WOMEN ALCOHOLICS

The attitude of women towards alcohol and alcoholism is quite intriguing and puzzling. One of the common questions raised is, do women realize that alcohol causes damage to them much more than it does to the male alcoholic? There is a popular belief that at least some women appreciate male alcoholism and associate with manliness. But the present study has shown that this is not true, as many women interviewed had bitter experiences with their alcoholic husbands and that they consider alcoholism as the major cause for the loss of domestic peace.

It is evident from the study that children and women are engaged in alcohol trade especially in the illicit alcohol market. There may be various reasons why girls and women are preferred in alcohol trade. Unemployment and cheap labour may be the reasons. Experience has shown that women in illicit brewing/distilling are also caught in the dragnets of law enforcing authorities. Women accused, when they are not handled by women police, face unbearable hardships and untold insults and insinuations. Hence a study into the law enforcing authorities who handle women accused, is needed.

Why are girl children and women employed in the marketing of illicit liquor? This is due to the fact that they easily escape from being caught. With hardships and insults surrounding them always, this is an example of how an
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It is evident from the study that children and women are engaged in alcohol trade especially in the illicit alcohol market. There may be various reasons why girls and women are preferred in alcohol trade. Unemployment and cheap labour may be the reasons. Experience has shown that women in illicit brewing/distilling are also caught in the dragnets of law enforcing authorities. Women accused, when they are not handled by women police, face unbearable hardships and untold insults and insinuations. Hence a study into the law enforcing authorities who handle women accused, is needed.

Why are girl children and women employed in the marketing of illicit liquor? This is due to the fact that they easily escape from being caught. With hardships and insults surrounding them always, this is an example of how an
Indian woman is exploited in the male prescribed territory. The sufferings she endures while getting involved in illicit trade is basically for satisfying the needs of men.

Alcoholism is a social evil. This habit is not confined to men alone. Women are also found to be taking alcohol. In general, in India, alcoholism is considered to be common among men. But this is not true. There are problem drinkers and habitual drinkers among women also. When we study how man’s alcoholism affects women, it is also necessary to study how women too have become direct victims of alcohol.

To find out how alcohol has affected women as direct victims it is necessary to study whether the women in the fishing hamlets drink and if so, how often. Hence an attempt was made to study the frequency of consumption of alcohol among the women in the target group.

Table 45  **Frequency of Drinking among Women**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Drinking</th>
<th>No. of Respondents (n :504)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study shows that 60.8% women in the fishing hamlets have taken alcohol. Of these 2% said that they take alcohol often, 3.8% said they consume
alcohol occasionally and 55% said that they have consumed it rarely. But in
spite of the prevalence of drinking among men, 39.2% women said that they
have never consumed alcohol. One can come to the conclusion that drinking is
not common among women in this community, and the 2% is negligible
compared to the 87.1% of men who are regular consumers of alcohol.

The data available should not be ignored because except for the 39.2% women who have never consumed alcohol, there is always the potential danger of turning into a confirmed alcoholic. Studies have shown that curiosity and occasional drinking have pushed many into the habit of drinking. Further, there is every possibility that the 2% increases. Hence, no doubt, there is a need to check alcoholism among women too. Though the women do not form the high risk group in the coastal fishing hamlets of Kanyakumari District, steps should be taken to curb this habit among women.

While talking about alcoholism among women one has to take a factor very seriously. Though as disease alcoholism does not make any difference between the sexes, it has been found that there are some differences on how quickly women develop the disease. If a man and a woman take the same quantity of alcohol, the damage it causes to a woman is three times faster. It is also a fact that the stigma around a woman alcoholic is much greater than around men. Taking our society into consideration it is much harder for a woman to admit that she has a problem of alcoholism than it is for a man to admit. Consequently, the death rate from alcoholism, and the health problems they suffer are higher than it is in men who have alcoholism. In short, it is
more difficult to bring around a woman for treatment and so the damage caused to a woman alcoholic is in all ways greater.

Alcohol abuse can ruin the life of the alcoholic as well as the life of those around the alcoholic. When a woman becomes an alcoholic her condition becomes very pathetic, because, in a society like the fishing community where even for other diseases, she doesn’t get the required attention, she is not likely to be treated for alcoholism. Her problems are all the more great if she is in reproductive stage as it involves a lot of risk to the unborn child of a drinking mother. Foetal Alcohol Syndrome which may occur when pregnant women consume alcohol, is the major known environmental cause of mental retardation and because of the mother’s addictive habits many babies are born with physical and mental disabilities. We must take alcoholism very seriously as it “is a disease that can destroy individuals physically, mentally, and spiritually, affecting anyone close to the alcoholic. It is cunning, baffling, and powerful”.

