

CONSUMPTION OF LIQUOR IN HIMACHAL PRADESH- ANALYSIS OF TRENDS OF PAST 10 YEARS AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE STATE OF H.P

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Abstract

The consumption of liquor has long term consequences on the society and has the potential to lay waste a whole generation. The state of Himachal Pradesh being a relatively young state with median age of population around 23 years only, there is a large chunk of population with long productive age ahead of them. The 'demographic dividend', the state of Himachal Pradesh has can be encashed only when the workforce is employable and is not scathed by the debilitating effect of liquor. However, in Himachal Pradesh the consumption of liquor combined with other substance abuse is posing threat to the productivity of the whole generation. The sale and consumption of liquor is being seen largely seen in term of the short term economic gains while the long term socio-economic consequences are being largely overlooked.

Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is a hill state with a lop sided revenue-employment profile with heavy dependence on tourism and allied industry for the income generation while the agriculture and allied sectors contributing much to the employment but not much to the income of the state . Also the economic burden on state is ever increasing with the loan on the state govt reaching around Rs 50,000 Crores As per the Economic Survey 2016-17 in the FY 2016-17, Rs 1307.87 Crores were collected under head 0039-State Excise, which was 21.19 % of the total revenue generated from all sources in the state. In such a situation and keeping in mind the 'assured' income coming from sale of liquor as excise duty which constitutes a

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major chunk of the income of the state, the state appears in no position to forego this assured income by discouraging, if not prohibiting the sale of liquor keeping in mind the social adverse impacts of consumption of liquor.

In the total debate on cost-benefit analysis of consumption of alcohol, an informed discussion on the socio-economic consequences of alcohol is thwarted by lack of empirical and monetized data on long term effects of consumption of alcohol. The monetary loss caused to the society by the reduction in productive working years of an individual workman is not quantified and thus not accounted for while assessing the cost-benefit analysis of consumption of liquor. The allied consequences like crimes, road accidents, domestic violence etc are also not quantifiable and hence are not accounted for in the debate.

Objectives

The present work has been attempted with a view –

- a) To study the consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh in comparison to other states.
- b) To examine the district wise trends of consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh in past 10 years.
- c) To analyze the correlation of consumption of liquor with tourism, literacy, health effects and cess on liquor.
- d) To find out the socio economic impact of liquor consumption especially on women empowerment and suggest suitable measures in this regard.

Methodology

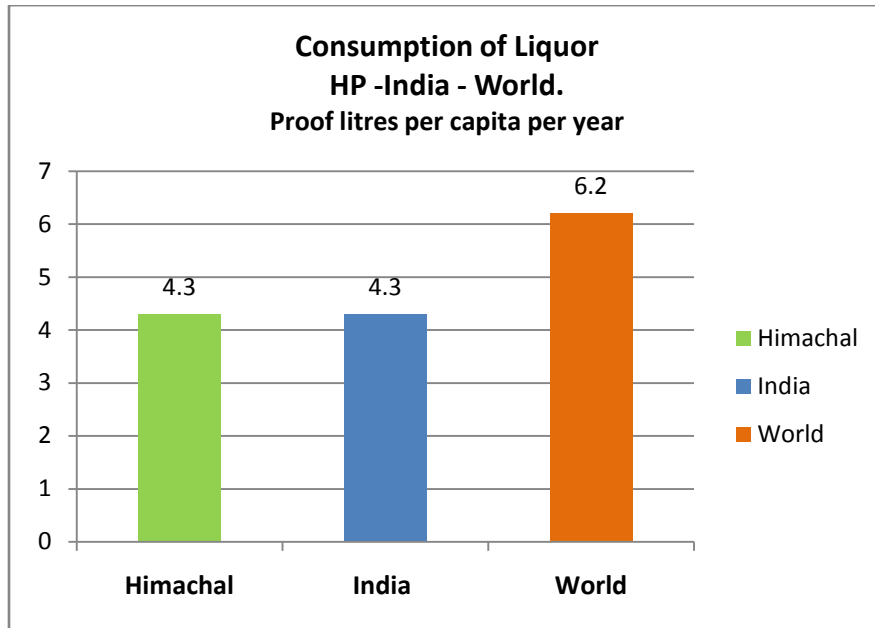
The methodology employed to conduct the present analysis is primarily quantitative in nature. It involves the analysis of documents pertaining to the Excise Department, Govt of Himachal Pradesh and making observations and inferences based on the data spread over last 10 years.

The trends of liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh over the period of last 10 years have been depicted diagrammatically and an attempt has

been made to depict the relationship between the consumption of liquor and literacy rate graphically.

While calculating the per capita consumption figures the per annum population growth rate of each district has been taken into consideration taking the 2011 Census figures as the reference.. To keep the calculations simple, it has been assumed that there has been uniform population growth in all the 10 years.

