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Status of livelihood of people after liquor ban in Bihar

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the status of livelihood of people after liquor ban in Bihar. It was conducted in three districts of Bihar eg. Jamui, Buxar and Gaya. Total 300 samples were taken for an in-depth study. Case Study was also undertaken with some respondents. Data was analysed on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In this study it was found that after the implementation of liquor ban in Bihar a problem of livelihood arose before the local people of the state, who were earlier engaged in liquor business. Since most of these communities belonged to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, it was found to be necessary to make a better arrangement for their livelihood before total ban was imposed in the state.

Keywords: *Liquor ban, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, economic status, educational status, livelihood etc.*

Introduction

Liquor ban in Bihar was one of the bold steps taken by the Nitish Government. It made many improvements in the society related to road-rage, accidents, domestic violence and other forms of violence related to women and girls. After the ban on liquor, people became free to move around without any disturbance being caused by the drunkards. In the beginning the move itself was condemned by the Opposition parties and other sections of the society because it would result in the loss of Rs. 4000 crore per year; However, in the long run it made a tremendous change in the society. Although, it is still illegally found in the state, it is hoped that as time passes, things will become better. In April, 2016, the Government of Bihar introduced the “Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act, 2016”. This was one of the bold steps taken by the Government of Bihar. The Act prohibited the production, sale and consumption of alcohol in the state. This ban was aimed at controlling

violence against women and curbing the misuse of income by men on liquor. On the popular demand of women organisation of the state and 'Jeevika Didis', the Chief Minister of Bihar promised to ban the liquor in Bihar. Subsequently, the Bihar Excise Act, 1915 was amended and Bihar Excise (Amendment) Act, 2016 was promulgated from 1st April, 2016, vide official Gazette Notification No. 1485, dated 5th April, 2016 and complete prohibition was declared within the state of Bihar. In the first step, only country made liquor was banned in the state.

After the demand for ban on every type of liquor, Bihar government completely banned all types of liquors a week later. This step by the Government of Bihar has an adverse impact on revenue also. A large section of revenue of Bihar Government was coming from liquor sale. The estimated loss due to liquor prohibition was about Rs. 4000 crores in 2016. But it was estimated that in the long run this loss would be substituted by gradual decrease in crime and illness due to liquor ban. Decline in crime and illness due to ban on liquor consumption will eventually lead to low expenditure on law and order and healthcare. Thus, this loss of revenue will be compensated through many such indirect benefits to the state and its people.

After six months of liquor ban in the state, two different studies on liquor ban were conducted by different agencies. The first study was conducted by DMI (Development Management Institute, Patna) and another was done by ADRI (Asian Development Research Institute, Patna). The study by DMI was based on a survey of 2,368 households in 5 districts. According to this study, 19 percent of households acquired new assets and 5 percent spent money on renovating their houses. The study further said that 58 percent women felt that they were given more respect and they played a greater role in the household decisions.

The second study by ADRI, based on secondary data stated that there was a 66.6 percent decline in the cases on ransom and 28.3 percent decline in murder cases. Kahle, (2018) noted that the liquor prohibition "provided women with the feeling of having a leverage to communicate their demands to their husband". From the Human Development point of view Samnta, et. al, (2017) pointed out that "liquor prohibition is an imperative step which would indirectly cause savings in the household, and these savings could be better invested into human development inputs, such as availing better educational facilities, health facilities, consuming protein and vitamin rich food and also towards some luxury expenditures". Another empirical study (Falezan, 2020) revealed that ban on alcohol "decreased expenditure on alcohol and had a rippling effect on other household expenditures and saving decisions. Prohibitions led to an increase in expenditures on nutritious food as well as education". Yet another related study indicates that there is a drastic decline in liquor consumption. Nearly 64 percent of known alcoholics have quit alcohol after the ban (Agarwal, *et.al*, 2017).