Women in the fishing hamlets of Kanyakumari district do not have much social contacts like men as most of them confine themselves to their homes taking care of their domestic duties. In the absence of socialization, it is essential to find out how the women in the fishing hamlets get introduced to alcohol. The cause for the initiation may be varied for the women. We should analyse whether it is the husband or any other man in the family or society or a woman who is responsible for introducing the drinking habit in the life of a woman.
Table 46  Persons Prompting Women to Drink

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person prompting to Drink</th>
<th>No. of Respondents (n:306)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men in the society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Man, after consuming alcohol usually tempts or even compels others to take alcohol. Out of the 306 women who said that they have taken alcohol either rarely or occasionally or often, 97.4% said that it is their husband who offered them alcohol. It is not under the scope of the present study to analyse why the husband instigates the wife to taste alcohol. But at the same time it is a matter of concern that for 97.4% of women who have tasted alcohol, the husband was responsible for introducing them to alcohol. It is indeed a new dimension of how women especially the wives are affected due to male addiction.

With poverty and hunger looming large over the family and usually the male member wasting money on liquor, it is essential to look at what type of drink the woman takes when she develops the habit of taking alcohol.
Diagram 16

Type of Alcohol Consumed by Women

- Arrack: 3.6%
- Toddy: 1%
- Arishtam: 40.2%
- IMFL: 89.7%
Table 47 Type of Alcohol Consumed by Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Alcohol</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrack</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arishtam</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMFL</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>412</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The total exceeds the sample size as there are more than one answer given by the respondents

**Null hypothesis** There is no significant difference among the kind of alcohol consumed by women

**Hypothesis** There is significant difference among the kind of alcohol consumed by women

Since the calculated $\chi^2$ value (470.36) is more than the table value of $\chi^2$ 0.05 (7.815), the null hypotheses is disproved. Hence the hypothesis 'There is significant difference among the kind of alcohol consumed by women' stands proved at 5% level of significance for 3 degrees of freedom.

Quite strangely, unlike men, women (89.7%) have a fancy for the high quality liquor that is IMFL. As stated earlier in the case of men the preference is for Arishtam (71.1%). Only 40.2% of women have a liking for man's favourite drink Arishtam.
This also points to the fact that as the woman has fancy for costlier liquor, the drain on the family budget is likely to be severer. This does not come under the purview of the present study, but still it is a matter of concern because, when a woman in the fishing hamlets of Kanyakumari District takes to the habit of drinking the consequences are likely to be devastating, as most of the families are already impoverished due to male alcoholism. It must be noted with anguish that in the social set up, woman is the centre of the family and any damage caused to her mental or physical health is likely to have far reaching consequences, especially on the girl children in the family.

This study points to the fact that by and large the alcoholic husband is indifferent to the health problems of the wife and the health of the wife does not get the deserved priority in the family agenda. It can only be a reality that if a woman turns an alcoholic in such a society, she does not get the chance to be treated for alcoholism and that various health problems developed due to alcoholism may not get the required medical attention.

It is evident from the present study that in general women are not habitual alcoholics like men. But there is always an attempt to initiate women into drinking. One of the myths prevalent in the coastal hamlets is that alcohol is good for women who have just delivered babies. Hence liquor is given as part of postnatal care. But that is not the only reason for women taking alcohol. So the interviewees were asked when they take alcohol.
Diagram 17

Occasions of Women Consuming Alcohol

- Festivals: 66.9%
- Family Functions: 41.9%
- Delivery: 20%
- Normal Days: 14.7%
- Never: 22%
66.9% of interviewees said that women take alcohol during festivals. 41.9% said that women take alcohol during family functions. What they mean by festival is various religious festivals they celebrate and also the local church festival. 20% said that women are given alcohol as part of postnatal care. 14.7% interviewees said that women take alcohol even during normal days, only 22% said that women never take alcohol. The investigator understands that alcoholism is not a great problem among women though many women have consumed alcohol on different occasions. But it is not uncommon for women to take alcohol during festivals and family functions.

Table 48 Occasions of Women Taking Alcohol

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occasions</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festivals</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family functions</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal days</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The total exceeds the sample size as there are more than one answer given by the respondents.

**Null hypothesis**
There is no significant difference among the occasions when women consume alcohol

**Hypothesis**
There is significant difference among the occasions when women consume alcohol
Since the calculated $\chi^2$ value ($238.36$) is more than the table value of $\chi^2$ 0.05 ($7.815$), the null hypothesis is disproved. Hence the hypothesis ‘There is significant difference among the occasions when women consume alcohol’ stands proved at 5% level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom.

