



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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## IMPACT OF LIQUOR BAN ON SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN BIHAR

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### ABSTRACT:

*This study was conducted to examine the impact of liquor ban on scheduled caste women and children in Bihar. It was conducted in two districts of Bihar viz. Nawada and Nalanda. Total 400 samples were taken for in-depth study. Case Study was also undertaken with some respondents. Data was analyzed on SPSS. In this study it was found that after the liquor prohibition in Bihar there came about satisfactory reduction in violence against women both inside home and outside in the society. It was also found that focus on children's education also enhanced after the prohibition.*



**KEYWORDS:** *Liquor ban, scheduled caste, domestic violence, rape, children, education etc*

### INTRODUCTION :

Liquor Prohibition was one of the top most agenda of Nitish Government in Bihar. It was implemented in the year 2016. This measure was very well appreciated and accepted in the society not only in Bihar but all over India. Liquor ban in Bihar is not a new phenomenon. It has already been adopted earlier in many states like Gujarat, Nagaland, parts of Manipur and Lakshadweep as well. In Bihar it was implemented the first time in 1979 during Karpoori Thakur's regime but was later withdrawn. It was an electoral agenda (2015 Assembly Election) of Nitish Kumar which was later fulfilled by a two step plan when he came into power. First with a ban on country made liquor which was effective from April 1, followed just four days later with a total prohibition on the sale of Indian Made Foreign Liquor as well. Under the law only special courts constituted under Bihar Special Act can try the cases and confiscate properties upon whose premises liquor is either consumed or stored. As per the new liquor law those indulging in unlawful import, export, transport, manufacture, sale and possession could attract a minimum of 10 years jail term extendable upto life imprisonment besides minimum fine of Rs. 10 lakh. This new law was brought in after the High Court quashed the previous Bill on liquor ban, stating it to be illegal, impractical and unconstitutional. There was a massive protest by the civil societies, women organizations and social activists demanding ban on liquor. Banning liquor was part of the poll promise made by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar and he fulfilled his promise to appease his staunch vote bank comprising mainly of women. The major beneficiary of this decision is women of Bihar since alcoholism used to affect their life in terms of domestic violence and increased insecurities in case of death of their spouse. 99 % women are exuberant post prohibition and are highly supportive

of the ban, according to a report prepared by Gender Resource Centre. In fact this is not an easy or simple step taken by any government in their state. Whereas on one hand it annoyed the drinkers; on the other, it angered the persons involved in sale and trade of liquor business. Parties in opposition also protested against this policy of the government.

In 2016, Bihar government's estimated loss due to liquor ban came to approximately 4,000 crore rupees. Although this loss was a humongous one in the long run it was bound to be more beneficial. It is a common feeling that as much revenue as is collected from wine selling in the state, lots more than that is spent on prevention of crimes like rioting, street fighting, rape, maintenance of law and order, loss in GDP, jail management and illness due to drinking. Those supporting the Act ask a question, "Can any government collect revenue by killing it's own people through sale of hazardous items?" Hence, they all support Nitish Kumar for taking such a bold and appreciable step.

Implementation would have definitely been a difficult one but once rolled out the scheme seems to have had a great positive impact on people and the society at large. Many instances of smuggling and wrongful hoarding of liquor used to come out in the open, but efforts have been made by the administration to make the ban work for the general well being of the people. This measure is said to have been for the benefit of specially women of Bihar as it was their demand and women of the state form a solid support structure for Nitish government. Women do out number men at the polling booths and vote for Nitish in hordes. Nitish Kumar's enormous victory in the elections is attributed to the women's unflinching support for his party. So, the political dispensation understands very well the value of keeping half the population of Bihar happy and satisfied.

### **Alcohol consumption and violence against women before the prohibition policy**

In Bihar, nearly 30% of men in the age group of 15-49 consumed alcohol before the prohibition, according to the National Family Health Survey 2015-16 data. Women in Bihar, that has historically been a patriarchal society faced high levels of intimate partner violence – 40% of ever-married women aged between 15 and 49 reported that they experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their husbands during the previous 12 months. Moreover, while about 25% of women whose husbands did not consume alcohol experienced violence at the hands of their husbands, 75% of women whose husbands got drunk 'very often' experienced spousal violence. In this context, how did the prohibition policy impact such violence? What do the crime records compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau reveal?

### **Incidence of violence against women after the prohibition policy**

According to the Report, Post prohibition there is significant reduction in violence against women and girls in homes, public places and during festivals /social functions. 39 The percentage of rural women who faced physical violence dropped to 5 percent after prohibition from a high 54 percent. The percentage of women reporting economic deprivation or lack of access to financial resources have dropped from 70 percent to 6 percent. Similarly, the percentage of women facing sexual violence with physical torture came down from 17 to 3 percent. Around 67 percent addicts used to be abusive at home before prohibition but only 9 percent remain abusive after it. Cases of quarrelling with neighbourhood too came down to 3 percent from 29 percent. 73 percent said that fights and brawls under the influence of liquor during weddings have come down. 78 percent women say that interaction of men with their family members has increased as 58 percent men who earlier spent time drinking now spend time with their families. Consumption of food and non-food items has gone up by over 30 percent. Money that is being saved is being used to buy fish, meat, green vegetables, snacks, milk and other things like clothes. Money spent on acquiring new assets and renovation of homes have also seen an upward trend. In a study done by Asian development Research Institute (ADRI), 6 months after prohibition, purchase of expensive sarees, plastic goods, furniture, sewing machines, sports goods and processed food items have also seen a drastic increase. Post prohibition, 84 percent women say there are more savings and 31 percent women say there is increase in their household income. Women in large numbers appreciated the fact that men in general have become more humane and responsible and

