Anticonvulsant medications, such as carbamazepine and valproate, are occasionally used as alternatives to benzodiazepines for managing alcohol withdrawal symptoms. These medications work by stabilising neuronal activity and reducing excitability in the brain. While they may be less sedating than benzodiazepines, anticonvulsants have shown efficacy in controlling seizures and managing mild to moderate withdrawal symptoms.

c. Alpha-2 Adrenergic Agonists

Clonidine, an alpha-2 adrenergic agonist, has demonstrated utility in managing alcohol withdrawal symptoms. It works by reducing sympathetic outflow, thereby alleviating symptoms such as high blood pressure, rapid heart rate, and anxiety. Clonidine may be used alone or in combination with benzodiazepines to provide additional relief from symptoms.

d. Naltrexone

Naltrexone is an opioid receptor antagonist that is primarily used in the maintenance phase of alcohol dependence treatment. However, it can also be beneficial during the initial detoxification period by reducing alcohol cravings and the risk of relapse. Naltrexone helps block the reinforcing effects of alcohol and may be administered orally or through an extended-release injectable formulation.

e. Other Medications

Additional medications, such as antipsychotics or sedatives, may be employed in specific cases to manage severe withdrawal symptoms or co-occurring psychiatric conditions. However, their use requires careful consideration due to the potential for side effects and interactions with other medications.

Medical detoxification is a critical step in managing alcohol withdrawal symptoms and facilitating the transition to sobriety. Pharmacological approaches, including benzodiazepines, anticonvulsants, alpha-2 adrenergic agonists, naltrexone, and other medications, provide effective relief from withdrawal symptoms, ensuring patient safety and comfort during this challenging period. However, it is important to individualise treatment based on the patient's specific needs and medical history. Close monitoring by healthcare professionals and the provision of psychosocial support are essential components of medical detoxification, as they contribute to the overall success of alcohol withdrawal management and long-term recovery.

B. Behavioural Therapy: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and other evidence-based approaches.

Behavioural therapy plays a vital role in the de-addiction process for individuals struggling with alcohol use disorder. By addressing the underlying thoughts, emotions, and behaviours associated with alcohol addiction, behavioural therapies help individuals develop healthier coping mechanisms and make positive changes in their lives. This section focuses on two prominent evidence-based approaches: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Interviewing (MI). Additionally, it briefly explores other effective behavioural therapies used in alcohol deaddiction.

a. Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a widely recognized and extensively studied form of therapy for alcohol de-addiction. It is based on the principle that thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are interconnected and influence each other. CBT aims to identify and modify dysfunctional thoughts and beliefs surrounding alcohol use, thus fostering positive changes in behaviour. Key components of CBT include:

- i. **Functional Analysis:** Understanding the antecedents, behaviours, and consequences related to alcohol use to identify triggers and high-risk situations.
- ii. **Cognitive Restructuring:** Challenging and replacing negative or distorted thoughts and beliefs associated with alcohol use, promoting healthier thinking patterns.
- iii. **Skills Training:** Equipping individuals with coping skills to manage cravings, stress, and other triggers effectively.
- iv. **Relapse Prevention:** Developing strategies to identify early warning signs of relapse and implementing preventive measures.

Numerous studies have shown that CBT can effectively reduce alcohol consumption, prevent relapse, and improve overall well-being in individuals seeking deaddiction.

b. Motivational Interviewing (MI)

Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a client-centred approach that focuses on enhancing intrinsic motivation and commitment to change. It recognizes that individuals with alcohol use disorder may have ambivalence about quitting or reducing their alcohol intake. MI aims to explore and resolve this ambivalence by fostering a supportive and non-confrontational therapeutic relationship. Key elements of MI include:

- i. **Expressing Empathy:** Demonstrating understanding, empathy, and acceptance to create a safe and non-judgmental environment.
- ii. **Developing Discrepancy:** Helping individuals recognize and explore the discrepancy between their current behaviour and their desired goals and values.
- iii. **Rolling with Resistance:** Avoiding confrontation and instead seeking to understand the individual's perspective, which can facilitate change.
- iv. **Supporting Self-Efficacy:** Encouraging individuals to identify and build confidence in their ability to make positive changes.

MI has been found to be effective in increasing motivation for change, reducing alcohol consumption, and improving treatment outcomes.

c. Other Evidence-Based Approaches

In addition to CBT and MI, several other evidence-based approaches are utilised in alcohol deaddiction:

- i. **Contingency Management (CM):** This approach uses positive reinforcement, such as vouchers or rewards, to incentivize abstinence or adherence to treatment goals.

- ii. **Community Reinforcement Approach (CRA):** CRA integrates several components, including behavioural therapy, family involvement, vocational training, and recreational activities, to create a supportive and alcohol-free lifestyle.
- iii. **12-Step Facilitation:** Based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), this approach promotes attendance and engagement with self-help groups, emphasising social support and spirituality.
- iv. **Brief Interventions:** These short-term interventions, often delivered in primary care settings, aim to raise awareness about alcohol-related risks, motivate change, and provide guidance on harm reduction strategies.

Each of these approaches has demonstrated effectiveness in various settings and populations, providing individuals with a range of options for alcohol de-addiction.

Behavioural therapies, including Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and other evidence-based approaches, offer valuable tools for individuals seeking to overcome alcohol addiction. These therapies target the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects underlying addiction, empowering individuals to make positive changes and maintain long-term recovery. By modifying maladaptive thoughts, enhancing motivation, and providing coping skills, behavioural therapies significantly contribute to reducing alcohol consumption, preventing relapse, and improving overall well-being. The selection of an appropriate therapy should be tailored to individual needs and preferences, and therapists should incorporate a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the complex nature of alcohol addiction.

C. Mutual Support Groups: Utilising self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

Mutual support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), have played a significant role in supporting individuals on their journey towards alcohol deaddiction. These self-help groups

provide a supportive and non-judgmental environment for individuals to share experiences, seek guidance, and develop strategies to maintain sobriety. The importance and benefits of mutual support groups, like Alcoholics Anonymous is as below:

- 1. The Philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous:** Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a widely recognized mutual support group that follows a 12-step program. Founded in 1935, AA is built on the principles of anonymity, fellowship, and mutual aid. The core philosophy of AA revolves around admitting powerlessness over alcohol, seeking spiritual guidance, and assisting others in their journey towards sobriety. The group emphasises the importance of personal responsibility and accountability in maintaining long-term recovery.
- 2. Support and Understanding:** One of the key benefits of mutual support groups like AA is the opportunity to connect with individuals who have similar experiences and challenges with alcohol addiction. AA meetings provide a non-judgmental environment where members can openly discuss their struggles, share their stories, and receive support and understanding from their peers. This sense of belonging and camaraderie fosters a feeling of acceptance and reduces feelings of isolation that often accompany addiction.
- 3. Shared Experience and Hope:** In AA meetings, individuals with alcohol addiction find solace in hearing others' stories of recovery. Sharing experiences and witnessing the success of fellow members who have achieved sobriety instils hope and motivation in those who are still struggling. This shared experience and hope serve as powerful catalysts for personal growth and change, reinforcing the belief that recovery is possible.
- 4. Accountability and Sponsorship:** AA encourages accountability through the use of sponsors—experienced members who provide guidance, support, and encouragement to newcomers. Sponsors serve as mentors, offering a wealth of knowledge and personal experiences to help individuals navigate the challenges of alcohol deaddiction. The sponsorship relationship

provides a structured system of support, accountability, and guidance, enhancing the chances of successful recovery.

- 5. Continuous Learning and Lifelong Recovery:** AA promotes continuous learning through regular meetings and engagement with the 12-step program. Members gain valuable insights, tools, and coping strategies that help them navigate the complexities of life without alcohol. The focus on lifelong recovery ensures that individuals stay connected to the support network even after achieving initial sobriety, further reducing the risk of relapse and providing ongoing guidance and encouragement.

Mutual support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) offer a powerful platform for individuals seeking alcohol deaddiction. Through shared experiences, support, accountability, and a sense of belonging, AA empowers individuals to overcome alcohol addiction, maintain sobriety, and achieve long-term recovery. The principles and community-driven approach of mutual support groups make them valuable resources in the journey towards a healthier, alcohol-free life.

D. Medications: Overview of Approved Medications for Alcohol Use Disorder

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a significant public health concern in Tamil Nadu, necessitating effective treatment strategies. While psychosocial interventions play a crucial role in alcohol deaddiction, medications approved for the treatment of alcohol use disorder can be valuable adjuncts in promoting abstinence and reducing relapse rates. Given below is an overview of the approved medications for alcohol use disorder, highlighting their mechanisms of action, efficacy, and considerations for their use.

- 1. Disulfiram:** Disulfiram is one of the oldest medications approved for the treatment of alcohol use disorder. It works by inhibiting the enzyme acetaldehyde dehydrogenase, leading to an accumulation of acetaldehyde when alcohol is consumed. This causes unpleasant physical symptoms, such as flushing, nausea, and palpitations, discouraging further alcohol consumption. Disulfiram is typically prescribed as a deterrent for individuals highly motivated

to maintain abstinence. However, its use requires caution due to potential side effects, such as hepatotoxicity and adverse drug interactions.

2. **Acamprosate:** Acamprosate is an oral medication that helps individuals with alcohol use disorder maintain abstinence by reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms. It modulates the glutamate neurotransmitter system, which is thought to be dysregulated in individuals with AUD. Acamprosate has been shown to be effective in reducing relapse rates and promoting sustained abstinence. It is generally well-tolerated and can be particularly beneficial for individuals with a strong desire to quit drinking.
3. **Naltrexone:** Naltrexone is an opioid receptor antagonist that can be administered orally or as a monthly extended-release injectable formulation. It blocks the reinforcing effects of alcohol by reducing the pleasurable effects of endorphins released during alcohol consumption. Naltrexone helps reduce alcohol cravings and the risk of relapse. In the Indian context, oral naltrexone is more commonly prescribed due to its availability and cost-effectiveness. Naltrexone should be used cautiously in individuals with liver impairment, and its use may require periodic monitoring of liver function.
4. **Topiramate:** Topiramate, an antiepileptic medication, has shown efficacy in reducing alcohol consumption and promoting abstinence. It acts on various neurotransmitter systems, including GABA and glutamate, which are implicated in the neurobiology of addiction. Topiramate may be particularly beneficial for individuals with comorbid alcohol and psychiatric disorders. However, it can be associated with side effects such as cognitive impairment, somnolence, and weight loss, necessitating careful monitoring and dose adjustment.

In the Indian context, several factors must be considered when prescribing medications for alcohol use disorder:

- a. **Affordability and Accessibility:** Medication availability and cost-effectiveness are crucial considerations in a resource-limited setting like India. Medications that are widely accessible

and affordable are more likely to be prescribed and adhered to by individuals seeking treatment.

- b. **Cultural Factors:** Cultural beliefs, stigma, and societal attitudes towards alcohol addiction can influence the acceptance and willingness of individuals to seek pharmacological treatment. A comprehensive approach that incorporates cultural sensitivity and education can help overcome barriers to medication use.
- c. **Comorbidity Management:** Individuals with alcohol use disorder often have comorbid psychiatric conditions that may require specific medication interventions. The choice of medication should consider the potential interactions and side effects in the context of co-occurring conditions.

REHABILITATION STRATEGIES

XV. Rehabilitation Strategies

Rehabilitation is a critical component of the treatment process for individuals seeking recovery from alcohol addiction. Various rehabilitation strategies are available to cater to the diverse needs of individuals, including inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient rehabilitation, and holistic approaches. This section provides an overview of these strategies, highlighting their key features, benefits, and their contribution to the overall well-being of individuals undergoing alcohol deaddiction.

A. Inpatient Rehabilitation: Intensive treatment in a controlled environment

Inpatient rehabilitation, also known as residential treatment, involves round-the-clock care and support within a controlled environment. This approach is suitable for individuals with severe alcohol addiction or those requiring intensive medical and psychological intervention. Key features of inpatient rehabilitation include:

1. **Supervised Detoxification:** Inpatient programs provide medically supervised detoxification to ensure safe withdrawal from alcohol, minimising discomfort and potential complications.
2. **Structured Treatment:** Inpatient rehabilitation offers a highly structured treatment program, including individual and group therapy sessions, educational workshops, skill-building activities, and holistic interventions.
3. **Peer Support:** Individuals in inpatient rehabilitation have the opportunity to interact and gain support from peers who are going through similar challenges. This sense of camaraderie and understanding can be beneficial for fostering motivation and a sense of community.
4. **Psychological Support:** Inpatient programs often provide access to mental health professionals who offer individual counselling, addressing underlying psychological issues contributing to alcohol addiction.

- 5. Aftercare Planning:** Inpatient rehabilitation programs typically include comprehensive aftercare planning to support individuals' transition back into their communities, including referrals to outpatient treatment, sober living environments, and ongoing support groups.

B. Outpatient Rehabilitation: Structured treatment programs with flexible scheduling

Outpatient rehabilitation offers structured treatment programs while allowing individuals to live at home and maintain their daily routines. It is suitable for individuals with less severe alcohol addiction or those who have completed inpatient rehabilitation and require ongoing support. Key features of outpatient rehabilitation include:

- 1. Flexibility:** Outpatient programs provide flexibility in scheduling, allowing individuals to continue their work, education, or family responsibilities while receiving treatment. This flexibility reduces disruptions to their daily lives.
- 2. Group Therapy:** Outpatient programs often involve group therapy sessions where individuals can share their experiences, receive support, and learn coping strategies from peers who understand their challenges.
- 3. Individual Counselling:** Individual counselling sessions are an integral part of outpatient rehabilitation, enabling individuals to address specific issues, develop personalised treatment plans, and work on relapse prevention strategies.
- 4. Family Involvement:** Outpatient programs emphasise involving family members in the treatment process, recognizing the important role they play in supporting individuals' recovery. Family therapy sessions help improve communication, address enabling behaviours, and enhance the overall support system.
- 5. Skill-Building and Relapse Prevention:** Outpatient programs provide education on addiction, coping skills development, and relapse prevention techniques. These programs equip individuals with the tools necessary to navigate triggers and maintain sobriety in their daily lives.