Figure 1: Consumption of Liquor-Himachal Vs India Vs World.



Source –WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol 2014

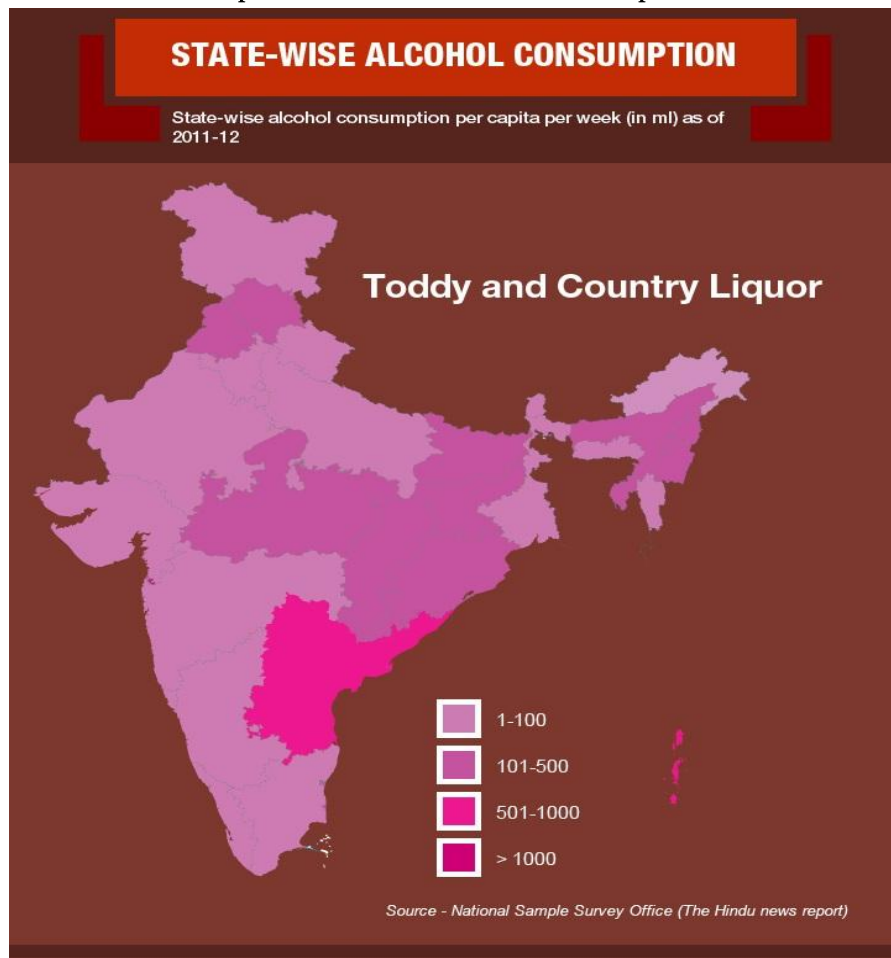
Though per capita consumption of liquor in Himachal is almost comparable with that in the country (4.3 proof litres per capita per year), it is much less as compared to the global average (6.2 proof litres per capita per year)

While the per capita liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh is almost similar to that of the country as a whole but in the state of Himachal Pradesh the consumption of country made liquor as percentage of total consumption is much more than other states of country.

However, the quality of liquor consumed is also a factor that must be considered while analyzing the social impact of the consumption of liquor.

In Himachal Pradesh, the tribal areas have a lot of consumption of local made liquor and no figures of this consumption are available. In areas of Lahaul & Spiti, Kinnaur and Bharmaur, the people brew the local liquors made of cereals and females also consume it especially during the social festivals and marriages etc. The quality and purity of these local brews is always questionable.

Map 1: State wise Alcohol Consumption



The above representation shows that Himachal Pradesh is one of the states having per capita per week consumption of country liquor (in ml) above 100 ml. This puts Himachal Pradesh among the state with total liquor consumption above the national average.