Livelihood are the set of activities essential for sustaining a life on earth. Such activities include arrangements of food, clothes, shelter, medicine etc. In Bihar after liquor ban in 2016; many people engaged in liquor business became jobless or unemployed. They were restricted to produce any form of wine in the state. In this situation a livelihood problem arose before people, especially from the downtrodden communities like: Musahars, Bhuiyans, Pasis, and Aadiwasis etc. who were earlier engaged in this business.

So, a question of alternative livelihood for these vulnerable groups were bound to come up. Because of lack of monetary backing or educational qualification, they could not set up their alternative engagement as well. Government should take initiatives to help out these communities from debt and unemployment which they are currently facing. Although this is a fact that some people are still engaged in liquor business in the state though illegally.

Objectives of Study

The main aim of this study was to find the status of livelihood of people after liquor ban in Bihar. Other objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To examine the forms of liquor business before prohibition was implemented
2. To examine the present form of livelihood of people
3. To examine the options of alternative livelihood
4. To examine the status of 'Neera' as a substitute to liquor

Methodology

In order to examine the above objectives; the study consists of both secondary and primary data. The secondary data was collected from all over the state, district and block level offices. The primary data was collected through interview schedules, participants observation, case studies, informal discussions with household members, discussions with government officers and panchayat members. Mixed research design approach– both quantitative and qualitative method was used in order to achieve the above objectives. The household survey was undertaken through a structured interview.

(i) Sample

A sample of 300 respondents including male, female and children were taken from three districts of Bihar eg. Jamui, Buxar and Gaya. Age of the respondents ranged from 18-45 years for adults and 6-12 years for children. All the samples belonged to different communities like SC, ST, OBC and General category people.

(ii) Design:

Data collection was designed at four levels: household, panchayat and State level.

(iii) Tools

- In-depth Interview schedule for the respondents
- Observation check list
- Checklist for the Case Study
- Structured interview schedule for the key informants of the districts and blocks

(iv) Data Analysis

Data analysis for the collected data was done through SPSS.

Result and Discussion:**Table1: Form of liquor business in the area**

District	Form of liquor business			
	Producer	Seller	Supplier	Others
Jamui	1.2	9.6	0.8	88.6
Buxar	5.2	14.8	15.4	27.4
Gaya	26.4	24.8	11.6	0.6
Total	10.93	16.4	9.26	38.86

Table 1 shows the form of businesses of people who were earlier engaged in liquor business. During survey it was found that most of the people were engaged in selling wine like 24.8% in Gaya, 14.8% in Buxar and 9.6% in Jamui, some people were engaged in producing wine like 26.4% in Gaya, 5.2% in Buxar and 1.2% in Jamui. Some people were engaged in supplying wine door to door or in other areas of state like 11.6% in Gaya, 15.4% in Buxar and 0.8% in Jamui.

Table 2: Present form of livelihood of people

District	Present form of livelihood					
	Agriculture	Animal husbandry	Labour	Trade	Unemployed	Others
Jamui	6.4	4.2	1.4	1	0	
Buxar	2	1.4	1.4	10.2	8.6	
Gaya	18	14.4	16.6	7.2	5.2	
Total	8.8	6.6	6.46	6.1	4.5	

From table 2 when investigating the present form of livelihood it was found that in Jamui district 6.4% people were engaged in agriculture, 4.2% in animal husbandry, 1.4% in labour, 1% in trade but none were unemployed. In Buxar 2% were engaged in agriculture, 1.4% in animal husbandry, 1.4% in labour, 10.2% in trade and where 8.6% were found unemployed. In Gaya 18% were engaged in agriculture, 14.4% in animal husbandry, 16.6% in labour work, 7.2% in trade while 5.2% were still unemployed.