C. Holistic Approaches: Incorporating complementary therapies (e.g., yoga, meditation) for overall well-being

Holistic approaches to alcohol de-addiction emphasise the importance of addressing the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of individuals seeking recovery. Incorporating complementary therapies, such as yoga and meditation, into treatment programs can provide significant benefits and support the overall well-being of individuals on their journey towards alcohol de-addiction.

1. **Yoga for Alcohol De-Addiction:** Yoga, an Indic practice, offers numerous benefits for individuals undergoing alcohol de-addiction. It combines physical postures, breath control, and meditation techniques to promote balance and harmony in the body and mind. Key aspects of yoga in the context of alcohol de-addiction include:
 - a. **Stress Reduction:** Alcohol addiction often coexists with stress and anxiety. Yoga practices, including asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breathing exercises), and meditation, help individuals manage stress levels, enhance emotional well-being, and reduce the likelihood of relapse.
 - b. **Mind-Body Connection:** Yoga fosters a deep mind-body connection, allowing individuals to become more aware of their physical sensations, thoughts, and emotions. This increased self-awareness promotes self-reflection and aids individuals in identifying triggers and addressing underlying emotional issues related to alcohol addiction.
 - c. **Improved Mental Health:** Regular practice of yoga has been shown to improve mental health outcomes, including reduced depression and anxiety symptoms. This is particularly relevant in alcohol de-addiction, where individuals may experience mood disturbances and other mental health challenges.

2. Meditation for Alcohol De-Addiction

Meditation is a practice that involves focusing attention and cultivating mindfulness. It can be a valuable component of holistic approaches to alcohol de-addiction. Key benefits of incorporating meditation include:

- a. **Emotional Regulation:** Alcohol addiction often involves difficulty managing emotions. Meditation practices, such as mindfulness meditation, cultivate non-judgmental awareness of one's thoughts and emotions, enabling individuals to develop healthier coping mechanisms and regulate their emotional responses.
- b. **Craving Management:** Intense cravings for alcohol can be a significant challenge during the de-addiction process. Meditation techniques, such as urge surfing or mindfulness-based relapse prevention, help individuals observe cravings without judgement, reducing their intensity and providing a greater sense of control.
- c. **Increased Self-Awareness:** Meditation fosters self-reflection and deepens self-awareness, allowing individuals to gain insights into their patterns of behaviour, triggers, and underlying motivations related to alcohol addiction. This heightened self-awareness serves as a foundation for personal growth and positive behavioural change.

3. Integration and Support

To effectively incorporate complementary therapies like yoga and meditation into alcohol de-addiction programs, integration with other treatment modalities is essential. These therapies should be integrated into a comprehensive treatment plan that includes medical intervention, counselling, and support from addiction professionals. Additionally, support from qualified yoga instructors and meditation teachers who understand the specific needs and challenges of individuals in recovery is crucial for creating a safe and supportive environment.

Holistic approaches, such as incorporating complementary therapies like yoga and meditation, provide valuable tools for individuals seeking alcohol de-addiction. These practices promote physical and emotional well-being, reduce stress, enhance self-awareness, and support long-term recovery. By addressing the holistic aspects of individuals' well-being, these approaches contribute to a comprehensive and integrated treatment approach for alcohol de-addiction.

SUPPORT FOR DEPENDENTS

XVI. Support For Dependents

Alcoholism not only affects the individuals struggling with addiction but also has a profound impact on their family members and loved ones. Supporting the dependents of alcoholics is crucial to address the emotional, psychological, and social challenges they face. This section explores various support mechanisms for dependents, including family counselling, support groups, education and psychoeducation, and periodical check-ups post-discharge. By incorporating these elements into the recovery process, we can foster healing, resilience, and long-term well-being for both the individual with alcohol addiction and their family members.

A. Family Counselling: Involving family members in the recovery process.

Family counselling plays a vital role in supporting dependents of alcoholics. It involves bringing together family members and a trained therapist to address the impact of alcohol addiction on family dynamics. Key aspects of family counselling include:

1. **Communication and Boundary Setting:** Family counselling helps improve communication patterns within the family unit, facilitating open and honest dialogue about the challenges caused by alcohol addiction. It also assists in establishing healthy boundaries and fostering mutual understanding.
2. **Emotional Support and Coping Skills:** Dependents of alcoholics often experience emotional distress and struggle with coping strategies. Family counselling provides a safe space for individuals to express their feelings, receive validation and support, and develop effective coping mechanisms.
3. **Rebuilding Trust and Strengthening Relationships:** Alcohol addiction can erode trust and strain relationships within the family. Family counselling helps rebuild trust through effective communication, forgiveness, and fostering healthier relationship dynamics.

B. Support Groups: Establishing groups specifically designed for the families of alcoholics

Support groups for families of alcoholics provide a space for individuals to connect, share experiences, and find solace in a supportive community. Key aspects of support groups include:

1. **Shared Understanding and Empathy:** Support groups offer a non-judgmental environment where family members can relate to one another's struggles, emotions, and challenges. This shared understanding fosters empathy and reduces feelings of isolation.
2. **Information Exchange and Coping Strategies:** Support groups provide an opportunity for family members to exchange practical information, learn coping strategies, and gain insights from those who have faced similar situations. This collective wisdom helps individuals develop effective strategies for managing their own well-being and supporting their loved ones.
3. **Continued Support:** Support groups often continue beyond the initial phase of treatment, offering ongoing support for family members even after the alcoholic individual has completed rehabilitation. This long-term support is essential for sustained recovery and the well-being of the entire family.

C. Education and Psychoeducation: Providing information about addiction, its impact, and coping strategies.

Education and psychoeducation programs for dependents of alcoholics provide essential knowledge about addiction, its impact on individuals and families, and coping strategies. Key elements of education and psychoeducation include:

1. **Understanding Addiction:** Education programs help family members gain insight into the nature of addiction, its causes, and the physiological and psychological processes involved. This knowledge fosters empathy, reduces stigma, and facilitates more informed decision-making.
2. **Impact on Family Dynamics:** Psychoeducation programs highlight the effects of alcohol addiction on family dynamics, relationships, and communication patterns. This understanding

enables family members to identify unhealthy dynamics and make positive changes to support the recovery process.

3. **Coping Strategies and Self-Care:** Education and psychoeducation programs equip family members with practical coping strategies to manage stress, set healthy boundaries, and prioritise self-care. By enhancing their well-being, family members can better support their loved one's recovery journey.

D. Periodical Check-up Post Discharge

Periodical check-ups post-discharge from alcohol rehabilitation centres are essential for the ongoing support and well-being of both the individual with alcohol addiction and their dependents. Key aspects of periodical check-ups include:

1. **Relapse Prevention:** Regular check-ups allow healthcare professionals to monitor the individual's progress, identify potential relapse triggers, and provide necessary interventions and support.
2. **Continued Counselling and Support:** Periodical check-ups offer an opportunity for individuals and their families to engage in ongoing counselling sessions, address any concerns or challenges, and receive guidance on maintaining a healthy and supportive environment.
3. **Evaluation of Family Dynamics:** These check-ups provide a platform for healthcare professionals to evaluate the functioning of the family system and provide guidance on strengthening healthy relationships and resolving any unresolved issues.

Support for dependents of alcoholics is crucial for addressing the significant emotional, psychological, and social impact of alcohol addiction on families. By incorporating family counselling, support groups, education and psychoeducation, and periodical check-ups into the recovery process, we can provide the necessary support and resources to empower dependents and help them navigate the challenges they face. By nurturing their well-being, we contribute to the

overall healing and resilience of both the individuals with alcohol addiction and their families, fostering a healthier and more sustainable recovery journey.

IMPORTANCE OF ONGOING MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP CARE

XVII. Importance Of Ongoing Monitoring And Follow-Up Care

In the context of alcohol de-addiction, ongoing monitoring and follow-up care play a crucial role in ensuring successful outcomes and long-term recovery. This essay explores the importance of ongoing monitoring and follow-up care, with a specific focus on the Indian context, particularly Tamil Nadu. It discusses collaborative care models that involve coordination between treatment centres, primary care providers, and mental health professionals. Additionally, it examines relapse prevention strategies, including identifying triggers, managing cravings, and preventing relapse. Furthermore, the essay delves into the process of setting up de-addiction and rehabilitation centres, highlighting the key considerations, necessary resources, and the role of government initiatives in Tamil Nadu.

A. Collaborative Care Models: Coordinating care between treatment centres, primary care providers, and mental health professionals

In the Indian context, collaborative care models are essential for the effective management of alcohol de-addiction. These models involve close coordination and communication between different healthcare providers, including treatment centres, primary care providers, and mental health professionals. Key aspects of collaborative care models include:

1. **Integrated Approach:** Collaborative care models promote an integrated approach to alcohol de-addiction by involving multiple healthcare professionals who work together to provide comprehensive care. This approach ensures that the individual's physical, psychological, and social needs are addressed holistically.
2. **Continuity of Care:** Ongoing monitoring and follow-up care require seamless transitions between different care settings. Collaborative care models facilitate the continuity of care by establishing effective referral systems, ensuring that individuals receive necessary support and interventions throughout their recovery journey.

3. **Shared Decision-Making:** Collaborative care models emphasise shared decision-making between healthcare professionals and individuals seeking alcohol de-addiction. This approach empowers individuals by involving them in treatment planning and goal setting, promoting their active participation in their own recovery.
4. **Enhanced Support Systems:** Collaborative care models strengthen the support systems available to individuals by connecting them with a network of healthcare professionals who can provide specialised care, counselling, and ongoing support. This multidisciplinary approach improves the accessibility and effectiveness of treatment.

B. Relapse Prevention: Strategies to identify triggers, manage cravings, and prevent relapse.

Relapse prevention is a critical component of ongoing monitoring and follow-up care in alcohol de-addiction. It involves implementing strategies to identify triggers, manage cravings, and prevent relapse. Key strategies for relapse prevention include:

1. **Identification of Triggers:** Ongoing monitoring helps individuals identify their personal triggers for alcohol use. These triggers can be environmental, social, emotional, or psychological factors that increase the risk of relapse. By recognizing and understanding these triggers, individuals can develop effective coping mechanisms and strategies to avoid or manage them.
2. **Cognitive-Behavioural Techniques:** Cognitive-behavioural techniques, such as cognitive restructuring and behavioural self-control, help individuals challenge and modify unhealthy thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviours associated with alcohol use. These techniques promote self-awareness and equip individuals with the skills to respond to cravings and triggers in healthier ways.
3. **Coping Skills Development:** Ongoing follow-up care includes the development and reinforcement of coping skills that enable individuals to manage stress, regulate emotions, and

address life challenges without resorting to alcohol use. These skills may include relaxation techniques, problem-solving skills, assertiveness training, and healthy lifestyle practices.

4. **Supportive Networks:** Building a strong support system is crucial for relapse prevention. Ongoing monitoring and follow-up care involve connecting individuals with support groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or other peer support networks, where they can receive encouragement, share experiences, and learn from others in similar situations.

C. Setting up De-Addiction and Rehabilitation Centers

Setting up de-addiction and rehabilitation centres is pivotal for providing comprehensive care and ongoing monitoring in the treatment of alcohol addiction. In the Indian context, particularly in Tamil Nadu, the following considerations and resources are crucial:

1. **Infrastructure and Facilities:** De-addiction and rehabilitation centres should have adequate infrastructure to accommodate individuals seeking treatment. This includes inpatient facilities, outpatient clinics, counselling rooms, and recreational spaces. Additionally, centres should have access to medical and psychiatric services to address any co-occurring conditions.
2. **Qualified Staff:** De-addiction and rehabilitation centres require a multidisciplinary team comprising medical professionals, psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, and social workers. These professionals should have specialised training and expertise in addiction treatment to provide comprehensive care and support.
3. **Evidence-Based Approaches:** De-addiction centres should follow evidence-based practices and treatment protocols endorsed by national and international guidelines. This ensures that individuals receive effective and scientifically validated interventions.
4. **Government Initiatives and Support:** Government initiatives, policies, and funding play a crucial role in establishing and sustaining de-addiction and rehabilitation centres. In Tamil Nadu, the government has implemented programs such as the Tamil Nadu Substance Abuse

Prevention and Rehabilitation (TNSAP&R) scheme, which provides support for the establishment and functioning of such centres.

5. **Community Integration:** De-addiction and rehabilitation centres should collaborate with community organisations, educational institutions, and local authorities to raise awareness about alcohol addiction, reduce stigma, and provide support and resources for ongoing monitoring and follow-up care.

**LOCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE:
CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELECTING AN
APPROPRIATE FACILITY**

XVIII. Location And Infrastructure: Considerations For Selecting An Appropriate Facility

The establishment of 200-bed alcohol de-addiction centres in all 312 talukas of Tamil Nadu is a significant endeavour in addressing the pressing issue of alcohol addiction in the state. By carefully evaluating factors such as selecting an appropriate facility, including location and infrastructure, staffing requirements, services offered, and approximate costing per centre, we can ensure that the centres are well-equipped to provide effective treatment, support, and rehabilitation for individuals struggling with alcohol addiction throughout Tamil Nadu.

A. Location and Infrastructure:

1. **Accessibility:** Selecting locations that are easily accessible to individuals seeking treatment is essential. The centres should be situated in areas that have good transportation links, making it convenient for individuals and their families to access the facility. Additionally, proximity to healthcare facilities and emergency services is crucial for addressing any medical emergencies that may arise during the treatment process.
2. **Adequate Space:** Each facility should have sufficient space to accommodate a minimum of 200 beds to cater to the anticipated demand. The centres must include separate sections for males and females to ensure privacy and dignity. Additionally, the centres should have designated areas for individual counselling, group therapy sessions, recreational activities, vocational training, and administrative functions.
3. **Safety and Security:** Ensuring the safety and security of individuals within the facility is paramount. The centres should have appropriate security measures, including surveillance systems, controlled access points, and trained security personnel. Additionally, adherence to fire safety regulations and the provision of emergency response systems are essential to protect the well-being of both patients and staff.