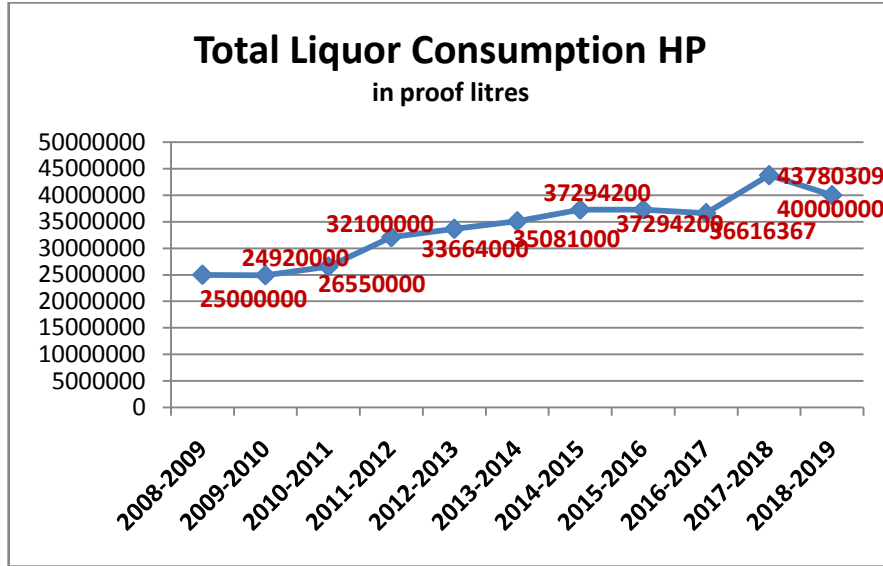
Map 2: Total Liquor Consumption



Himachal Pradesh has the per capita per week consumption of Beer, Imported Liquor and wine above 100 ml which is highest among highest among the north Indian states including Panjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Liquor Consumption in Himachal Pradesh – trends in last 10 years.

Figure 2: Total Liquor Consumption



The total liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh in the year 2008-09 was 2,50,00,000 Proof litres however in the year 2018-19 it has been increased to 4,00,00,000 proof litres (an increase of 60 %).

From the analysis of the cumulative figures of alcohol consumption in the state of Himachal Pradesh, it is apparent that the consumption has indeed increased by 60 % in last 10 years from the analysis it's clear that there has been a continuous increase in liquor consumption except in the year 2016 and 2018 where they has been a decrease in the liquor consumption. However to make the data more meaningful per capita consumption has to be analyzed.

This increase has been more marked after the year 2010-11 after which there has been a continuous increase in the consumption of liquor in the state.

There has been a sudden spike in the per capita consumption of liquor in year 2017-18, however this appears to have stabilized or saturated in the next year.

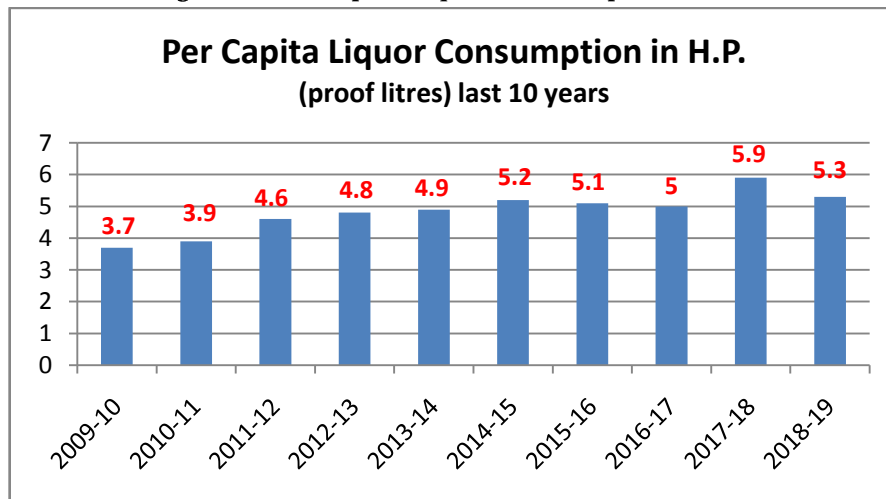
Here, it must be noted that the above figures are maintained by the excise department and is only about IMFL and Country liquor. There is no record available about the actual production and consumption of local spittits like Chhang, Angoori, Singsing, Chulli etc.

Per Capita Consumption of Liquor in Himachal Pradesh

To take into account the effect of increase in population on increase in alcohol consumption, we must examine the per capita consumption figures over the last 10 years.

The per capita consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh has increased almost synchronous with the increase in total liquor consumption with the per capita liquor consumption of 3.73 litres per person per year in the year 2009-10 increasing to 5.32 litres per person per year in the year 2018-19

Figure 3: Per Capita Liquor Consumption in HP



The analysis as depicted in above figure still shows that the per capita consumption has also increased around 50 % in last 10 years.

Thus it is quite evident that the total consumption of alcohol in the state and total per capita consumption in the state have increased.