Table 3: Options of alternative livelihood

District	Table 3 Options of alternative livelihood					
	Business loan	Setup for work	Migration	NAREGA job	Training and job	Others
Jamui	84.6	1.4	0.05	0.03	4.8	6.6
Buxar	79.4	0.2	0.02	0.05	0.6	11
Gaya	72.2	1.6	0.08	0.01	0.6	8.2
Total	78.7	1.06	0.05	0.03	2.0	8.6

From table 3 we find that while asking about alternative option of livelihood people actively participate in the survey. Business loan were given utmost priority by the people – 84.6% in Jamui, 79.4% in Buxar and 72.2% in Gaya. Setup of factory was reported by 1.4% in Jamui, 0.2% in Buxar and 1.6% in Gaya. Migration and NAREGA job was also reported in all the districts by 0.05% and 0.03%. Training and job as alternative option of livelihood was also reported by 4.8% in Jamui, 0.6% in Buxar and 0.6% in Gaya. These facts reveals that after liquor ban a problem of alternative livelihood has arisen in an unprecedented way before people who were earlier engaged in liquor business. So, government should take initiative to reduce this problem by launching the Alternative Livelihood Programmes in the state.

Table 4: Should Government promote Neera ?

District	Table 4 Should Government promote Neera?				
	Good initiative	Make economically strong	New alternative of employment	Good impact on people	Others
Jamui	43.4	34	9.4	6.8	15.2
Buxar	46.4	37.4	11.6	3.8	1
Gaya	51.8	37.2	46.2	13.2	8.6
Total	47.2	36.2	22.4	7.9	8.2

From table 4 we find that as an alternate of wine, Neera has emerged as a best suited option for the people of Bihar. On the one hand it will reduce the health risk involved with drinking of liquor and on the other hand it will be helpful in ensuring a better health. There are no unhealthy ingredients as far as Neera is concerned. It is rich in sugar, essential elements such as potassium, magnesium, iron, calcium, zinc, phosphorus, micronutrients, vitamin C and 12, B complex minerals and good source of ascorbic acid. In the light of these benefits, government of Bihar decided to open Neera selling centres in all the 38 districts. In Patna alone, 51 centres were set up. Out of this, some are located near the Eco-park, Sanjay Gandhi Jaivik Udyan gate no. 1 & 2, Meethapur, Ugyog Bhawan Gandhi Maidan, Saguna more and Chak Bariya Bus Stand etc. These initiatives will be good to promote Neera in the state. In the survey it was found that In Jamui 43.4% people reported that it will be good initiative for the people of Bihar, 34% said that it will make the people economically strong, 9.4% reported that it will open a new alternative for employment, 6.8% said that it's

impact will be good on the people of Bihar. Even in Buxar 46.4% people reported that it will be a good initiative for the people of Bihar, 37.4% said that it will make the people economically strong, 11.6% reported that it will open a new alternative of employment, 3.8% said that it's impact will be good on the people of Bihar. In Gaya 51.8% people reported that it will be a good initiative for the people of Bihar, 37.2% said that it will make the people economically strong, 46.2% reported that it will open a new alternative of employment, 13.2% said that it's impact will be good on the people of Bihar.

Conclusion

This study goes to show that livelihood is one of the basic needs for the survival of people. The liquor ban in the state not only took away employment opportunities from the manufacturer but others too who were suppliers or in any way related to liquor business. The total ban raised the problem of livelihood in front of the sections of people involved in liquor trade. This section of businessmen mostly include Scheduled caste and Aadiwasi community of Bihar. In order to have better business prospects, the youth from all the three districts demanded for business loan. Some also demanded to setup factories for labour work while some demanded industrial training. Others demanded business loans to be provided to set up factories, that would help restrict their migration. Job-oriented programmes should be launched to make them skillful to get the available jobs easily. Small scale industries should be setup in the districts to engage unemployed youths and women. NREGA should be implemented in best possible manner to guarantee the 100-days job in a year. Neera should be promoted to create an alternative form of employment for the youth that was desperately looking for an alternative career. Thus, in order to successfully implement the total ban on liquor in the state, government should keep these suggestions and pointers in mind, only then will the state be able to reap the benefit of total ban and it can save itself from criticism for loss of revenue that has been caused by the total ban on liquor.

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