4. **Infrastructure and Facilities:** The centres should be equipped with necessary infrastructure and facilities to support the treatment process. This includes well-maintained rooms, comfortable bedding, clean bathrooms, dining areas, and recreational spaces. The centres should also have access to medical facilities and diagnostic services for comprehensive care.

B. Staffing Requirements: Recommended healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, psychologists, counsellors, and support staff.

1. **Physicians:** Each centre should have a team of qualified and experienced physicians who specialise in addiction medicine. These physicians will be responsible for conducting medical evaluations, prescribing medications, overseeing detoxification procedures, and providing general medical care to patients.
2. **Nurses:** Adequate nursing staff is crucial for the provision of 24/7 care and monitoring of patients. Nurses play a vital role in medication administration, monitoring vital signs, assisting physicians during procedures, and providing general nursing care.
3. **Psychologists:** Qualified psychologists trained in addiction counselling and therapy should be present in each centre. They will conduct individual counselling sessions, assess the psychological needs of patients, and provide therapy interventions tailored to each patient's unique circumstances.
4. **Counsellors:** Substance abuse counsellors with expertise in addiction treatment should be part of the team. They will facilitate group therapy sessions, conduct assessments, provide education on addiction and relapse prevention, and offer support to patients and their families.
5. **Support Staff:** Additional support staff, such as administrative personnel, housekeeping staff, and security personnel, are necessary for the smooth functioning of the centres.

C. Services Offered: Detoxification, individual and group therapy, psychiatric care, vocational training, aftercare planning, etc.

1. Detoxification: Each centre should offer comprehensive medical detoxification services under the supervision of physicians. Detoxification aims to safely manage withdrawal symptoms and prepare individuals for further treatment.
2. Individual and Group Therapy: Both individual counselling and group therapy sessions should be integral components of the treatment program. Individual counselling provides personalised support, addresses underlying issues, and develops coping strategies. Group therapy fosters peer support, sharing of experiences, and learning from others facing similar challenges.
3. Psychiatric Care: Psychiatric care should be available to address co-occurring mental health conditions. This may involve psychiatric evaluations, medication management, and specialised therapy for individuals with dual diagnosis.
4. Vocational Training: Providing vocational training opportunities equips individuals with skills that enhance their employability and facilitate their reintegration into society post-recovery. Vocational training programs should align with local employment needs and offer practical skills development.
5. Aftercare Planning: Each centre should develop comprehensive aftercare plans for individuals transitioning out of the facility. This may involve referral to outpatient counselling, support groups, and community resources to promote sustained recovery and prevent relapse.

D. Estimated Costing for Rehabilitation Centre and Livelihood Programs

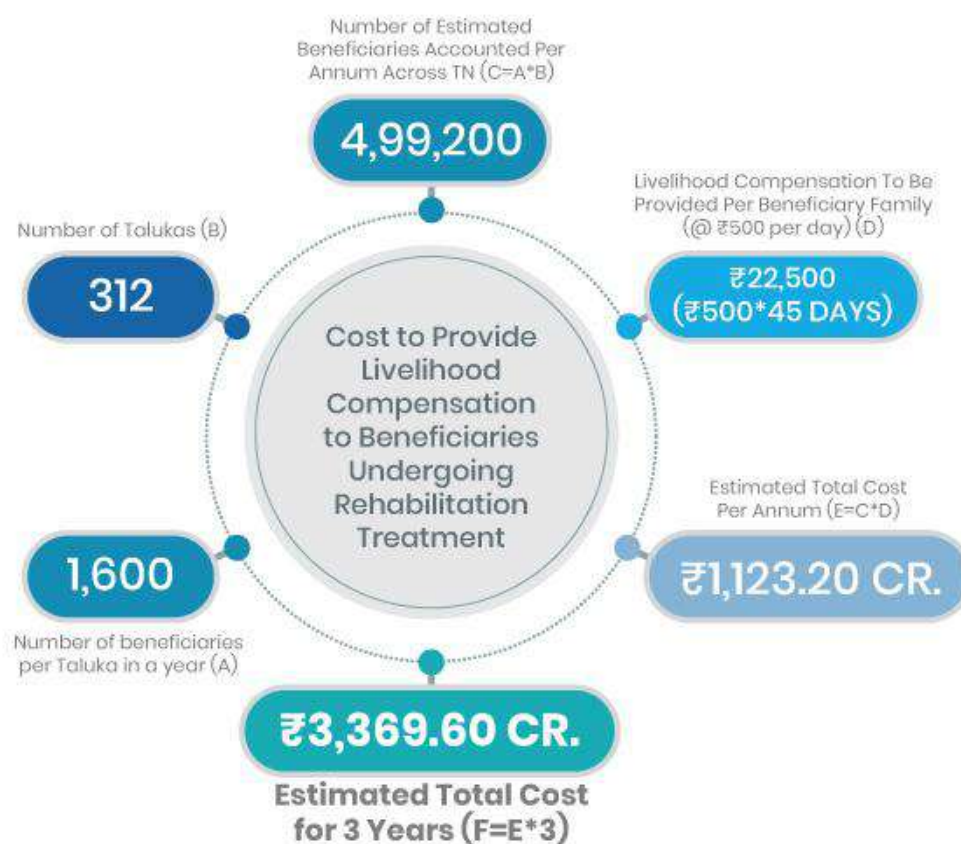
1. The state government would establish a 200 bed rehabilitation centre in every taluka, ie. 312 talukas across all the 38 districts of Tamil Nadu. Considering that a normal alcoholic would take an average of no more than 45 days to rehabilitate, in a year, the State Government would be able to accommodate 1,600 beneficiaries in every taluk for rehabilitation purposes. This will

ensure the rehabilitation of 4,99,200 persons across the state in a year. **Over 3 years this program will cover a minimum of 14,97,600 persons.** On the other hand a severe alcoholic may take up to 60 days to recover. Rehabilitation beyond 60 days may be provided for by considering the beneficiary as an Outpatient or for palliative care. The rehabilitation facility would be equipped with a doctor, a counsellor and other healthcare professionals, as per global norms. Additionally, a quick response team and a counsellor may be deployed at all the 1,421 PHCs in Tamil Nadu.²⁰³

2. A livelihood compensation amounting to ₹15,000 per month (at the rate of ₹500 per day) would be provided to the family of the beneficiary undergoing rehabilitation, for 45 days at a time. **Over the course of three years, the estimated cost of livelihood compensation is projected to amount to ₹3,369.60 crore.** While a part of this may be funded through an Anti-Alcohol cess collected from distilleries and suppliers, a policy change may be effected to set up a dedicated grant of ₹500 crore per year under the National Health Mission, Tamil Nadu or through a partnership with any multilateral development agency. The grant may be complementary to the Central Sector Scheme for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse, as envisaged by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.²⁰⁴

²⁰³ [National Health Mission](#)

²⁰⁴ [Central Grant provided by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment](#)



Infographic 23 : Data on Cost to Provide Livelihood Compensation to Beneficiaries Undergoing Rehabilitation Treatment

PLAN FOR CURTAILING/ REVAMP OF RESTO-BARS AND PUBS

XIX. Plan for Curtailing/ Revamp Of Resto-bars And Pubs

Providing liquor through resto-bars and pubs should be regulated and it is necessary for the proper implementation to curtail the consumption of TASMAL liquor. The availability of alcohol in these establishments, combined with the social atmosphere they provide, can encourage individuals to consume alcohol more frequently and in larger quantities. This heightened consumption has the potential to hinder the objectives of curtailing TASMAL liquor, as it may lead to an overall increase in alcohol-related issues and associated negative social and health consequences. Therefore, it is essential to consider the potential impact of alcohol availability in resto-bars and pubs when formulating strategies to address the consumption of TASMAL liquor.

Excessive alcohol consumption associated with the provision of liquor in resto-bars and pubs can pose significant challenges in curtailing the consumption of TASMAL liquor in Tamil Nadu. These establishments often serve as popular social gathering spots, where individuals come to unwind, socialise, and relax. According to a research by more than one in two alcoholics consume liquor on a daily basis; two-thirds of women feel their families have become poorer due to their drunkard husbands; and there is a rise in the number of patients admitted to government hospitals for alcohol-related ailments.²⁰⁵

While the efforts to curtail TASMAL liquor aim to control and regulate the availability of alcohol, it is also necessary that the presence of liquor in resto-bars and pubs should also be regulated. The accessibility of alcohol in these establishments can create an alternative avenue for individuals seeking to consume alcohol, potentially undermining the intended goal of reducing overall alcohol consumption.

To address this issue effectively, a comprehensive plan for revising the policy on resto-bars and pubs should include measures to regulate the availability and promotion of alcohol. This could involve stricter licensing regulations, limiting the number of establishments permitted to serve alcohol,

²⁰⁵ [Times Of India August 2015](#)

enforcing responsible alcohol service practices, and implementing educational campaigns on the risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

Additionally, fostering alternative social spaces and activities that promote health, creativity, and community engagement can help shift the focus away from alcohol-centric gatherings. Encouraging the development of non-alcoholic beverage options and promoting a culture of responsible drinking within the resto-bar and pub industry can also play a significant role in reducing alcohol intake and addressing the concerns associated with liquor provision. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that includes regulatory measures, awareness campaigns, and the promotion of alternative social spaces. By considering these factors, it is possible to develop strategies that strike a balance between supporting the hospitality industry and ensuring the well-being of individuals and communities in Tamil Nadu. The DMK government in Tamil Nadu has been neglecting the implementation of necessary measures to curtail and reduce alcohol consumption in the state. Despite the alarming rise in alcohol-related problems, the government has not taken significant action to address this pressing issue.²⁰⁶ The absence of comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate the public about the risks of alcohol abuse is concerning. Moreover, the government's failure to enforce stricter regulations on the availability and accessibility of alcohol has contributed to its normalisation and easy access. It is crucial for the government to recognize the severity of the situation and take immediate steps to address alcohol consumption in Tamil Nadu.

A. Overview Of The Resto-Bar And Pub Industry In TamilNadu

To address this challenge, a comprehensive plan for revising the policy on resto-bars and pubs in Tamil Nadu should take into account the unique cultural and social dynamics of the state. It should include engagement with local communities, industry stakeholders, and experts to ensure that strategies are culturally sensitive, aligned with the state's values, and have the support and understanding of the people. Moreover, the plan should emphasise the promotion of alternative social spaces and activities that align with Tamil Nadu's cultural ethos. Encouraging non-alcoholic

²⁰⁶ [Times Of India May 2023](#)

options, such as traditional beverages and healthier alternatives, can provide viable alternatives to alcohol consumption. This can help in reshaping the social landscape and fostering a culture of responsible choices and well-being. By addressing the specific perspectives and sensitivities of Tamil Nadu, the plan for revising the policy on resto-bars and pubs can contribute to the larger goal of creating a progressive and harmonious society that respects its cultural heritage while promoting the welfare and health of its citizens.

Alcohol consumption is a major risk factor for a number of health problems, including liver disease, heart disease, cancer, and mental health problems. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that alcohol consumption is responsible for 5.3% of all deaths worldwide. In Tamil Nadu, alcohol consumption is a major problem. **According to the WHO, the state has one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption in India. In 2016, the average Tamil Nadu resident consumed 8.2 litres of alcohol per year. This is significantly higher than the national average of 6.3 litres per year.**

The negative consequences of alcohol consumption are far-reaching. In addition to the health problems mentioned above, alcohol abuse can also lead to accidents, violence, and crime. It can also damage relationships and have a negative impact on work and school performance. **The government of Tamil Nadu has not taken steps to address the problem of alcohol abuse, instead they have promoted alcohol in greed of revenue.**

B. DMK Government's Greed For Revenue

Tamil Nadu's relationship with alcohol is characterised by a peculiar and unsettling dynamic. The state had been under prohibition for several decades until the 1970s when the policy was revoked. However, its liquor policy has since exhibited a contradictory stance, marked by a mix of expansion and expressions of concern regarding the "evils of alcohol." The state's approach towards the liquor industry has undergone significant growth since 1967, expanding its scope considerably. The Tamil Nadu government's approach towards alcohol and its impact on the state's residents has been a

cause for concern and criticism. Despite the significant social problems associated with alcoholism, the government has shown a contradictory stance by expanding the liquor industry while voicing concerns about the "evils of alcohol."²⁰⁷

Tamil Nadu currently leads the nation in alcohol consumption, accounting for 13 percent of the total alcohol consumed in the country, according to a Crisil study. The sales of alcohol are solely controlled by the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC), which sells a staggering number of cases of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) and beer on a daily basis.

This emphasis on revenue generation seems to overshadow the well-being of the citizens.

The conditions in which alcohol is sold and consumed at government-controlled outlets are deplorable, lacking basic standards of hygiene and dignity for both customers and staff. Despite breaking revenue records year after year, the workers remain poorly paid, the outlets are in a dilapidated state, and the quality of alcohol is often substandard. The exploitative nature of the government's approach is particularly evident in the plight of TASMAC workers. They endure abysmal working conditions and face contempt and ridicule from society. While government jobs are typically regarded with prestige in India, TASMAC workers are subjected to low wages and a lack of recognition. The historical evolution of Tamil Nadu's liquor policy reveals a disconcerting pattern. Prohibition was enforced until 1971, only to be lifted temporarily and then reintroduced in subsequent years. TASMAC was established in 1983 to tackle the menace of illicit liquor, but it has gradually become a profit-driven enterprise rather than a solution to social problems.

According to the report released by TASMAC a total of Rs 520.13 crore worth of liquor was sold from the Tamil Nadu Sales and Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) on January 13 and 14, during the Pongal festival. Of this, the TASMAC saw liquor sales worth 203.05 crore on January 13, while the sale on January 14 was worth Rs 317.08 crore, TASMAC said in a press release. Compared to the same period last year, there was an increase of 24.67% in sales in 2022. However, the continuous expansion of TASMAC's operations and the substantial revenue it generates raise questions about

²⁰⁷ [The Hindu April 2023](#)

the government's true motives. **The government's reliance on alcohol revenue to finance social welfare schemes indicates a prioritisation of short-term gains over the well-being of the population.**

This exploitative approach has created a system where corruption and crime thrive. Despite its massive earnings, TASMAC's employees are neglected and receive meagre salaries, significantly lower than what an average government employee earns. This disparity has fueled a dark underbelly of corruption and criminal activities that permeate the system. The government's exploitation of vulnerable individuals, particularly by increasing alcoholism in the state, is a deeply concerning phenomenon. It perpetuates social problems, compromises public health, and disregards the long-term consequences of alcohol abuse. Rather than prioritising revenue generation at the expense of its citizens' well-being, the government should focus on implementing comprehensive measures to address alcohol-related issues and provide support for those affected by alcohol addiction.