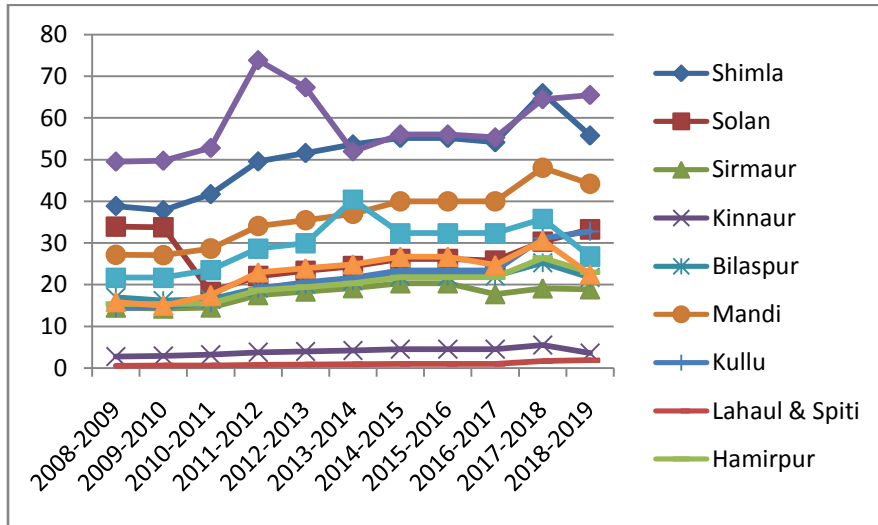
There has been a sudden spike in the per capita consumption of liquor in year 2017-18, however this appears to have stabilized or saturated in the next year the increase in per capita consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh to the tune of long 50% in last 10 years can be attributed partially to increase in per capita income.

The increase in per capita liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh has been more profound for the year 2017-18 where the per capita liquor consumption figure rose by around 20% to reach 5.9 proof litres per person per year from the figure of 5 proof litres per person per year in year 2016-17.

District Profile of Alcohol Consumption in Himachal Pradesh

The districts of the state of Himachal Pradesh have different social configurations with a varied array of social factors determining the consumption of alcohol.

Figure 4: Total Consumption of Liquor In Various Districts of Himachal Pradesh-



The district Kangra has shown the largest consumption of alcohol in the state with levels increasing from 49.5lac proof litres in 2008-09 while

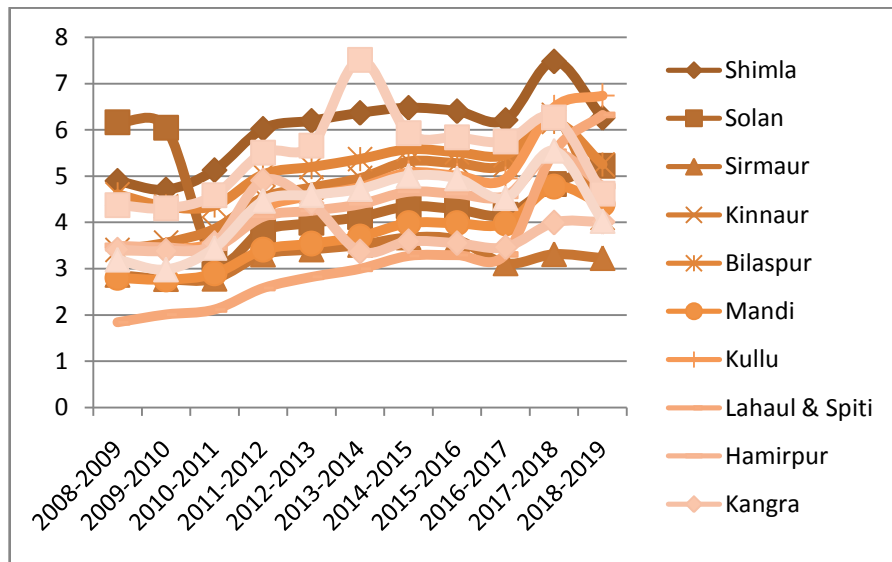
recording 65.5 lac proof litres in 2018-19. There was noted a sudden spike in liquor consumption in year 2011-12 in district Kangra.

The district Lahaul & Spiti has shown the lowest consumption of alcohol in the state with levels increasing from 58,000 proof litres in 2008-09 while recording 1.89 lac proof litres in 2018-19. This is largely due to predominant consumption of locally made spirits. There was noted a sudden spike in liquor consumption in year 2011-12 in district Lahaul & Spiti.

However, this analysis must be seen in the light of the fact that some of the districts like Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti and Shimla have much higher consumption of local made liquor which is not reflected in the figures available from the excise department.

Further to make the data more meaningful, per capita consumption of liquor in the various districts must be analysed.

Figure 5: Per Capita Consumption of Liquor in Various Districts of Himachal Pradesh-



Per Capita Liquor Consumption in Districts of Himachal Pradesh in the last 10 years.

The analysis of per capita consumption of liquor in various districts of Himachal Pradesh shows that the district Shimla has shown almost continuously the highest per capita consumption of liquor (average of 6.61 proof litres per person per year) among all the districts.

The district Una has shown the highest per capita consumption figure during any year in the last 10 years figure of 7.51 litres per person in the state during any year in the last 10 year period.

However, the district Shimla has been almost throughout been leader in per capita liquor consumption except the year 2009-10 and 2013-14

District Shimla with highest per capita consumption of liquor 'The Tourism Connection'

Analysis of the per capita liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh for the last 10 years shows that the district Shimla has shown the highest per capita liquor consumption in 7 out of 10 years with average per capita consumption of 6.61 proof litres per person per year over 10 years.

