CONCLUSION

Alcoholic drinks had been in use in Tamil Nadu from Sangam period. Deriving revenue from alcohol was also old. The Cheras, Cholas, Pandyas and Pallavas had imposed tax upon liquor products. The British also found that the revenue from liquor was a sound source of income. Hence it regulated the liquor business in Tamil Nadu.

The first important regulation was implemented in the year 1802. In the year 1858, the crown directly assumed power; but the same liquor policy was continued. In 1886, for effective excise system, the Akbári Department was created. Rules and regulations were formed and these who violated them were punished.

From the financial year 1923-24, the Abkári Department was known as Excise Department. It issued licences and controlled the production and consumption. But basically there was no change in the administrative system.

In the mean time, the Indian National Congress preached prohibition. The evils of drunk reached the ears of the people. The native newspapers also propagated the evils of drinking. Hence agitations and picketing of the liquor shops was resorted by the people, under the leadership of Indian National Congress. Women took a leading role in the agitations.
In order to pacify the people, the Government announced temperance. The people were for total prohibition. But the government was not ready to loose the revenue, hence total prohibition was not implemented.

In 1937, when the Congress assumed power, it implemented prohibition in Salem district. Later it was extended to North Arcot and Coimbatore districts. The partial prohibition itself was a grand success. Many people changed their profession. Their life standard improved. The toddy tappers, who were especially belonged to the Nadar Community, changed their position. As a result of that the particular community become one of the well-advanced communities in Tamil Nadu. As the prohibition improved the condition of the people they expected total prohibition. But the British Government checked the cry for total prohibition.

The Government clearly knew that their liquor policy affected the people, their culture, their health, wealth and morality. But they hesitated to take steps to obviate that evil. The reason was that they apprehend some loss of revenue. They might have to bear the welfare of the ruled in their mind even if there was a loss in revenue. They must make up their mind to make good, the loss by some other means. Speaking soothing words would do little good while desisting from undertaking prohibition on the plea of the revenue going down.

It was lamentable that though Excise had long been made a transferred subject little change had been achieved. Excise Ministers had been criticised by the people and none of them had satisfied them. The reason was that they had not laid down a constructive programme and worked for that.
What was the use of preaching against drunkards while maintaining liquor shops in public places and near villages? There was a government order that the Health Department should not deliver lectures on drinking. From that it was clear that the Government was not willing to carry out prohibition whole-heartedly. The Government, which was responsible for the good of the people, should not hesitate in the least to order prohibition of drink. Unfortunately, the British Commercial Government, which aimed at making profit from the colonies, would never be prepared to make the sacrifice that affected their revenue. No propaganda or other such means would be able to put down the drunken evil. Only by means of closing the shops, it could be achieved. Otherwise, the people would be slaves of alcohol.

If the government was really intended to carrying on propaganda in favour of total prohibition, should not the committee, which they were appointing in this connection, be known as the Prohibition Committee? It was, on the other hand, known as the Temperance Committee. The Government was declaring that its aim was to implement prohibition within twenty years. But steps were taken for promoting drink. The Government did not check advertisements related to the inducement of drinking habit.

Why the Government appointed Temperance Committee? Whether it had real intention to reduce the drink habit of the people? The answer was a ‘no’. They had the fear that if they did not take such steps, the Indian National Congress would mobilize all the people against the Government. Hence, as a preventive step they played such tricks.
People thought that only ‘swaraj’ was the solution for complete prohibition. As a result of continuous effort under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, India got independence in 1947. The people hoped that total prohibition would be implemented, but contrary to their expectation, it was not so.

Regional parties assumed power in Tamil Nadu since 1967. After that liquor shops were freely allowed. At present, there is no prohibition. Liquor is freely available. The present Government is also not worrying about the ruins made by liquor. It is also raising revenue from alcohol. Now also the people, especially women, demand for the closing of liquor shops. The Government is declaring that it will lead to illicit production and consumption.

The present Government is also following same temperance methods. It asked the Breweries and Distilleries to print the following sentence in the bottle: “Liquor consumption is injurious to health.” It is printed in the ‘Indian made Foreign Liquor’ bottles. But what is the use. There is a heavy rush in the liquor shops.

Another steps taken by the government is the ban of liquor advertisement. It is no use at all. Instead, it is a blessing in disguise. The liquor companies used this ban to their advantage by using surrogate advertising for products like mineral water and soda, which also generated additional revenue for the company.
Many of the road accidents of the recent years have happened due to drinking under intoxication. Mass death due to the consumption of illicit liquor is also happened frequently.

Hence, if the Government is willing to protect the welfare of the people, it should implement total prohibition.