The practice of selling alcohol above the maximum retail price (MRP) is widespread and prevalent in Tamil Nadu. Customers often find themselves paying extra, ranging from Rs.5 to Rs.20 per bottle, depending on its size. Additionally, beer is sold at a premium of Rs.10 above the MRP, and chilled bottles command even higher prices. This alarming issue has not gone unnoticed by authorities. An official acknowledges the seriousness of the problem and assures that steps are being taken to address it. Due to inefficiency of the DMK government still exists without being addressed.

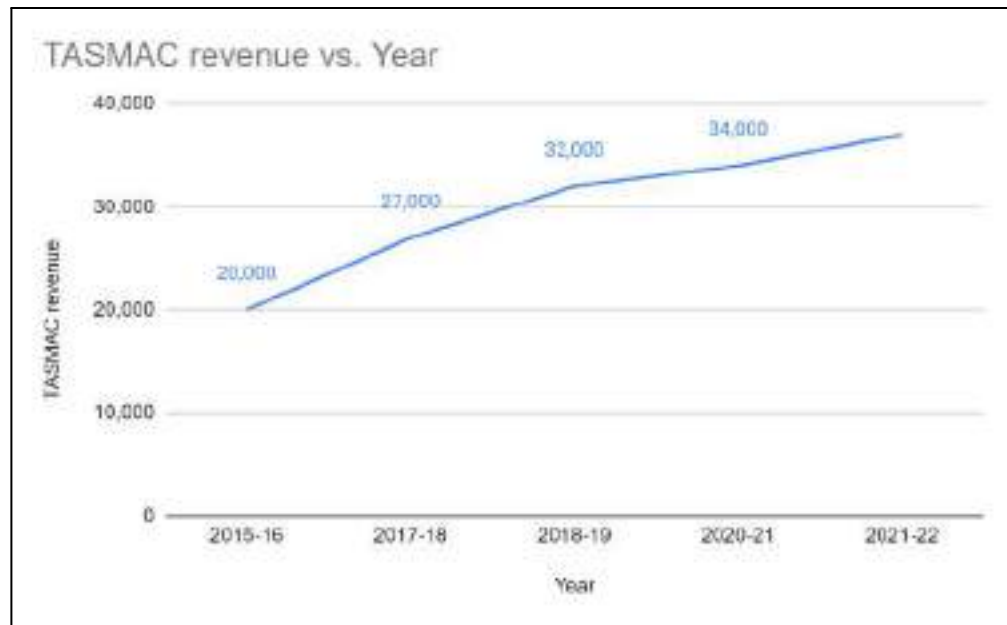


Chart 8: Year-wise TASMAL Revenue

The government's approach of selling hard liquor through TASMAL outlets on a targeted basis, has inadvertently led to an alarming increase in alcohol consumption in the state. The rampant corruption within the system, where selling above the maximum retail price is prevalent and quality control is compromised, has exacerbated the problem. As a result, the state has witnessed a surge in alcohol consumption, leading to adverse social, health, and economic consequences. It is imperative for the government to reevaluate its strategies and implement measures to curb alcohol consumption, prioritise public health, and address the underlying issues contributing to this concerning trend.

Former Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan has indicated that there may be revisions to Tamil Nadu's liquor policy to address its limitations and better cater to the needs of the state. During his speech at the inauguration of the Chennai chapter of the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI), **Thiru. Thiaga Rajan emphasised the significance of entertainment, nightlife, and bars in attracting global talent to Chennai.** He acknowledged that the current alcohol and distribution policy in Tamil Nadu has its shortcomings. Former Minister Rajan stated that recognizing the importance of attracting international professionals, the state government needs to

take further action to enhance the alcohol industry's retail aspects. He expressed the belief that deregulating certain aspects of the retail alcohol industry could be necessary to meet the demands of a globalised city like Chennai. By loosening restrictions, the government hopes to create an environment that appeals to the international workforce and encourages their participation in Chennai's growing economy.²⁰⁸ He says that the intention is to create a more progressive and appealing atmosphere that aligns with the evolving needs of Chennai and its aspirations to become a global hub for talent and business.²⁰⁹

Bridget Freisthler, Professor of Social Work at the Ohio State University suggests that there was a time when alcohol consumption was considered morally irresponsible behaviour. But nowadays, it has become as common as stopping by for a cup of coffee. Past research has shown that people drink more frequently and consume greater amounts of alcohol when they have more bars and restaurants in the neighbourhoods where they live. "If you have a tough day at work, you may stop at the nearby bar for a drink before going home. If you're out shopping with your kids, you might stop for dinner at the chain restaurant next door that serves alcohol."²¹⁰

The Tamil Nadu state government is exploring the possibility of shutting down bars that are currently attached to state-run Tasmac liquor outlets. Instead, they are considering allowing private individuals to operate standalone bars that are separate from these outlets. The primary motivation behind this proposal is to generate additional revenue for the state. Currently, there are independent bars operating in Tamil Nadu; however, they are required to be attached to hotel rooms in accordance with the existing Tamil Nadu liquor licence rules. If the government decides to permit standalone bars, it would necessitate the introduction of a special licence category specifically for these establishments. This would allow individuals to run bars independently without the requirement of being affiliated with hotels. **The potential shift in policy regarding bars and liquor delivery highlights the government's efforts to explore new avenues for revenue**

²⁰⁸ [The Times Of India August 2022](#)

²⁰⁹ [Ibid](#)

²¹⁰ [Hindustan Times](#)

generation disregarding public safety and health concerns. By reevaluating the existing regulations and considering alternative approaches, the state government aims to adapt to changing dynamics and create a more favourable business environment in the liquor industry.²¹¹

Critics strongly contend that the Tamil Nadu government's consideration of detaching bars from state-run Tasmal liquor outlets reflects a misguided approach that could lead to an increase in alcohol consumption. **While the government already enjoys a substantial annual revenue of approximately 440 crore through bars attached to these outlets, the proposal to introduce standalone bars is viewed as a potential catalyst for further exacerbating the problems associated with alcohol.**

These discussions regarding standalone bars have emerged periodically in the past, but they have been met with scepticism and opposition. One of the key concerns is the challenge of effectively monitoring these standalone establishments. With bars detached from Tasmal outlets, there is a potential for looser regulations and reduced oversight, which can make it easier for alcohol to be obtained and consumed. This, in turn, raises concerns about public health, the potential for increased alcoholism, and the associated social issues that come with excessive drinking. Rather than prioritising revenue generation, the government should instead focus on addressing the existing challenges associated with alcohol consumption in the state. Tamil Nadu already faces issues such as alcohol addiction, domestic disputes, impaired judgement, and adverse health effects related to excessive drinking. By diverting attention and resources towards expanding the availability of alcohol through standalone bars, the government risks perpetuating these problems rather than effectively curbing them. Furthermore, there are concerns about the government's commitment to public health and social well-being. Increasing alcohol consumption through the proliferation of standalone bars contradicts efforts to promote temperance, maintain cultural values, and uphold the principles of responsible governance. Critics argue that the government should prioritise implementing measures that promote public health, reduce alcohol-related harms, and provide

²¹¹ [Times of India June 2022](#)

support for individuals struggling with alcohol addiction. The potential for increased alcohol consumption, inadequate monitoring, and the neglect of existing challenges associated with alcoholism raise significant concerns. It is essential for the government to prioritise the well-being of its citizens and explore more effective strategies to address alcohol-related issues rather than facilitating further consumption through standalone bars.

C. Case Studies And Best Practices

1. Kerala Model

The Kerala model of liquor ban from 2014-2018 refers to the progressive measures taken by the Government of Kerala to control and restrict the availability and consumption of alcohol in the state. In 2014, the then ruling government, led by the United Democratic Front (UDF), initiated a phased prohibition policy with the ultimate goal of achieving total prohibition. The implementation of the Kerala model involved the closure of many liquor outlets, reduction in bar licences, and the introduction of stricter regulations on the sale and consumption of alcohol. The government aimed to address the social and health issues associated with alcohol abuse and create a healthier and more productive society. **One of the notable features of the Kerala model was the conversion of many liquor bars into beer and wine parlours with lesser alcohol content. This move was intended to shift the preference of consumers towards less potent alcoholic beverages and reduce the demand for hard liquor.** Additionally, the government focused on promoting de-addiction programs, raising awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol, and providing support for individuals struggling with alcoholism.

The Kerala model of liquor ban received both praise and criticism. Proponents argue that it helped reduce the adverse consequences of alcohol consumption, such as domestic violence and road accidents, and improved the overall social fabric of the state. They highlight the success in curbing alcohol-related problems and the positive impact on public health. Critics, on the other hand, raised concerns about the economic implications of the ban, including the loss of revenue

for the state and the potential rise of illegal alcohol trade. They also pointed out the challenges faced by individuals dependent on the alcohol industry for their livelihoods. Over the years, there have been debates and discussions regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of the Kerala model. The subsequent governments have adopted a more nuanced approach, focusing on responsible consumption and regulation rather than complete prohibition.

The Kerala model of liquor ban represented a bold and progressive approach towards addressing the issues associated with alcohol consumption. While it aimed to create a healthier society, the long-term implications and effectiveness of the ban continue to be subjects of debate and evaluation.

The liquor ban in Kerala did have an impact on the revenue of the state. Kerala was known for its significant revenue generated from the sale of alcohol, including taxes and excise duties. The implementation of the liquor ban resulted in a decline in the state's revenue from the alcohol industry.

Initially, the government faced a significant drop in revenue as many liquor outlets were shut down and the availability of alcohol was restricted. This led to a decrease in tax collection and other revenue streams associated with the liquor industry. The government had to find alternative sources of income to compensate for the loss.

However, it is important to note that the liquor ban in Kerala was implemented in a phased manner, allowing for the operation of certain categories of bars and establishments selling beer and wine. This helped in minimising the immediate revenue shock and providing some income for the state. Additionally, the government introduced measures to compensate for the revenue loss, such as increasing taxes on other commodities and promoting tourism as an alternative source of income. The focus shifted towards promoting Kerala as a "dry state" and attracting tourists interested in the state's natural beauty, culture, and heritage.

2. Bihar Model

The liquor ban in Bihar, implemented in April 2016, was a significant policy decision by the state government to curb alcohol consumption. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the ban aimed to address the social and health issues associated with alcohol abuse and create a prohibition-like environment in the state. The liquor ban in Bihar was enforced through the Bihar Excise (Amendment) Act, 2016, which made the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcohol illegal. The move was applauded by many for its intent to improve public health, reduce crime rates, and uplift the overall social fabric of the state. One of the main objectives of the liquor ban was to address the concerns of women, who often faced the brunt of alcohol-related problems within their families and communities. The ban was seen as a step towards empowering women and ensuring their well-being.

The implementation of the liquor ban had several impacts on the state. On the positive side, it led to a reduction in alcohol-related crimes, including incidents of domestic violence, road accidents, and public nuisance. It also brought about a positive change in the social dynamics of communities, with people engaging in healthier and more productive activities.

The liquor ban also had a significant impact on the state's revenue. Bihar was known to generate substantial revenue from the alcohol industry, including taxes and excise duties. The ban resulted in a substantial loss of revenue, which posed challenges for the government in terms of funding developmental projects and public services. Over time, the Bihar government introduced amendments to the liquor ban, allowing limited liquor sales in the form of government-controlled outlets known as "Bihar State Beverages Corporation Limited" (BSBCL) stores. This move aimed to regain some revenue while maintaining control over the quality and distribution of alcohol. The liquor ban in Bihar remains a topic of debate and discussion, with proponents praising its social benefits and critics highlighting the challenges and drawbacks associated with its implementation. The effectiveness and long-term implications of the ban continue to be evaluated, with ongoing efforts to strike a balance between public health

concerns, revenue generation, and addressing the issues related to alcohol consumption in the state.

3. Gujarat Model

Gujarat, has implemented a complete prohibition on the sale and consumption of alcohol since its formation in 1960. The Gujarat model follows a strict no-alcohol policy, with severe penalties for violators. The ban covers all types of alcoholic beverages, including both Indian-made and foreign liquor. The state government has focused on creating awareness about the harmful effects of alcohol and promoting a culture of abstinence. The Gujarat model has been credited with reducing alcohol-related issues such as drunken driving, domestic violence, and public disturbances.

The Gujarat model stands as a unique example showcasing that a state can thrive economically without relying on revenue generated from alcohol sales.

Gujarat's complete prohibition on the sale and consumption of alcohol has demonstrated that it is possible to create alternative sources of revenue and foster economic development without compromising the social well-being of its citizens. The state has focused on attracting investments, promoting industries, and developing its infrastructure to drive economic growth. The success of Gujarat's model challenges the conventional belief that alcohol sales are necessary for generating substantial revenue. It highlights the potential for states to explore alternative avenues and prioritise the overall welfare of their residents while still achieving financial prosperity. The case studies of liquor bans in states like Kerala and Bihar provide valuable insights and lessons that could be applicable to Tamil Nadu. Some best practices and lessons learned:

- a. **Effective enforcement:** One crucial aspect is ensuring strict enforcement of the liquor ban. This involves deploying adequate resources, such as law enforcement personnel, to prevent illegal production, smuggling, and sale of alcohol. Strengthening surveillance and implementing stringent penalties for violations can act as deterrents.