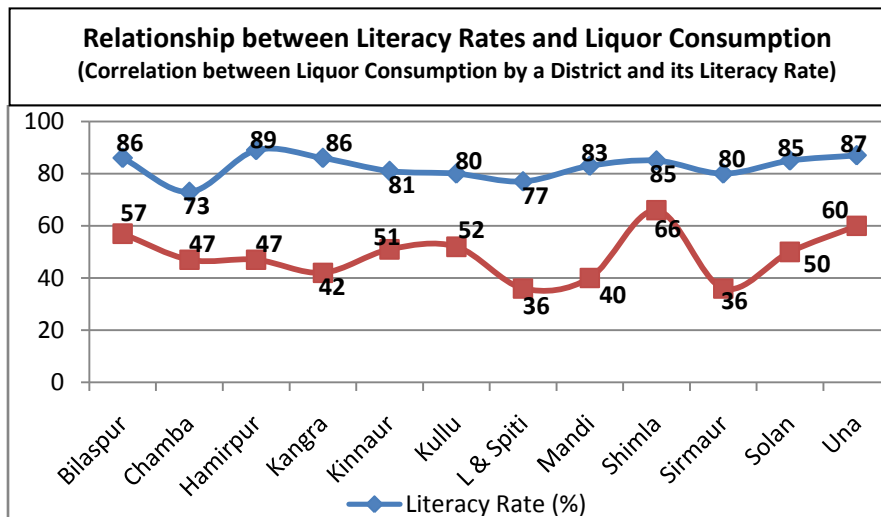
From the analysis it is apparent that this fact is due to the high footfall of tourists in the city of Shimla leading to highest per capita consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh in district Shimla .

Shimla town is a prominent weekend destination from tourists from adjoining areas of Chandigarh, Panchkula ,Ambala and even Delhi .This leads to a higher per capita consumption of liquor in the district of Shimla especially during the summer season. This fact is also true for other districts like Kangra and Kullu but the effect of incoming tourists is more prominent in the district Shimla.

Needless to say there is a spike in the consumption of liquor in the tourist districts of Shimla and parts of District Kullu and Kangra during the months of April to July as during these months there is a very high inflow of domestic as well as foreign tourists. Also the months of December and January witness an increase in consumption of liquor in the tourist towns for the reasons as discussed above.

Further the total consumption of liquor in the tourist districts of Shimla Kullu and Kangra do not represent the liquor consumption by the citizens of Himachal Pradesh as there is a substantial number of tourists resuming this liquor and hence the figures must be seen accordingly.

Figure 6: Relationship between Consumption of Liquor and Literacy Rates CAUSE and EFFECT..??



There is a very interesting correlation between liquor consumption by the populace of a district and its literacy rate.

The following inferences can be made from the examination of the above graph –

- I. On perusal of the literacy rates of the districts of Himachal Pradesh as compared to their per capita liquor consumption, it is clear at there is a definite correlation between the two.
- II. For example the district Shimla has highest per capita liquor consumption while it also has higher literacy rate. This somehow indicates that ‘illiteracy’ is not a definite factor leading to the consumption of liquor.
- III. From the Examination of the above graph it is Apparent that as the literacy rate increases the consumption of liquor also increases this

may be due to the reason at high literacy rates brings higher employment, higher income and thus higher expenditure on liquor.

In Himachal Pradesh –

Consumption of Liquor in a District \propto Literacy Rate of a District

(Positive Proportional Relationship)

- IV. Similarly the districts with lower literacy rates have relatively lower consumption of liquor which indicates that literacy rate is definitely a factor deciding the consumption of liquor but not in inverse relation, as one normally expects.
- V. This indicates that the literacy rate is connected to the liquor consumption and the liquor consumption is connected to the literacy rate. Though in a 'direct relation' and not in 'inverse relation'
- VI. One believes that with a decrease in the literacy rate there may be increase in liquor consumption, however the above graph suggest otherwise.

Predominant Consumption of Country liquor in Himachal Pradesh- the health effects

On analysis of liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh with respect to the type of liquor consumed, it is clear that the consumption of country liquor is much more than the consumption of India Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL).

Following are the figures of average consumption of country liquor and Indian made foreign liquor in the various districts of the state of Himachal Pradesh Hindi.