How do women behave if they get drunk? Is fighting under the influence of liquor quite characteristic of men alone? It is quite essential that we study how women behave when they become direct victims of alcoholism. The women have a lot to complain about the behaviour of men in public once they get drunk. But, one must find out whether, as alcoholics women also become a public nuisance. When the question whether women fight with other women or men when they are drunk was asked only 8.7% respondents said that women too indulge in fighting when they are inebriated. It is evident from the reaction of the women that, though not common, women too at times become the cause for public nuisance when they get drunk.

Table 49 **Women Fighting with Men/Women when Drunk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether Women Fight</th>
<th>No. of Respondents (n = 504)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>91.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WOMEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS ALCOHOL AND ALCOHOLISM

Studying woman as the victim of man's alcoholism is analysing a highly complicated issue. Women in general are aware of the impact of alcoholism on society, family, especially wife and children. But many a woman is incompetent to detect he habit of the husband till he becomes a problem drinker. Many reasons can be given for the woman's ignorance of the alcohol paraphernalia, but it remains a sad fact that woman's inability to detect the habit of husband at the initial stage aggravates her problems as a victim. Men go on duping women as many do not have the ability to comprehend alcohol paraphernalia. To check addiction of man and the consequent oppression of women, the woman should be able to detect an addict. This may be by looking at the behaviour of a person who is under the influence of liquor or the smell or any peculiar contacts and company. Taking matters to the public is not the way to fight addiction in the family. At least that should not be the first step. The woman should succeed in counseling him once detected to be an alcoholic. Earlier detection helps to save a person turning into a confirmed alcoholic. It is always ideal to save a person in the initial stge itself as the damage caused is minimal. But how many of the women in the coastal fishing hamlets have the competency to detect and counsel men who have the habit of taking alcohol? So the investigator wanted to find out how many of the women interviewed have the ability to detect an addict.
Table 50  Ability to Detect an Addict

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to detect</th>
<th>No. of Respondents (n :504)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>76.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23.4% of the women interviewed said that they cannot detect an addict. This shows that at least in 23.4% of homes, the wife becomes aware of the habit of the husband only after he turns into a problem drinker. Usually it is very late by the time the wife detects. Whether they can detect or not, once the society detects a person as an alcoholic, how many women have the ability to counsel an alcoholic. This is very important because that is the first step in the society's attempt to save alcoholics.

The ability to detect an addict will not solve the problems of a woman who is an indirect victim of alcoholism. She should have the ability to handle the husband who becomes a problem drinker. It requires great professional competency to counsel an alcoholic and one cannot expect such a competency in the women of the coastal fishing hamlets. But it is worth finding out whether the women interviewed have the confidence that they have the ability to counsel an addict. What they claim as their competency to counsel may not come anywhere near the professional counseling offered by any of the agencies involved in the fight against alcoholism. But what women claim as their ability can be taken as a sign of their confidence to handle the problem drinker.
The interviewer with the view to understand this level of confidence in women asked the interviewees whether they can counsel an addict.

Table 51  **Ability of Women to Counsel an Addict**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can Counsel an Addict</th>
<th>No. of Respondents (n:504)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

70.4% women interviewed confessed their inability to counsel an alcoholic. But it was heartening to find that at least 29.6% women claimed that they can counsel an addict.

Once the wife comes to know of the habit of the husband she naturally should adapt her life to the situation. This does not mean that she should submit herself to whatever humility she is subjected. Naturally, the reaction of women to addiction of the husband, when his habits are revealed to her, should make an interesting study. There are women who said that they have always hoped that their husband would one day stop drinking whereas there are some out of dejection say that it does not make any difference whether they now stop drinking or not as all the damages are already done.

Indian society is by and large fatalistic. It curses the fate for any suffering. Putting the blame on fate very often serves as an escapist tactic. This attitude towards the alcoholism of the husband is likely to do a lot of damage to the wife and induce her to accept her sufferings with complacency.
This may also serve as a deterrent to her attempts at corrective measures. The wife is often tempted to withdraw into herself and be a silent sufferer. This helps the alcoholic husband to take the upper hand and suffering of the wife goes unchecked, unquestioned and unmitigated.

It is therefore essential to find out the reaction of the wife to the addictive habit of her husband and how she accepts alcoholism of the husband. Hence an attempt was made to find out the reaction of the wife to the alcoholism of the husband.

The study revealed that 16.2% of the women interviewed just accepted alcoholism with passivity as they believe that they are helpless. But 78.4% of the women said that they tried to correct their husbands. But the interaction with them revealed that attempt to correct was almost synonymous with advising or quarreling. It was this attitude that aggravated their sufferings very often as this serves as the cause behind tensions in the family of the alcoholic.