- b. **Rehabilitation and awareness programs:** Recognizing that alcohol addiction is a social problem, comprehensive rehabilitation and awareness programs should be in place. These programs can include counselling, support groups, and public awareness campaigns highlighting the harmful effects of alcohol abuse and promoting healthier alternatives.
- c. **Economic diversification:** States should focus on diversifying their economy and promoting industries that do not rely on alcohol. This could involve attracting investments in sectors such as manufacturing, tourism, agriculture, technology, and services. Developing infrastructure, providing incentives for businesses, and creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship can help foster economic growth.
- d. **Social welfare initiatives:** Reallocating the resources previously associated with alcohol sales towards social welfare programs can be beneficial. Investing in education, healthcare, skill development, and poverty alleviation measures can improve the overall well-being of the population and create a positive social impact.
- e. **Monitoring and evaluation:** Regular monitoring and evaluation of the liquor ban's impact are essential. This includes assessing the reduction in alcohol-related crimes, improvements in public health indicators, economic growth in non-alcohol sectors, and overall societal well-being. This data can guide policy adjustments and ensure the effective implementation of the liquor ban.

D. Conclusion

1. Implementing a phased approach to curtail and restrict TASMAC and bars attached with the retail stores can be an effective strategy to reduce alcohol consumption in Tamil Nadu. By gradually tightening regulations and imposing restrictions on these establishments, the government can ensure a controlled and responsible drinking culture. This approach allows for a systematic reduction in the availability and accessibility of alcohol, discouraging excessive consumption and its associated negative consequences.

2. In order to address the concerns surrounding alcohol consumption and promote responsible drinking practices, it is crucial to implement a policy whereby bar licences are exclusively granted to 5-star bars and resto-bars in Tamil Nadu. This measure will ensure that alcohol consumption takes place within a controlled and regulated environment, reducing the accessibility and potential misuse of alcohol. confining bar licences to 5-star bars will discourage the proliferation of liquor establishments in residential areas and near educational institutions. This will protect vulnerable populations, such as young adults and communities, from the negative influences and social disturbances associated with excessive alcohol consumption.
3. In order to promote a shift towards lighter alcoholic beverages and discourage the consumption of hard liquors, it is important for the government to substitute hard liquor consumption to beer and wine in Tamil Nadu. These beverages offer a lower alcohol content compared to spirits, making them a relatively safer and more moderate option for individuals who choose to drink.
4. To effectively address the issue of alcoholism in Tamil Nadu, it is imperative to consider the potential benefits of removing the ban on toddy. Toddy, a traditional and locally produced alcoholic beverage, has a lower alcohol content compared to other spirits. By legalising and regulating its production and sale, the government can provide an alternative and safer option for those seeking alcoholic beverages.

CURTAILING HARD LIQUOR VIS-A-VIS BEER AND TODDY PERMITS

XX. Curtailing Hard Liquor vis-a-vis Beer and Toddy Permits

A. Introduction

Despite the abundance of over 50 million palm trees in Tamil Nadu, which could be utilised to produce relatively less harmful toddy, the state government continues to promote the exclusive sale of hard liquor and beer through TASMAL outlets, while keeping toddy banned. The general public and critics hold the perception that the government's promotion of hard liquor exclusively through the outlets is influenced by the fact that many distilleries producing hard liquor are owned by politicians or their relatives. The following alcoholic beverages are commonly consumed in South India especially Tamil Nadu.

1. **Hard liquor** : Also known as distilled spirits or spirits, refers to alcoholic beverages that are produced through distillation. Distillation is a process that involves heating a fermented liquid (such as wine or beer) to separate the alcohol from the water and other impurities, resulting in a higher alcohol content. Hard liquor typically contains a higher alcohol percentage compared to beer or wine. In Tamil Nadu, TASMAL shops sell various types of hard liquor, including popular spirits such as whiskey, rum, vodka, brandy, and gin. These spirits are available in different brands, qualities, and price ranges. TASMAL shops are licensed to sell hard liquor to individuals above the legal drinking age, which is 21 years in Tamil Nadu.
2. **Beer** : It is a type of alcoholic beverage that is brewed from malted barley, water, hops, and yeast. It is fermented using yeast, which converts the sugars in the malted barley into alcohol and carbon dioxide, resulting in a beverage with a lower alcohol content compared to hard liquor. In Tamil Nadu, TASMAL shops sell a variety of beers, including both domestic and imported brands. Beers are available in different types, flavours, and alcohol percentages. Some common types of beer include lagers, ales, stouts, and pilsners. TASMAL shops are licensed to sell beer to individuals above the legal drinking age, which is 21 years in Tamil Nadu. The availability of beer in TASMAL shops may vary based on the local regulations and stock availability.

3. **Toddy:** Also known as palm wine or kallu, is an alcoholic beverage commonly consumed in States of South India. It is derived from the sap of various species of palm trees, particularly the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*) and the palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). The process of collecting toddy involves tapping the unopened flower buds of the palm tree and collecting the sap that drips out. The sap is then fermented naturally by the yeasts present in the environment, resulting in the production of toddy. The flavour of toddy is mildly sweet and it has a low alcohol content, typically ranging from 4% to 6%. Toddy is traditionally consumed fresh and is often served in earthenware pots or bamboo containers. It is commonly enjoyed by locals in rural areas and is considered a traditional and cultural beverage. In recent years, efforts have been made to regulate and standardise the production and sale of toddy to ensure its safety and quality. Since 1987, the consumption of Toddy has been prohibited in Tamil Nadu, despite the fact that half of India's Palm trees can be found in the state.

4. **Wine:** In Tamil Nadu, wine is produced in a few vineyards and wineries located in the region. These wineries cultivate grapes, harvest them, and then ferment the juice to produce wine. The grapes used for winemaking can be either locally grown varieties or imported ones. The term "wine" in Tamil Nadu generally refers to the alcoholic beverage made from grapes.

Category	Beer	Hard Liquor (Spirits)	Toddy
Definition	Alcoholic beverage made through fermentation of grains	Alcoholic beverages distilled from fermented grains or fruits	Alcoholic beverage made from the sap of palm trees
Alcohol Content	Typically ranges from 4% to 6% ABV (Alcohol by Volume)	Varies depending on the type; commonly 40% ABV or higher	Usually contains around 4% to 6% ABV

Category	Beer	Hard Liquor (Spirits)	Toddy
Flavour	Wide range of flavours and styles, from light to dark, hoppy to malty	Flavour depends on the type of spirit; can be sweet, bitter, or smooth	Mildly sweet and has a slightly acidic taste
Ingredients	Water, malted grains (such as barley), hops, and yeast	Distilled from various grains or fruits	Sap extracted from palm trees, often fermented naturally
Serving Style	Generally served chilled in cans, bottles, or on tap	Often served as shots or mixed into cocktails	Traditionally served fresh and consumed directly from the tree
Drinking Culture	Often associated with socialising and casual gatherings	Commonly consumed in social settings or as a base for cocktails	Traditional drink in some tropical regions
Hangover	May cause hangovers due to higher water content and carbonation	Hangovers can vary depending on the type and quantity consumed	Hangovers can vary depending on the quantity consumed

Table 3: Commonly used Alcoholic Beverages

B. Primary Beverage Choice Among Current Alcohol Consumers in India

According to the National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India, the study found that approximately 30% of current alcohol users in India preferred country liquor or 'desi sharab', while another 30% favoured spirits or Indian Made Foreign Liquor. The proportion of individuals

who predominantly consumed low-alcohol content beverages such as beer and wine was relatively small both nationally and across most states.

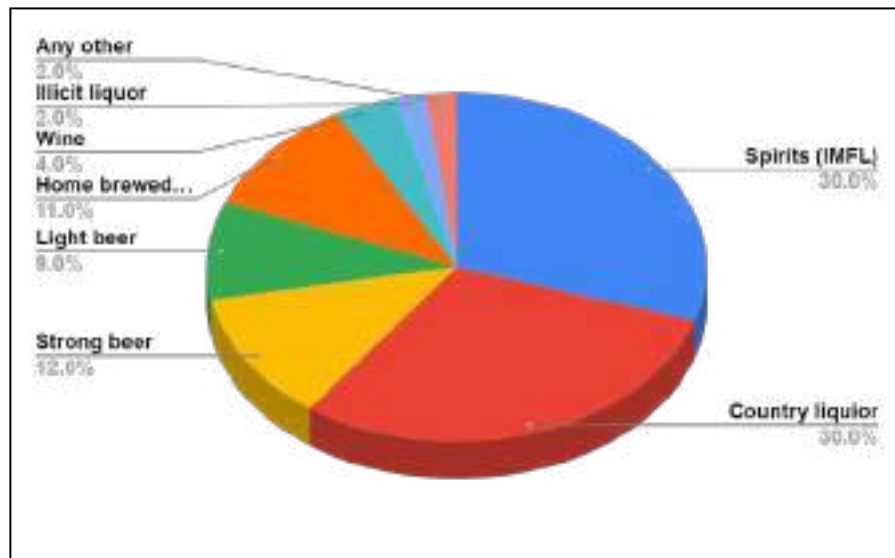


Chart 9: Percentage of choice of alcohol consumers in India

C. Health Risk Comparison

In India, the consumption of alcohol, including beer, spirits, and toddy, is deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric. However, it is important to recognize that excessive indulgence in these beverages can lead to severe health consequences. Alcohol abuse in India is a significant public health concern.

In 2018 Tamil Nadu ranked third among Indian states in terms of the number of people who needed help for alcohol problems. With approximately 37 lakh individuals seeking assistance, the state faced a significant challenge in addressing alcohol-related issues. The high number reflects the prevalence of alcohol consumption and the associated problems within Tamil Nadu. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the state government has implemented various initiatives to combat alcohol abuse and support those in need. The following are some health issues commonly observed among individuals who consume various types of alcoholic drinks.

Beer: Excessive beer consumption can contribute to weight gain, obesity, and associated health issues such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Furthermore, alcohol misuse is strongly linked to

liver diseases, including cirrhosis, which has become alarmingly prevalent in the country. The unregulated production and distribution of illicit liquors in some regions of Tamil Nadu pose additional risks, as they can be adulterated with harmful substances, leading to severe health complications or even death.

Hard liquor: It is commonly consumed in Tamil Nadu, has a higher alcohol content than beer and can cause even greater harm when consumed irresponsibly. The negative effects of excessive alcohol intake on the liver, pancreas, and other organs are particularly worrisome. The rise in alcohol-related liver diseases, including alcoholic hepatitis and liver cirrhosis, is a cause for concern among healthcare professionals. Moreover, alcohol addiction and its associated mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety, pose significant challenges to individuals and families across the state.

Toddy : It is a traditional alcoholic beverage enjoyed in some parts of India, also carries health risks when consumed excessively. Inadequate fermentation or contamination during the production process can lead to health problems. Overindulgence in toddy can result in alcohol poisoning, dehydration, and impaired judgement, which can lead to accidents and injuries. Toddy, being an organic beverage, generally carries a lower risk to health compared to hard liquor and beer.

D. Beer & Toddy Promotion Policy In Adjacent States

In recent years, the states adjacent to Tamil Nadu have been promoting beer instead of liquor. This is due to a number of factors, including the health risks associated with liquor, the economic benefits of beer tourism, and the cultural significance of beer & Toddy in the respective states.

1. Health Risks Of Liquor : Liquor Consumption is a major contributor to health problems in these states.. Liquor consumption is also a major factor in road traffic accidents, violence, and crime. Five of India's southern states amount to about half of the country's total liquor consumption. Tamil Nadu is also the biggest consumer of liquor in the country with the state alone guzzling 13% of total alcohol consumption. Karnataka follows closely at 12%. ²¹² While

²¹² [Financial Express, May 2020.](#)

this is a major cause of concern, it is also to be noted that the increase in alcohol consumption is a major reason for acute health problems. Excessive alcohol use can lead to the development of chronic diseases and other serious problems including:²¹³

- a. High blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, liver disease, and digestive problems.
 - b. Cancer of the breast, mouth, throat, oesophagus, voice box, liver, colon, and rectum.
 - c. Weakening of the immune system, increasing the chances of getting sick.
 - d. Learning and memory problems, including dementia and poor school performance.
 - e. Mental health problems, including depression and anxiety
2. **Economic Benefits Of Beer Tourism :** Beer tourism is a growing industry in South Indian states. Tourists from all over India and the world come to the tourist destinations in these states to enjoy the beaches, backwaters, and hill stations. Many of these tourists also enjoy beer, and the state governments are promoting beer tourism as a way to boost the economy.
3. **Cultural Significance Of Beer :** Toddy, a traditional alcoholic beverage made from the sap of palm trees, is a type of beer. Toddy has been consumed in these adjacent states especially in Kerala for centuries, and it is still an important part of the state's culture.
- a. **Kerala's Beer Promotion Policy :** In 2013, the Kerala government announced a new beer promotion policy. The policy allowed for the opening of new beer and wine parlours across the state. The government also reduced the taxes on beer, making it more affordable. The beer promotion policy has been successful in reducing liquor consumption in Kerala. According to the state government, liquor consumption in Kerala fell by 20% between 2013 and 2016. The policy has also boosted the beer tourism industry, and it has helped to create jobs in the state.

²¹³ www.cdc.gov

- b. **Karnataka's Beer Promotion Policy :** In 2017, the Karnataka government announced a new beer promotion policy. The policy allowed for the opening of new beer and wine parlours across the state. The government also reduced the taxes on beer, making it more affordable. The beer promotion policy has been successful in reducing liquor consumption in Karnataka. According to the state government, liquor consumption in Karnataka fell by 15% between 2017 and 2022. The policy has also boosted the beer tourism industry, and it has helped to create jobs in the state.
- c. **Andhra Pradesh's Beer Promotion Policy :** In 2022, the Andhra Pradesh government announced a new beer promotion policy. The policy allowed for the opening of new beer and wine parlours across the state. The government also reduced the taxes on beer, making it more affordable. The beer promotion policy has been met with mixed reactions. Some people have praised the policy, arguing that it will help to reduce liquor consumption in the state and boost the beer tourism industry. Others have criticised the policy, arguing that it will encourage alcohol abuse and lead to social problems.
- d. **Puducherry's Beer Promotion Policy :** In 2021, the Puducherry government announced a new beer promotion policy. The policy allowed for the opening of new beer and wine parlours across the state. The government also reduced the taxes on beer, making it more affordable. The beer promotion policy has been met with mixed reactions.