Table 1: District Wise Consumption of Liquor

District	Total Liquor Consumption During the years 2008-09 to 2018-19 (Minimum Guaranteed Quota) in lac proof litres	
	Country Liquor	Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL)
Shimla	328.48	217.87
Solan	152	144.53
Sirmour	108.5	86.27
Kinnaur	15.69	24.42
Bilaspur	126.27	96.97
Mandi	243.25	158.4
Kullu	87.96	152.21
Lahaul & Spiti	3.3	8.62
Hamirpur	133.45	98.33
Kangra	381.56	250.89
Una	176.58	138.82
Chamba	138.36	87.68
Total for the State	1895.4	1465.0

The analysis of the above table clearly shows that all the districts in Himachal Pradesh the consumption of country liquor is much more than that of Indian made foreign liquor also known as branded liquor except in the districts of Kinnaur, Lahaul & Spiti and Kullu.

This anomaly may be due to the fact that country liquor is already prepared locally in these districts and thus the demand and consumption is mainly for the foreign liquor.

The consumption of country liquor as a percentage of total liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh is much more than other Northern Indian states probably due to easy accessibility and lower cost of the country liquor as compared to the India Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL).

The above facts imply critical implications on social health parameters as the country liquor (Desi Liquor) is of relatively poor quality.

Quality of Liquor Consumed in Himachal Pradesh and the socio-economic effects of poor quality alcohol

Angoori (a local grape wine from Kinnaur region), moori (local apple wine from upper region of Shimla Kullu Kinnaur), Aara (famous local drink from Lahual and spiti), Chhang and lugdi are some of the different forms of alcohol beverages that are freely brewed, distributed and consumed at home without any restriction.

In Himachal Pradesh, the higher consumption of country liquor as compared to IMFL in Himachal Pradesh has critical implications on the public health and resultant socio-economic costs due to poorer quality of country liquor, precipitating diseases like Liver Cirrhosis, Kidney failure and Blindness, thus increasing increased health burden.

Table 2: Comparison of Liquor Consumption in Himachal Pradesh compared to North Indian states -

State Wise Comparison of Liquor Consumption in North Indian States		
Liquor Consumption (%)		
State	Men	Women
Himachal Pradesh	37	1.8
Chandigarh	36.3	1
Panjab	34.9	0.7
Haryana	20.2	0.6

District Health Survey-4, 11,874 Households in Himachal surveyed.

The state of Himachal Pradesh, also known as Dev Bhoomi or the land of gods, has shown a higher percentage of population consuming liquor. It has the highest number of men and women consuming alcohol in the northern region, higher than Punjab, reveals the district-level health

survey (DLHS)-4 conducted under the Union ministry of health and family welfare for 2013.

The survey, says 37% of Himachal's men and 1.8% women consume alcohol. Though the number for women remains relatively low, Lahaul and Spiti district has the highest number of woman drinkers in the region. The high consumption of liquor in HP is due to easy availability and accessibility. At a lot of places it is locally made and there is little restriction on brewing. The state has a cold climate too, which contributes to it.

Contribution of Rs 1 from the sale of each bottle of liquor-

(गौ वंश विकास सेस)

The government of Himachal Pradesh through the state budget 2018-19, announced to levy Rs 1 cess (to be called 'Gau Vansh Vikas Cess' on the sale of every bottle of liquor to generate revenue for the maintenance of gaushalas (cow shelters) in the state.

Certainly the excise duty and other allied taxes/cesses/charges (including the latest levy of Rs 1 .per bottle for running of Gau Sadans in the state) levied on the sale and consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh constitutes a major source of income for the government.

It is always debatable whether the imposition of such cesses only promotes or discourages the consumption of liquor. Though, the financial implications in terms of revenue generation from source step would be minimal as this would generate additional Rs 6.5 Crores. This cess may however provide some potential drinkers a 'solace' or a sense of justification and thus draw them into the fold of drinkers.

However there is a need of a responsible brainstorming over the overall long term impacts of loose regulation of liquor consumption on the social economic conditions of the state.

Socio-Economic Impacts of Consumption of Liquor in Himachal Pradesh

A productive debate on liquor consumption and its socio-economic consequences have been largely thwarted by improper understanding of the long term and abstract effects and an unwillingness to debate on compromising an assured income of the government in form of excise duties.

The socio-economic consequences of liquor consumption which are true for the rest of the country are also applicable for Himachal Pradesh, more so, the effects are potentiated as the state of Himachal Pradesh has a developing economy with inadequate health coverage, an almost non—existent social security net and the majority of population (90%) which still lives in rural hinterland, more prone to the ill socio-economic effects of consumption of liquor.

The explicit and implicit impacts of the consumption of liquor on the society are worth considering and must be taken into account while having discussion of ‘regulating’ if not ‘banning’ or ‘discouraging’ the consumption of liquor in this hilly state.

Alcohol use is related to wide range of physical, mental and social harms. A number of studies have attempted to calculate the cost of alcohol to society.

This is tricky for two reasons.

- I. First, because many of the costs are difficult to estimate accurately.
- II. Second, because there is significant debate around which types of cost to include.