have begun recognizing their obligations towards their families. Post Prohibition, 58 percent women exercise greater influence in household decisions and 23 percent feel their area of influence now extends beyond the household to village issues as well. Overall, there is an enhanced sense of self-worth and collective efficacy amongst women. Children who experienced mental violence and verbal abuse came down from 30 percent and 35 percent to 5 percent in both the cases. Economic violence too has dropped from 18 to 4 percent. They feel the general environment for study at home has improved as there is more peace now.

Violence against women seen through the number of recorded crimes against women has declined marginally in Bihar state and more significantly in Patna city (the state's capital) after the alcohol ban (Figure 1). To avoid year-on-year fluctuations, we compared the average of reported crimes for three years after the prohibition with that of three years preceding it (excluding 2016, as the ban was implemented halfway into the year). Excluding cases of kidnapping and abduction, which are mostly filed by women's families when they elope, crimes against women have clearly declined both in terms of rate (registered cases per 100,000 female population) and incidence (absolute numbers).

In fact; the liquor ban had helped to make women's houses a paradise. As much money used to be spent earlier on wine, that much money began to be saved now which did definitely help in improving the general household condition in the society. Poor class people did find their situation improving. It was found that women who were earlier terrified of their husbands were now becoming less fearful. Cases of accidents due to drunken driving were coming down. Kidney issues due to drinking problem were showing a downward trend. Youth were saved from deviating onto a wrong path. Women were feeling more secure while travelling out on the roads and streets. Incidents of molestation of girls, cases of rape due to heavy intoxication were found to have come down a little.

### OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The main aim of this study was to find out the impact of liquor ban on women and children. The following objectives were taken to improve their livelihood condition.

1. To examine the impact of liquor ban on women.
2. To examine the impact of liquor ban on children's education

### METHODOLOGY

In order to examine the above objectives; the study consists both of 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's officers and panchayat members. Mixed research design approach- both quantitative and qualitative method were used in order to achieve the above objectives. The household survey was undertaken through a structured interview.

#### (i) Sample

A sample of 400 respondents including male, female and children were taken from two districts of Bihar eg. Nawada and Nalanda. Age of the respondents ranged from 18-45 years for adults and 6-12 years for children. All the samples belonged to scheduled caste community.

#### (ii) Design:

Data collection was designed at Four levels; household level, panchayat level, block level 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:

**Table 1: Reduction in violence against women due to liquor prohibition**

District	Reduction in violence against women due to liquor ban						Total	
	Yes		No		DK/NA			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Nawada	196	98.00	3	1.50	1	0.50	200	100.00
Nalanda	186	93.00	9	4.50	5	2.50	200	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>95.50</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Estimated from field data

From table 1 we see that 98% people in Nawada and 93% people in Nalanda accepted that after the liquor ban violence against women has reduced significantly. Before liquor ban people wasted their money in consuming liquor and did not care of their household expenses even their children's education. After ban now they became more responsible and took care of their family. About 1.5% people in Nawada and 4.5% people in Nalanda accepted that violence against women did not reduce due to liquor ban in the state. Few respondents of Nawada district also reported that there is no effect of liquor ban in their area; because liquor is easily is easily delivered in this area and also in other area of Bihar through Jharkhand state.

**Table 2: Increase in child education due to liquor prohibition**

District	Increase in child education due to liquor ban						Total	
	Yes		No		DK/NA			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Nawada	198	99.00	2	1.00	0	0.00	200	100.00
Nalanda	184	92.00	7	3.50	9	4.50	200	100.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>95.50</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source : Estimated from field data

From table 2 we find that due to liquor ban in the state male members of scheduled caste community did not waste money in liquor consumption and took care of their family which reduced the violence against women in the family and increased child education. Now women are able to save same money for the future of their children. Table shows that 99% people in Nawada and 92% people in Nalanda reported that due to liquor ban in the state the ratio of school going student has increased. Although 1% people in Nawada and 3.5% people in Nalanda reported that there is no increase in children education due to liquor ban in the state.

### CONCLUSION

From the above study it can be concluded that social impact of liquor ban can be seen as a reduction in violence towards woman in home and society. Now people instead of buying liquor invested their money more on education and household expenses. Social cohesion increased as people used to fight earlier under intoxication. Health condition of the people also got better as prohibition

succeeded. Although the whole community is happy with the developments, they want foolproof implementation of the ban. They are concerned about the availability of ganja, toddy, tobacco, other intoxicants and spurious liquor. They want more local wage and self-employment opportunities. They also demand more recreational and educational support, greater access to education, credit, investment, health, nutrition, income opportunities and a dignified life.

Thus, it is quite clear that impact of liquor ban has been a positive one, especially for economically weaker sections of the society. It provided protection to vulnerable families against economic ruin and they have started moving towards prosperity. It has been instrumental in enhancing the status of women, both within and outside the house.

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