E. The Barriers Hindering Beer And Toddy In Tamil Nadu

- 1. **Shortage Of Beer In TASMAC Outlets :** Although the TASMAC menu lists 46 different beer brands, only 4 to 5 brands are actually available at the outlets. Customers have been facing difficulties in finding their preferred beer brands, and the limited options have led to complaints and frustration among consumers. One of the main reasons behind this is reportedly the delay in issuing licences to breweries for the production of beer. Additionally, distribution challenges and supply chain disruptions have also contributed to the scarcity of beer in the state.

2. **Influence Of Politicians :** In Tamil Nadu, there exists a perception among the general public and critics that the government's exclusive promotion of hard liquor through its outlets is driven by a notable influence from politicians and their relatives who own several distilleries producing hard liquor. The monopolistic control over liquor distribution and promotion by politically affiliated distilleries has resulted in limited opportunities for beer and toddy producers to thrive in the market. Consequently, the choices available to consumers are largely restricted, thereby hampering the diversity and development of the overall alcohol industry in Tamil Nadu. The alleged link between political interests and the promotion of hard liquor has contributed to the persistence of these barriers, leaving the beer and toddy sectors struggling to gain a significant foothold in the state.
3. **Toddy Ban :** The sale and consumption of toddy, a traditional alcoholic drink made from the sap of palm trees, has been banned in Tamil Nadu since 1987. The ban was imposed by the then-government on the grounds that toddy was addictive and harmful to health. However, there has been growing opposition to the ban in recent years, with many people arguing that toddy is a safe and nutritious drink that has been consumed for centuries in Tamil Nadu

F. Curtailing Measures That Can Be Taken By The TN Government Through Policy Changes

1. **Removing Toddy Ban :** The toddy ban in Tamil Nadu has been in place for over 30 years, and there is growing evidence that it is not achieving its intended goals. In fact, the ban may actually be doing more harm than good. One of the main reasons for the ban was to reduce alcoholism. However, studies have shown that toddy is no more addictive than other alcoholic drinks, such as beer or wine. In fact, some studies have even shown that toddy can be beneficial for health, as it contains antioxidants and other nutrients. Another reason for the ban was to protect public health. However, the ban has actually led to an increase in the consumption of illicit alcohol, which is often adulterated and can be harmful to health. If the toddy ban were lifted, it would allow for the regulation and taxation of toddy, which would generate revenue for the government and help to protect public health. It would also allow for the creation of jobs in the

toddy industry, which would benefit marginalised communities. In addition, lifting the toddy ban would help to reduce the demand for hard liquor, which is more harmful to health than toddy. This would have a positive impact on public health and could help to reduce the number of alcohol-related deaths and injuries. Overall, there are a number of potential benefits to lifting the toddy ban in Tamil Nadu. These benefits include reducing alcoholism, protecting public health, generating revenue for the government, and creating jobs. Lifting the ban would also help to reduce the demand for hard liquor, which is more harmful to health.

2. Regulation and Monitoring: A Toddy Board (dedicated regulatory body or task force) can be established to oversee toddy tapping activities, ensure compliance with standards and regulations, and monitor production. This would enable effective monitoring of quality and adherence to regulations. The Toddy Board can be the single point authority to provide licence for shops, authenticate branding and packaging of the drink, and ensure price regulation to prevent any corruption or price volatility in the market. Additionally, the board can consider accommodating employees of TASMACH who may be affected by the liquor ban, by re-employing them in the dedicated toddy shops. It is estimated that there are about 25,000 employees managing the TASMACH outlets²¹⁴. The Toddy Board can recruit them to manage toddy shops, or, alternatively, create livelihood opportunities through the Tamil Nadu Palm Development Board as detailed in the following two sections.

3. Addressing The Beer Scarcity and Promoting Responsible Consumption : The Tamil Nadu government can address the beer scarcity by providing more licences and by streamlining the distribution process²¹⁵. The government can also work to reduce the regulatory burden on breweries, which would make it easier for them to operate and produce more beer. In addition to addressing the beer scarcity, the Tamil Nadu government can also consider curtailing hard liquor vis-à-vis beer. This would mean increasing the availability of beer and making it more

²¹⁴ [The News Minute, February 2022](#)

²¹⁵ [Times Of India](#)

affordable, while reducing the availability of hard liquor. This would help to reduce the number of alcohol-related deaths and injuries in the state.

G. Additional Things That Can Be Done To Replace The Hard Liquor

- 1. Increased Taxation On Hard Liquor :** One effective measure to curtail hard liquor vis-à-vis beer and toddy permits is through the implementation of increased taxation on hard liquor. By levying higher taxes on hard liquor products, the government can discourage its consumption and promote the consumption of comparatively less potent alternatives such as beer and toddy. Increased taxation can lead to higher retail prices for hard liquor, making it less affordable for certain consumer segments. This can have a direct impact on reducing the overall consumption of hard liquor, as some individuals may opt for cheaper alternatives or consume alcohol in moderation. Additionally, the revenue generated from higher taxes on hard liquor can be allocated towards funding public health initiatives, alcohol rehabilitation programs, and educational campaigns highlighting the potential risks associated with excessive alcohol consumption. Overall, increased taxation on hard liquor can be a viable strategy to curtail its consumption and promote the safer consumption of beverages with lower alcohol content.
- 2. Reduced Availability Of Hard Liquor :** Another approach to curtail hard liquor vis-à-vis beer and toddy permits is by implementing measures that reduce its availability. This can be done by imposing stricter regulations on the licensing and distribution of hard liquor. Governments can limit the number of licences granted for the sale of hard liquor, impose restrictions on the locations where it can be sold, and regulate the operating hours of liquor stores or bars that serve hard liquor. By reducing the availability of hard liquor, authorities can limit the accessibility and convenience of obtaining it, thus discouraging its consumption. In contrast, beer and toddy, which have lower alcohol content, can be made more readily available to consumers, promoting their safer consumption. Additionally, initiatives such as promoting the production and distribution of local beers or toddy can further incentivize the shift towards these alternatives. By reducing the availability of hard liquor and promoting alternatives,

policymakers can effectively curtail its consumption and encourage the adoption of beverages with lower alcohol content.

3. Increased Awareness Of The Harmful Effects Of Hard Liquor : An important aspect of curbing hard liquor consumption vis-à-vis beer and toddy permits is by raising awareness about the harmful effects associated with hard liquor. Governments, public health organisations, and community initiatives can play a vital role in educating the public about the risks and consequences of excessive hard liquor consumption. This can be done through targeted awareness campaigns, educational programs, and media initiatives that highlight the negative health effects, including addiction, liver damage, increased risk of accidents, and other alcohol-related diseases. By increasing awareness, individuals can make informed choices regarding their alcohol consumption and understand the potential benefits of opting for beverages with lower alcohol content like beer or toddy. Additionally, providing accurate and accessible information about responsible drinking practices, standard drink sizes, and recommended limits can empower individuals to make healthier decisions. Collaboration with healthcare professionals, addiction specialists, and counsellors can further enhance awareness efforts by offering support services for those struggling with alcohol abuse or addiction. By promoting the understanding of the adverse effects of hard liquor and fostering a culture of responsible alcohol consumption, the goal of curbing hard liquor consumption and encouraging safer alternatives can be achieved.

4. Enforcement Of Existing Laws Against Drunk Driving And Public Intoxication : Enforcement of existing laws against drunk driving and public intoxication is a critical aspect of curbing hard liquor consumption and promoting responsible alcohol use. The below mentioned are some aspects which can be taken by the authorities to curtail the use of hard liquor

a. Stringent Law Enforcement: Authorities should enforce laws pertaining to drunk driving and public intoxication rigorously. This includes conducting regular sobriety checkpoints,

increasing patrols in areas prone to alcohol-related incidents, and imposing strict penalties for offenders. Visible law enforcement presence acts as a deterrent and sends a clear message that irresponsible alcohol consumption will not be tolerated.

- b. Breathalyser Tests:** Equipping law enforcement officers with breathalyser devices enables them to accurately measure a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) and take appropriate action against drunk drivers. Conducting breathalyser tests during traffic stops or checkpoints helps identify and apprehend individuals who are operating vehicles under the influence of alcohol.
- c. Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launching public awareness campaigns that highlight the dangers and legal consequences of drunk driving and public intoxication can effectively deter individuals from engaging in these behaviours. Such campaigns should emphasise the importance of personal responsibility, the potential harm caused by alcohol impairment, and the impact on public safety.
- d. Collaboration with Stakeholders:** Collaboration between law enforcement agencies, transportation authorities, and community organisations is crucial. Working together can enhance efforts to enforce laws against drunk driving and public intoxication. Collaboration may involve sharing information, coordinating initiatives, and conducting joint awareness programs to reinforce the message and ensure a unified approach.
- e. Training and Education:** Providing comprehensive training to law enforcement officers on identifying signs of alcohol impairment, conducting field sobriety tests, and handling alcohol-related incidents is essential. Enhanced knowledge and skills enable officers to effectively enforce the law and gather evidence in cases of drunk driving and public intoxication.
- f. Strict Penalties and Consequences:** Imposing significant penalties and consequences for individuals found guilty of drunk driving and public intoxication can serve as a deterrent.

This includes fines, suspension or revocation of driver's licences, mandatory attendance at alcohol education programs, and, in severe cases, imprisonment. Strict enforcement and consistent application of penalties send a strong message that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

By ensuring the enforcement of existing laws against drunk driving and public intoxication, authorities can effectively discourage irresponsible alcohol consumption, promote public safety, and encourage individuals to choose safer alternatives like beer and toddy while discouraging the excessive consumption of hard liquor.

PROJECTED REVENUE AUGMENTATION FROM INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

XXI. Projected Revenue Augmentation From Increased Productivity

Alcoholism is a pervasive problem that affects individuals, families, and societies on a global scale. In addition to the personal health consequences, it poses significant challenges to the overall productivity of economies worldwide. This essay explores the detrimental effects of alcoholism on productivity and discusses how curbing this issue can lead to improved economic performance. By addressing the root causes of alcoholism, implementing preventive measures, and offering support to affected individuals, we can create a healthier workforce and a more prosperous society.

A. Health and Well-being

Alcoholism takes a toll on the physical and mental well-being of individuals. Chronic alcohol abuse leads to various health problems, including liver disease, cardiovascular issues, and neurological disorders. These health complications result in absenteeism, reduced work capacity, and increased healthcare costs. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), harmful use of alcohol contributes to 3.3 million deaths worldwide each year²¹⁶.

In India, alcohol consumption is responsible for a significant burden of disease. According to a study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), alcohol consumption is associated with a range of health conditions, including liver disease, cardiovascular problems, and mental health disorders. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) in India also reported that alcohol consumption has a direct impact on the health of individuals, leading to increased morbidity and mortality rates.

Globally, the economic costs of alcohol-related health issues are substantial. The World Health Organization estimates that alcohol-related harm costs societies 1-6% of their gross domestic product (GDP) due to healthcare expenditures, reduced productivity, and law enforcement expenses²¹⁷.

²¹⁶ [World Health Organisation Fact Sheet on Alcohol](#)

²¹⁷ [Socio-Economic Costs of Alcohol in India, WHO](#)

B. Workplace Absenteeism and Presenteeism

Alcohol-related absenteeism is a significant drain on productivity. Employees struggling with alcohol addiction often miss work due to personal health issues or the aftereffects of excessive drinking. This absence disrupts workflow, increases workloads for other employees, and hampers productivity levels. The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) estimates that alcohol-related absenteeism costs the U.S. economy around \$74 billion annually.

In India, a study conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) revealed that alcohol-related absenteeism costs the Indian economy around \$1.4 billion annually. The impact of alcohol-related absenteeism is felt globally, leading to decreased productivity and economic losses.

Furthermore, the World Economic Forum (WEF) ranks India among the top five countries with the highest levels of presenteeism caused by alcohol use. This indicates that employees may be physically present but not fully productive due to the effects of alcohol. Presenteeism leads to reduced work quality, decreased creativity, and a lack of focus, ultimately hampering overall productivity.

C. Workplace Accidents and Safety

Alcohol abuse significantly impairs judgment, coordination, and cognitive abilities, increasing the likelihood of workplace accidents. This not only leads to human suffering but also incurs substantial economic costs due to medical expenses, workers' compensation claims, and legal issues. According to a report by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, around 40% of road accidents in India are alcohol-related, resulting in loss of lives, injuries, and damage to property²¹⁸. In industrial sectors such as construction and manufacturing, alcohol-related accidents and safety violations contribute to decreased productivity and increased costs for businesses.

²¹⁸ [Road Accidents in India, Report by MORTH](#)

Globally, the impact of alcohol-related accidents is staggering. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that alcohol-impaired driving costs the United States over \$68.9 billion annually in medical expenses, property damage, and lost productivity²¹⁹. The cost of workplace accidents due to alcohol use further emphasises the need to address alcoholism for improved productivity and worker safety.

D. Increased Employee Engagement and Morale

Alcohol addiction negatively impacts employee engagement and morale. Workplaces that promote a culture of alcohol cessation programs and provide support for employees struggling with alcohol addiction witness improved employee morale, engagement, and overall well-being. By fostering a supportive environment, employers can help individuals overcome their addiction and provide them with the necessary resources for recovery. This, in turn, leads to higher job satisfaction, reduced turnover rates, and increased productivity.

E. Examples of Global Efforts and Success Stories

Numerous countries have implemented strategies to address alcoholism and its impact on productivity. These initiatives have shown promising results in enhancing productivity and improving public health. Here are some examples:

1. **Finland:** Finland has successfully reduced alcohol-related harm through a combination of measures, including price increases, restrictions on alcohol availability, and public awareness campaigns.²²⁰ These efforts have resulted in significant reductions in alcohol-related deaths, hospitalizations, and workplace absenteeism.
2. **South Africa:** South Africa has implemented workplace-based alcohol education and support programs to address alcohol abuse among employees. These programs have shown positive

²¹⁹ [Drunk Driving, Statistics & Resources, NHTSA](#)

²²⁰ [Statistics Finland, 2012](#)

results, including reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and improved employee well-being²²¹.