The link between alcohol consumption and consequences depends

- a) On the two main dimensions of alcohol consumption: average volume of consumption and patterns of drinking; and

- b) On the mediating mechanisms: biochemical effects, intoxication, and dependence

**The following are explicit social impacts of consumption of liquor-
Socio Economic Benefits of Liquor Consumption in Himachal Pradesh**

The socio-economic consequences range from increase in crime rate to hike in out of pocket expenses on health in longer term.

1. Rise in crime rate

The consumption of alcohol leads to breakdown of moral conditionings leading to social crimes like sexual assaults, sabotage of public property , caste related crimes, road rage incidences etc.

These impacts of consumption of liquor are often underrated and not taken into account while debating the pros and cons of consumption of liquor.

The crimes related to consumption of liquor are particularly severe in areas where the business of illegal and country made liquor is prevalent. In bordering areas of district Kangra abutting the state of Panjab are particularly vulnerable to the crimes like smuggling of liquor etc.

2. Loosening of Family Cohesively

Alcoholism and non-addicted alcohol abuse can have a widespread impact on the health of the family units in Himachal Pradesh..For example, decades of research document the two-way connection between alcohol problems and marital/relationship strife. Specific relationship issues associated with the presence of alcoholism and alcohol abuse include:

- Poor communication between partners/spouses
- Interpersonal conflict between partners/spouses
- Domestic violence between partners/spouses

In addition, partners and spouses of alcoholics and alcohol abusers have heightened risks for stress-based health issues.

3. Effect of liquor consumption on Social Utility and Employability of Youth in Himachal Pradesh

The social effects of alcohol use are well-known. People under the influence of beer, wine or liquor tend to experience a decreased sense of personal inhibition. They also tend to act more impulsively and have a reduced chance of considering the consequences of their behavior. Harms associated with these changes include:

- Heightened levels of aggression and violence
- Increased participation in unprotected sex and other risky activities
- Unplanned pregnancies
- Increased risks for victimization through sexual or physical assault
- Alcohol poisoning
- Increased chances of dying accidentally

4. Absenteeism and lost productivity at work

The cost of alcohol-related worker absenteeism is actually greater than this if lost productivity in the workplace is also considered. If an individual has consumed more alcohol than their body can metabolize before they begin work or school, they may still be intoxicated the following morning and performance is likely to be affected.

5. Increase in proneness to other addictions like substance abuse and drugs etc.

The persons addicted to alcohol are much more likely to fall prey to the lure of other addictions of substance abuse like cannabis, synthetic drugs etc. The moral and psychological defence of an alcoholic person is too weak to resist the temptations for such substances.

6. Rise in Road Accidents including road rage and dangerous driving

As the state of Himachal Pradesh being an attraction for tourists from all parts of the country especially the northern Indian states of Panjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan with huge inflow of tourists during special occasions like New Year eve, Christmas and snowfall etc. These crowds involve in celebrations in various tourist towns like Manali, Kullu, Shimla, Dharamshala, Dalhousie etc and these celebrations involve consumption of liquor. There is no surprise that during the above festival seasons a spike in road accidents and law and order complications like brawls on the streets, sabotage and vandalism of public property.

This not only vitiates the otherwise peaceful environs of the state but also causes economical loss to the state. There is some unauthorized sale of liquor in rural hinterland beyond the reach of law enforcement set-up. Some rural areas of the state witness mushrooming of unauthorized outlets like kiosks etc where liquor is sold in retail.

As well as injury and death from motor vehicle accidents caused by alcohol consumption there is damage to the cars and property, the costs of law enforcement and prevention (which may include road design), and the costs of administrating the insurance system. (There are also costs in the resulting travel delays).

7. Domestic violence

As discussed before, the consumption of liquor leads to breaking of moral conditionings. Further, the intemperate behaviour caused by liquor consumption is manifested in form of domestic violence with the majority of victims being women and children.

8. Loss of employability/working potential of the working class

The addiction to liquor affects the employability of the youth and working class. The working days of the year of a teetotaler are substantially more than that of a habitual drinker. This has serious effects on the economic interests of the state with relatively lower per capita income than the national average.

9. Increased out of pocket expenditure on health in longer term

In the state of Himachal Pradesh, numerous efforts have been made by the governments to provide health services to the masses through state sponsored health insurance schemes.

However, a large population has still been left out of this health safety net and as a result there are substantial out of pocket expenditures made by the patients. This has been aggravated by the increase in health problems associated with consumption of liquor.

10. Stagnation/ Decline in living standards especially of people near poverty line

The living standards of population spending a substantial part of their income on liquor are relatively lower than those spending little or no part of their income on consumption of liquor.