3. **Australia:** Australia has implemented policies targeting alcohol-related harm, such as minimum pricing, alcohol advertising restrictions, and public health campaigns. These interventions have resulted in reductions in alcohol consumption, violence, and workplace accidents.²²²
4. **United States:** Many workplaces in the United States have introduced employee assistance programs (EAPs) that provide resources, counselling, and treatment options for employees struggling with alcohol addiction. EAPs have been effective in improving employee well-being, reducing absenteeism, and increasing productivity.
5. **Sweden:** Sweden has adopted a comprehensive approach to reduce alcohol-related harm. Measures include state-run alcohol retail stores, strict regulations on alcohol marketing, and extensive public health campaigns. These efforts have led to a decline in alcohol-related accidents, hospitalizations, and work absences.

Curbing alcoholism is crucial for improving productivity in the global economy. By addressing the root causes of alcohol addiction, implementing preventive measures, and offering support to affected individuals, societies can create healthier workforces and foster environments that promote engagement, safety, and well-being. The examples and data presented from around the world, including India, highlight the negative impact of alcoholism on productivity and the potential for positive change through targeted interventions. Investing in alcoholism prevention and support programs will not only enhance productivity but also lead to improved public health, reduced healthcare costs, and a more prosperous society as a whole.

²²¹ [Labour Guide, South Africa](#)

²²² [Public Health Research & Practice, 2016](#)

ADDRESSING THE FINANCIAL IMPACT

XXII. Addressing The Financial Impact

The revenue to the Tamil Nadu Government in FY 2022-23 through Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) was ₹ 44,098.56 crore. This was up from ₹ 36,050.65 crore in the previous fiscal.²²³ As per a 2016 article, more than 30% of the state's revenue came from liquor sales.²²⁴

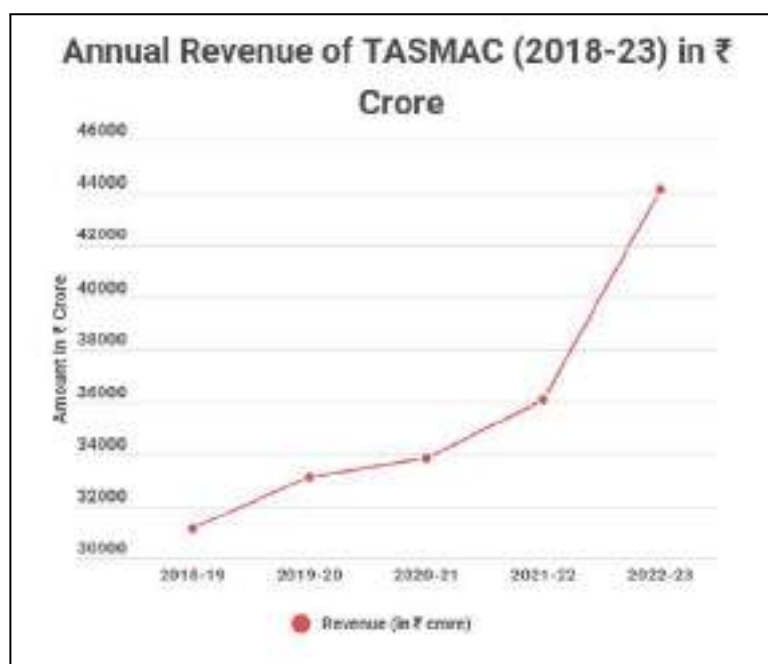


Chart 10: Annual Revenue of TASMAC from 2018-19 to 2022-23 in ₹ Crore

In Bihar, it was seen that a ban on alcohol was followed by a staggering 380% increase in the purchase of honey, 200% increase in the purchase of cheese, 1,751% increase in the purchase of expensive sarees, and a 910% increase in the purchase of expensive dress material, ie, it prohibition was seen to impact household prosperity in a positive way. As per an Asian Development Research Institute report, owing to the liquor ban in Bihar, at least ₹440 crore was saved every month, which translates to ₹ 5,280 crore every year.²²⁵

²²³ [IE, April 2023](#)

²²⁴ [Live Mint, May 2016](#)

²²⁵ [Business Insider, June 2018](#)

A liquor ban in Tamil Nadu can be implemented through a staggered process, with a sound strategy to compensate for the loss of revenue based on a multifaceted, futuristic approach. At present, the 5,380 outlets earn a total revenue of ₹44,098.56 crore. For the purpose of calculations, the revenue generated is presumed to be equal, hence each TASMACH outlet earns approximately ₹8.20 crore per year. To assess the total loss and added expenditure for the state, we have to consider the loss per outlet per year and also include the cost of the rehabilitation and de-addiction programs.

In light of the closure of TASMACH, it is anticipated that the state may experience some financial challenges. To address this situation, the government can explore two potential avenues to generate additional income. Firstly, direct sales through the auctioning of Toddy shops. Secondly, efforts are being made to stimulate economic growth and enhance tax revenue through promoting Palm-based products, fostering tourism, and extending support to various industries. These measures aim to mitigate the impact of the closure and ensure a sustainable financial outlook for the state. The details mentioned below are as follows.

A. Diversification of Revenue Sources

1. Tourism

Home to a wide range of natural resources, grand temples, hill stations, the longest coastline in the country, and eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Tamil Nadu has a large share in Indian tourism.²²⁶ However, this is still woefully low compared to the state's potential given its neglected tourist places and circuits. A synergistic approach involving the district administration, the Department of Tourism, and the private sector would help in boosting the tourism revenue of the state.

- a. **Temple Tourism:** Tamil Nadu, veritably called the 'land of temples', has, unfortunately, not been promoted as such. A renewed focus on 'temple tourism' will shower the blessings of the Gods and Goddesses on the Tamil *makkal* (people) whilst simultaneously filling the state's

²²⁶ [The Citizen](#)

coffers. While the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) website is not in the least, reflective of the potential of the state when it comes to temple tourism.²²⁷

Temples such as Srirangam Ranganathar temple, Kanchipuram Kailasanathar temple, Samayapuram Mariamman temple, and the myriad, magnificent temples of Murugan figure nowhere in the list. Grand tourism circuits linking Hanuman temples in Tamil Nadu (Sri Viswaroopa Panchamukha Anjaneya Swamy, Namakkal Anjaneyar, etc) with Anjanadri Betta in Karnataka, Anjanadri hills in Andhra Pradesh, and Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh which will be a win-win situation for all states, and promote temple tourism at unprecedented levels.

- b. **Augmenting Temple Tourism - Case Study of Kashi:** Prime Minister Modi transformed Varanasi into a living, breathing city that exemplifies the perfect amalgamation of the modern world with the ancient world, showcasing an unparalleled blend of tradition and progress. Prime Minister Modi took on a mission to revive the temples in Kashi. He made a promise to transform the Kashi Corridor, similar to that of Kyoto, a city in Japan known for its temples. Since then, around 40 temples have been restored to their original beauty. The impact of this endeavour extends far beyond restoration, as the temple area itself has undergone a massive expansion, expanding from its modest 3000 square feet to an astonishing 5 lakh square feet. At the heart of Kashi's glory stands the magnificent 400-metre-long Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, an architectural marvel with an estimated cost of around Rs. 800 crores, including the initial phase's construction cost of 339 crores. Prime Minister Modi's efforts have brought new life to the temples of Kashi, making them shine once again. The expansion of the temple area and the creation of the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor show his commitment to preserving the city's heritage while embracing modernity. This project has transformed Kashi into a place where the ancient and the modern come together in a harmonious way, attracting visitors from all over the world.

²²⁷ [TTDC](#)

As a result of this, domestic tourism in Uttar Pradesh has risen by 27%, and overall the state jumped to 2nd place nationally behind Tamil Nadu.

Domestic Arrivals in Kashi over the last 6 years²²⁸

Year	Tourist Arrivals
2017	59,47,355
2018	60,95,890
2019	64,47,775
2020	8,76,303
2021	30,75,913
2022	7,16,12,127

Table 4: Domestic Tourist Arrivals in Uttar Pradesh

The tourism revolution in Uttar Pradesh doesn't end with the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor. The state government has more plans in store to attract tourists. The upcoming Ram Temple in Ayodhya is expected to be the next major attraction that will draw pilgrims from far and wide. Additionally, the tourist facilities in Mathura are undergoing significant renovations and improvements to cater to a larger number of visitors.²²⁹ The Uttar Pradesh Government is making efforts to revamp these places and create a welcoming environment for tourists, ensuring that Uttar Pradesh continues to be a top destination for travellers seeking cultural and religious experiences.

On the other hand, Tamil Nadu holds tremendous scope and potential to surpass the developments seen in Uttar Pradesh. **Known for its rich spiritual heritage, Tamil Nadu has the capacity to outshine Uttar Pradesh's temple tourism development model, offering a far superior alternative TASMAC.** With its abundance of spiritual landmarks, Tamil Nadu presents an unparalleled opportunity to tap into the immense potential of

²²⁸ [Twitter](#)
²²⁹ [TOI](#)

temple tourism. The state is home to numerous renowned temples, each steeped in history, architectural marvels, and vibrant cultural traditions. The grandeur of temples such as Meenakshi Amman Temple in Madurai, Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur, and Kapaleeshwarar Temple in Chennai exemplify the captivating spiritual aura that Tamil Nadu possesses.

Tamil Nadu has the potential to offer a more holistic and authentic experience to visitors, fostering a deeper connection with its spiritual roots. By emphasising sustainable practices, preserving heritage, and promoting local traditions, the state can create a tourism ecosystem that respects and cherishes its spiritual and cultural assets. In contrast to the contentious TASMAC model, which primarily revolves around liquor sales, Tamil Nadu's focus on temple tourism can foster a positive image and draw a more diverse range of tourists. By capitalising on its spiritual heritage, Tamil Nadu can position itself as a beacon of enlightenment and exploration, offering an alternative source of income that celebrates its profound spirituality, cultural richness, and architectural splendour.

Moreover, Tamil Nadu can offer visitors a richer and more authentic experience, fostering a deeper connection with its spiritual roots. By focusing on sustainability, preserving heritage, and promoting local customs, the state can create a tourism system that values and protects its spiritual and cultural treasures.

- c. **Experiential and Accessible Tourism:** With a written history of more than 2,000 years, temples and forts dating back to antiquity, landscape covering forests, mountains, seashore, and dry lands, and an equally diverse cuisine, Tamil Nadu can offer tourists an experience like no other. This potential of Tamil Nadu could translate into revenue for the state if tourism plans are drawn along those lines. The state can also capitalise on the fact that almost a third of the world's population is directly affected by disability, signifying a huge potential market for travel and tourism.²³⁰ Accessible tourism facilities along with

²³⁰ [United Nations](#)

promotion of Tamil Nadu as a haven for Experiential and Accessible Tourism can help boost revenue prospects. Trails should be created for diverse taste groups. This could include forts (such as Gingee, the ‘Troy of the East’, atop Rajagiri, Krishnagiri, and Chandragiri), places offering cultural experience (such as Kanadukathan, Kottiyur, Aathangudi, Pallathur, Kothamangalam, and Devakottai villages offering a ‘Chettinad experience’), adventure sports (such as rock climbing in Chennai, surfing in Kovalam and paragliding in Yelagiri), and tea/coffee tourism in the Nilgiris.

- d. **MICE:** Given its infrastructure and connectivity to regions across the world, Tamil Nadu has great potential for meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) tourism. Its cultural heritage and coastline and added advantages that can make Tamil Nadu one of the most sought-after places for MICE tourism. TTDC should have a dedicated portal for MICE tourism, Tier 2 cities should be promoted as MICE centres with tourists getting the opportunity to enjoy local culture including ‘thiruvizha’.
- e. **Medical Tourism:** While Kerala has hard-sold ‘Ayurveda’ and managed to attract a lot of domestic and foreign tourists, turning it into a global health tourism destination, the TTDC has been reluctant to promote Siddha—the ancient Tamil system of healing—denying Tamil Nadu revenue and good-will. Siddha has a great potential as far as Medical and Wellness Tourism are concerned. TTDC should incorporate Siddha into the health packages being provided to the holidayers and international tourists.

Tamil Nadu is already at the forefront of Medical Tourism with 40% of international patients coming to India visiting Tamil Nadu,²³¹ and cities like Chennai and Coimbatore having the highest concentration of private hospitals in the state²³². With hospitals such as Christian Medical College, Vellore, which specialises in Neurosciences, Gastroenterology, and Haematology, and Aravind Eye Hospital which specialises in Ophthalmology, this sector

²³¹ [News 18, April 2023](#)

²³² [The Hindu, April 2015](#)

has tremendous potential for more growth, even in other districts. It can further be promoted with support infrastructure for caregiving and paramedical practitioners, to make the state a global leader for health & wellness tourism.