The Effects of Alcohol Consumption on Women in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh has different tribal regions with the total population of around 3 lacs. The tribal culture prevalent in these areas also sometimes includes community drinking and consumption of country liquor by women. This as a part of the social environment has social acceptance. The percentage of women consuming liquor as a percentage of total population is much more in these tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh than the rest of the state. This has corresponding consequences on the health status of these women

Alcohol affects women differently than men. The effects of alcohol are stronger in women than in men, and women who drink too much alcohol are more likely to suffer from significant alcohol problems than men, studies show. In addition, women who have alcohol problems have higher death rates due to suicide, accidents, and other health related issues — more than twice the rate of men.

Pro Active Role of Women in H.P. who Banned Liquor in Their Villages

When we take account of the biggest victims of liquor consumption, the women of the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh are the ones hit hardest. They are left with little income to be spent on education, health and basic lifestyle. They sometimes lose their breadwinners to liquor and thus they have to fight for their livelihood and basic needs. Of course, it takes time for any visible social change but the liquor ban is a result of the struggles of many people to put pressure on the government. A lot of families were ruined and lots were sociologically and economically struggling with liquor habits. Therefore women of villages in H.P have also started to ban liquor in their areas. Lady Pradhan of village in Mandi district pledged in Gram Sabha to levy fine on the person whoever will be found drunk or is serving alcohol. They have announced community ban on consuming and serving alcohol in the village. Whosoever did has to pay fine of Rs. 10,000/-. Women are strongly standing for the concern and making community followed sincerely.

There are many undercover villages of Himachal Pradesh where Women under Mahila Mandals or in forms of SHGs are actively participating in banning the liquor in the villages. But they are also afraid of getting shifting of liquor shops into their villages.

Impact of Orders of Supreme Court on Sale of Liquor and the Consumption of Liquor in Himachal Pradesh

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its orders dated December 16th, 2016 ordered that all liquor vends within 500 mtrs from National Highways shall be removed. This order had the potential of reducing the crimes and road accidents caused on highways due to drunken driving.

However, the resultant effect of the orders of the court has been rather minimal as the court itself later placed the city vends out of the purview of this ban and further the stakeholders getting affected by the orders found their ways to bypass the orders. There have been instances of re-

designation of highways to obviate the implementation of the orders of the Hon'ble Court.

Efforts to control road accidents by shifting licensed alcohol bar from state and a national highway inside 500 meters is appraisable. But simultaneously this is again leading to major atrocities that now 500 meter range will be direct into a village population which will lead to more alcohol consumption. Socialization is an important component of grooming our society, but if children will see every day alcohol outlet in his village then for him it will be a regular routine work which has its acceptability and nothing is wrong in consuming it.

In fact in alcohol and drug rehabilitation or detoxification one of the major things which is preached to avoid elapse is to keep away the alcohol or drug to which the person is addicted. The person being re-habilitated is not allowed to attend any sort of gathering which has alcohol or drug. But moving of drinking bars and shops inside the community may affect rehabilitation work.

Effect of Social Acceptability/Customs on Alcohol Consumption in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh is a land of thousand customs with around 3 lacs of population belonging to tribal areas. There are folk customs prevalent in some areas of Himachal Pradesh which involve consumption of alcohol and other locally prepared spirits at the congregations of people to celebrate their fairs and festivals.

Liquor consumption in various forms has always been culturally and socially acceptable particularly among adult in the state of Himachal Pradesh. Further, the liquor consumed in these customary ceremonies is mostly country made liquor and has potentially harmful health effects.

Angoori (a local grape wine from Kinnaur region), Moori (local apple wine from upper region of Shimla Kullu Kinnaur), Aara (famous local drink from Lahual and spiti), Chhang and lugdi are some of the different forms of alcohol beverages that are freely brewed, distributed and consumed at

home without any restriction. If we see historically the patterns of liquor consumption has evolved constantly, and from ceremonial or occasional use, it has become a regular part of life style.

Conclusion

A thorough analysis of the trends of consumption of liquor in Himachal Pradesh through the figures reported by the excise department clearly indicate increase in the absolute amount of liquor consumed as well in per capita consumption of liquor.

It is apparent that the per capita consumption in Himachal Pradesh is increasing almost continuously for the last 10 years with the district Shimla having the highest per capita liquor consumption while the district Lahaul and Spiti having the least per capita liquor consumption. The tribal districts of Lahaul & Spiti, Kinnaur and Pangi sub division of Chamba has high consumption of local made liquor which is completely left out of the figures reported by the excise department and hence the above figures presented must be seen in the light of the consumption of this local liquor. The district Kangra has the highest liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh almost throughout the last 10 year period.

Also on examination of the figure of liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh seen with the literacy rate of the districts, there appear no clear relation between illiteracy and liquor consumption. The figures show that there has been around 60% increase in liquor consumption in Himachal Pradesh in the last 10 years. The impacts of alcohol consumption are manifold, and it is not practical to list them all. But it can be safely said that the loosely regulated and somewhat encouraged consumption of alcohol has slow but serious socio-economic consequences for the state of Himachal Pradesh, especially the increasing health costs.

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