Sub-Sector	Revenue Potential for 1 year For The Industry (in ₹crore)	Projected Livelihoods Generated
Temple Tourism	8.5	3,21,000
Experiential Tourism	To be ascertained	To be ascertained
MICE Tourism	3250	To be ascertained
Medical Tourism	35	40,000

Table 5: Data on the Estimated Revenue Generation From Growth In Tourism

2. Filip To Industries

- a. **Bioplastics:** The plastic industry in Tamil Nadu has the potential to grow upwards of 28%, and currently lags behind other industrial states like Maharashtra and Gujarat.²³³ The Tamil Nadu Government should use this opportunity and invest in this sector. Keeping the futuristic trends and the general pro-eco-friendly sentiments in mind, the Tamil Nadu Government should invest and promote bioplastics. India's bioplastics market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 23.91 % to reach \$ 754.65 million by 2025 from \$ 208.48 million in 2019.²³⁴

²³³ [THBL, June 2022](#)

²³⁴ [Research and Markets](#)

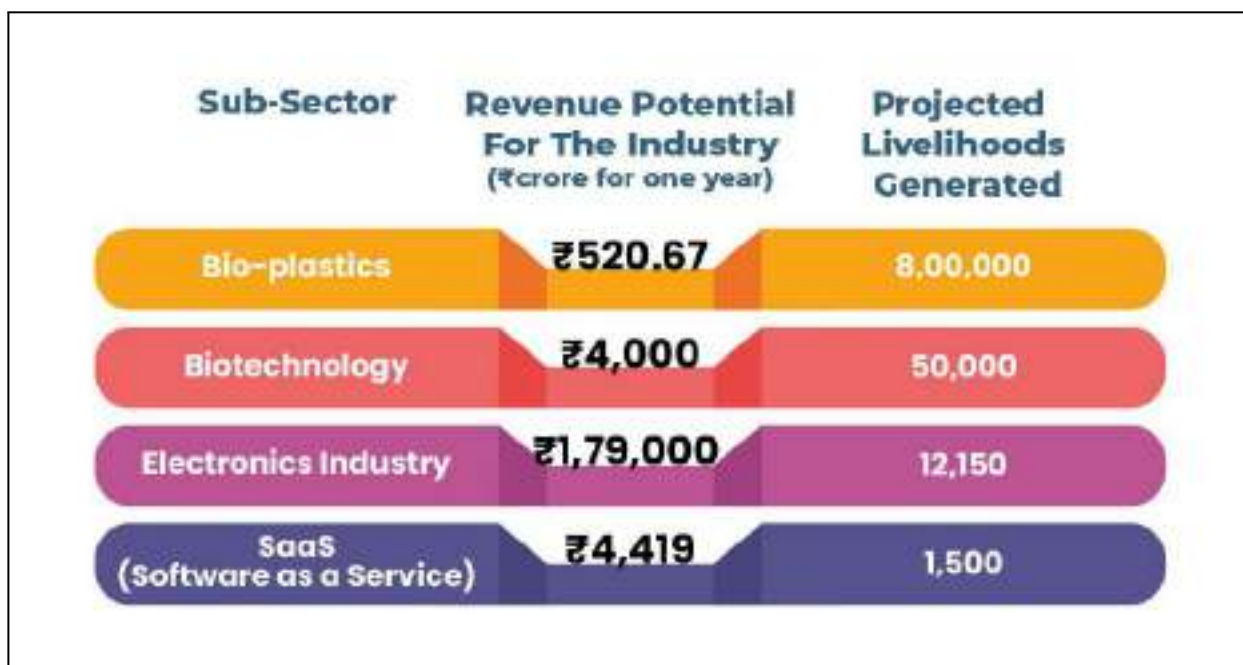
- b. **Biotechnology:** The 'Swiss Biotech Day' is one of the leading Biotechnology conferences in Europe, and Tamil Nadu was the only Indian state to be invited by Switzerland to participate in the event.²³⁵ Tamil Nadu has emerged as a test bed for companies innovating in the Health Tech space and investing in Medical Technology. This sector is expected to bring an investment of ₹ 20,000 crore.²³⁶
- c. **The Electronics Industry:** Last year, the electronics industry in India achieved a total sales figure of Rs 64,00,000 crores. Currently, Tamil Nadu contributes 20% to India's electronics manufacturing sector. Furthermore, the electronics industry in India is experiencing a growth rate of 14%. If we assume that Tamil Nadu will also grow at the same rate, we can anticipate an additional revenue of Rs 1,79,000 crores for Tamil Nadu in the upcoming years.
- d. **Software-as-a-Service (SaaS):** One of the SaaS companies based in Tamil Nadu made sales worth ₹883.8 crore on the continent last year. Assuming that 50% of the revenue was generated within India due to the rise of new startups and the country's economic growth, the amount comes to ₹441.9 crore. If the Tamil Nadu government creates a Business-friendly environment in the state and attracts 10 more companies, the projected revenue for Tamil Nadu from these companies over the next three years would be ₹4,419 crore.
- e. **One District One Product:** The initiative aims to select, brand, and promote at least One Product from each District (One District - One Product) of the country for enabling holistic socioeconomic growth across all regions. The Tamil Nadu Government has a list of potential ODOP products for export. The same should be pursued with full vigour to realise increased revenue for the state. Some steps to ensure greater promotion of products include:
 - i. Organising Buyer-Seller Meets

²³⁵ [THBL, April 2023](#)

²³⁶ [THBL, April 2023](#)

- ii. Exhibition of ODOP items in trade pavilions
- iii. Collaboration with Indian embassies to promote exports in their regions
- iv. Setting up common business services and logistics park in every district where ODOP manufacturers can avail the services at affordable and subsidised rates
- v. Giving exclusive branding and marketing services for ODOP-based MSME units

Industries present a lucrative area for Tamil Nadu to offset the monetary challenge that a liquor ban would entail. The following sectors present an opportunity which could be exploited:



Infographic 24: Data on the Estimated Revenue Generation From Growth In Industries

B. Calculation For Loss Of Revenue

Year	No. of Outlets to be Closed	Estimated Revenue Loss (₹crore)
Year 1 (20% Closure)	1,076	8,823
Year 2 (25% Closure)	1,345	11,029
Year 3 (30% Closure)	1,614	13,234
Total [A]	4,035	33,087

Cost of Rehabilitation Program over 3 years [B]	2,246.40
Total Cost [C]	35,333.40

Table 6: Data on the Revenue Loss and Cost to Tamil Nadu Government from Closing TASMAC outlets

C. Calculations for Potential Revenue From Additional Sources Mentioned Above

1. Direct Sales For Government (Auction & Tax Through Toddy)

Sector	Estimated Revenue Earned per Year From Auction (in ₹crore) [A]	Estimated Revenue By Tax per Year(20%) [B]	Total Estimation per Year [A]+[B]	Estimated Final Revenue in 3 Year (in ₹crore)
Toddy Outlets [A]	240	680	920	2760

a. Revenue For Government Through Taxes

Sector	Sub Category	Estimated Revenue Earned for 1 Year By The Industry (in ₹crore)	Estimated Revenue From SGST (6%) for 1 Year (in ₹crore)	Estimated Final Revenue in 3 Year (in ₹crore)
Palm-Based Products	NA	2,544	152.64	457.92
Tourism	Temple Tourism	8.5	0.51	1.53
	MICE Tourism	3,250	195	585
	Medical Tourism	35	2.1	6.3

Sector	Sub Category	Estimated Revenue Earned for 1 Year By The Industry (in ₹crore)	Estimated Revenue From SGST (6%) for 1 Year (in ₹crore)	Estimated Final Revenue in 3 Year (in ₹crore)
Filip To Industries	Bio-plastics ²³⁷	520.67	31.24	93.72
	Biotechnology	4,000	240	720
	Electronics Industry	179,000	10,740	32,220
	SaaS (Software as a Service) ²³⁸	4,419	265.14	795.42
	MSMEs around One District One Product ²³⁹	5,000	300	900
Total [B]				38,539.89

Table 7: Data on the Plan for Financial Recovery Over 3 Years

Summary Table

²³⁷ Projecting TN achieving 28% growth in the sector; currently at 14% employing 8 lakh persons

²³⁸ Projecting for five Rural SaaS Clusters

²³⁹ [Department of MSME, Policy Note 2021-22](#), Pg 10 of PDF; narrowing from the 10-Year Vision to 3 years

Projected Revenue Loss and Added Expenditure For Government Over 3 Years (Table 11)	₹35,333.40 crore
[A] + [B] Projected Revenue Earned Through Toddy Outlets, Palm-Based Industries & Diversified Revenue Sources	₹38,539.89 crore

Table 8: Data on the Overall Financial Implication for Tamil Nadu from the Proposed Policy Strategy

The above tables clearly reveal that the government can offset the revenue loss from the closure of TASMAC outlets through a multi-pronged strategy. **With a dedicated focus on developing the economy, even while catering to the rehabilitation needs of the dependents, the state stands to earn over ₹3206.49 crore additionally in the next three years alone.**

B. Eliminating Corruption

While the phased prohibition comes with its own revenue loss and financial implications, the state faces a greater threat of corroding finances thanks to entrenched systemic corruption. Tamil Nadu has earned infamy because of its long history of system corruption, right from the post-Independence era. In fact, the financial misappropriations have been so well documented and systematised that the term ‘scientific corruption’²⁴⁰ was coined just for Tamil Nadu’s politicians. For instance, the processes of tenders and bid management is so flawed, that anti-corruption NGOs in the state regularly file cases alleging graft in sectors ranging from civic infrastructure²⁴¹ to food

²⁴⁰ [Scroll, 2017](#)

²⁴¹ [TOI, April 2023](#)

supplies²⁴². While the ruling DMK government has cried hoarse about corruption in previous regimes, the nexus of family-run corporations still continue to drain the exchequer to the tune of several thousand crores a year. Some of the recent instances that highlight the DMK government's connivance on said corruption, or inaction on previous allegations:

1. DMK Minister Thiru Palanivel Thiagarajan in the recently leaked audio tape allegedly said that Chief Minister Thiru MK Stalin's son Thiru Udhayanidhi Stalin and son-in-law Thiru V Sabareesan together made ₹ 30,000 crore just in a year.
2. Despite being two years since the DMK Government assumed power, corruption cases involving civic projects worth crores in the Greater Chennai Corporation have made no progress. No chargesheets have been filed by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC), and the GCC's vigilance department has taken no action. Cases include the bus shelter scam (₹ 437 crore), M-sand scam (₹ 1,000 crore), and tender irregularities. Officials have not been held accountable, leading to concerns of evidence tampering.
3. In a strange case of political baptism, the same **Thiru Senthil Balaji** who was once called out as a **'collection agent' by the current Chief Minister**²⁴³ was not only accepted into DMK's fold, but also awarded two significant portfolios in the current government. This has allowed him to continue his reign as the chief collection agent for the first family of DMK with utmost devotion and dedication to the extent that he worships the Chief Minister similar to how one worships deities. Thiru. Senthil Balaji's aggressive and coercive approach towards collecting funds is an open secret and has earned him the wrath of multiple entities including the top court of this land as the Supreme Court has recently allowed for an ED probe to continue against him with respect to a cash-for-job scam. He has been known to employ strong-arm tactics, putting undue pressure on individuals and businesses to contribute to the party's coffers undermining all democratic principles. Even the most loyal media entities have been unable to save Thiru. Senthil

²⁴² [TOI, June 2021](#)

²⁴³ [New7 coverage](#)

Balaji as journalists themselves have started firing shots against the 'Karur Company's 10 rupee per bottle policy'. The twin hooch tragedy, arguably the worst and biggest since the advent of the 21st century, can be safely attributed to this deadly, blood thirsty policy. In the words of Chief Minister Thiru. M.K. Stalin, 'Corruption, Collection, Commission' can best define Thiru. Senthil Balaji and his legacy as the chief collection agent of the DMK.

While the list can go on, the immediate task of the government should be in addressing these concerns of corruption and also fixing the financial misappropriations that can in turn have a significant impact on the need to rely upon revenue from TASMACH to provide for the state. Reducing this rampant corruption by even half in would have a significant positive impact on the state's public exchequer and potentially diminish the need for revenue generated through organisations like TASMACH. This shall not only aid in redirecting money towards crucial sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and social welfare programs resulting in improved public services and an overall enhancement in the quality of life for the people of Tamil Nadu but will also aid in developing a competitive, business-friendly environment which shall in turn bring in revenue for the state. Right now, rampant corruption has allowed for a monopoly of sorts in those sectors wherein the DMK and its loyalists have a say and little to no investment in those sectors where they do not see a kill thereby resulting in the reliance upon TASMACH to meet the needs of the state.

CONCLUSION

XXIII. Conclusion

The state of Tamil Nadu has long been reeling from the aftereffects of wide-spread alcohol abuse among the youth. Recently, several youths in the state died after ingesting spurious liquor, leading to renewed debates on how to best address the issue. However, it bears noting here that the present state of affairs is relatively recent. For instance, in 1937, Tamil Nadu, as a part of the latter-day Madras Presidency led by Thiru C Rajagopalachari, was the first state in India to ban liquor. In fact, the policy was only repealed in 1971 by then-CM Thiru M Karunanidhi. Since then, a series of consequent policy decisions have resulted in the status quo today, with the state teeming with state-run liquor shops.

In turn, the proliferation of state-run liquor shops have resulted in an increase in alcoholism, and a subsequent degradation of society at large, including deteriorating public health, rising crime, domestic violence and family dissolution, among others. These pervasive issues have led to prohibition of alcohol becoming a widely-popular policy measure, with 82% of the population in favour of a total ban on the sale and consumption of liquor in the state. As such, several political parties and leaders have promised to implement a liquor ban but none has followed through.

The gulf between promise and implementation mainly stems from the profitability and revenue generated from these state-run liquor shops, from which funds are redirected to implementing other populist measures. For example, in 2022-23, TASMAC revenue hit an all-time high of ₹ 44,098.56 crore. To put into perspective, TASMAC revenue alone could fund 12.2% of the 2022-23 state budget. Due to this, while the societal consensus is for the ban on liquor, implementation of such a policy remains tricky.

However, given the gravity of the issue, and its undeniable impact on the public at large, it has become necessary to seriously consider a plan of implementation.

After thorough deliberation, we have proposed a detailed plan for the implementation of the policy, entailing a phased prohibition combined with strengthening law enforcement, public awareness programs and rehabilitation efforts.

Furthermore, we have elucidated a set of measures to mitigate or recoup financial loss resulting from the ban, mainly through the diversification of revenue sources, cost reduction, seeking financial aid and making wise investments. These measures would ensure that the state exchequer does not suffer from the closure of outlets. The total loss to the exchequer after three years, once 75% of the outlets are closed, is estimated at ₹ 35,333.40 crore, of which ₹ 33,087 crore is the lost sales revenue from the closed liquor shops, and ₹ 2,246.40 crore is the expense required for rehabilitation programs. This can be compensated through ₹38,539.89 crore of revenue from toddy outlets, palm-based industries & diversified revenue sources.

A well-planned and implemented ban could lead to improved public health, decreased crime, and a more productive workforce, ultimately resulting in long-term socio-economic benefits. This is the dharmic call for action for the well-being of Tamil Nadu and Tamizh *makkal*.