In a male chauvinistic society, what the woman thinks as her attempt to correct the husband is taken as the wife’s interference in the freedom of the husband. This ultimately becomes the root cause of domestic violence, wife battering and physical, mental and sexual torture of the wife. 3.9% of the interviewees said that they tried to counsel their husbands. They have tried in fact to advise their husbands either directly or through elders in the family or the parish priest. But only 0.9% of the women tried to correct their husbands through treatment and 0.6% tried to rehabilitate.
Table 52 Level of Acceptance to Husband's Alcoholism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Way of accepting the habit</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passivity</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tried to correct</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsel</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Null hypothesis**
There is no significant difference among the ways in which wives of alcoholics accept drinking habit of their husbands.

**Hypothesis**
There is a significant difference among the ways in which wives of alcoholics accept drinking habit of their husbands.

Since the calculated $\chi^2$ value (967.56) is more than the table value of $\chi^2$ 0.05 (9.488), the null hypotheses is disproved. Hence the hypothesis 'There is a significant difference among the ways in which wives of alcoholics accept drinking habit of their husbands' stands proved at 5% level of significance for 4 degrees of freedom.

It is a matter of concern that only 0.9% of women have attempted to correct their husbands through treatment. There are many reasons for this. Many of the women are aware of the fact that alcoholism is a disease that can
be treated with medicines. Even if they know that treatment is a remedy, it is
difficult to coax the husband to accept treatment. In Kanyakumari District
there is no Government hospital that has trained personnel or beds or wards for
the treatment of alcoholics. Though there are some private hospitals offering
this service, they are too expensive for the people of the fishing hamlets. Only
“Thiruppumunai”, a service wing of Kottar diocese, offers the treatment
affordable to the people of the fishing hamlets. All the churches in the coastal
fishing hamlets belong to this Diocese but “Thiruppumunai” in spite of its
commitment has not succeeded in catering to the needs of such a vast area.
Hence there are some practical difficulties for women to take their husbands
for treatment.

But it is evident from the study that the women realize that man’s
alcoholism causes a lot of damage to them. The women in the coastal fishing
hamlets find it difficult to accept the addictive habit of the husband, as
addiction is not common among women. Girija Khanna and Mariamma A
Varghese observe, “The tolerance of wives of their husbands’ drinking has
relation to whether they themselves drink or not. If they drink, the approval
rate is doubled. Over 25% of the women in the upper socio-economic strata
drink, against 9% in the middle and 5% in the lowest strata. For upper class
women drinking is a matter of fashion. Because of the popularity of social
drinking among the urban rich, women not only approve of drinking but often
drink in company.”

It is a sad fact that many women bear the torture and other
consequences of male alcoholism in silence and do not share with anyone in
I the society. As Derek Rutherford puts it in his talk "An important part of the explanation of the neglect of family alcohol problems is that those who experience them typically suffer in silence. These problems are also embarrassing and inconvenient for society at large."

**WOMEN AND GIRL CHILDREN IN ALCOHOL TRADE**

It is a known fact that in India, especially in a society like the people in the fishing hamlets of Kanyakumari District, it is mostly the men who are alcoholics. It is men who dominate the liquor trade. Women are made use of in the liquor trade, especially in brewing/distilling and sale of illicit liquor. In illicit liquor trade there is the risk of being caught by the police. Girl children are often preferred in this as they may escape the suspicion of the law enforcing authorities. Hence the investigator probed into this aspect of alcoholism.

Illicit alcohol trade is not an isolated business. It is rather a network. There is always the risk of being caught by the law enforcing authorities and punishment, if proved to be guilty by court of law, is severe. But the profit in this trade is rather lucrative. Hence, in spite of the threats of legal action, many still carry on the illicit liquor trade. When we look at the incidents of legal action on illicit liquor brewing / distilling we understand that even women are involved in this.

The investigator wanted to find out who were all involved in illicit liquor trade.
Table 53 **Persons Involved in Brewing / Sale / Buying Liquor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Work</th>
<th>Girl Children</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brewing / distilling</td>
<td>2 (0.4)</td>
<td>379 (72.9)</td>
<td>392 (75.4)</td>
<td>37 (7.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale of Illicit liquor</td>
<td>288 (55.4)</td>
<td>395 (76.0)</td>
<td>401 (77.1)</td>
<td>364 (70.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buying Liquor</td>
<td>343 (66.0)</td>
<td>396 (76.2)</td>
<td>405 (77.9)</td>
<td>388 (74.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Null hypothesis**  There is no significant difference among the type of persons involved in brewing/sale/buying of alcohol.

**Hypothesis**  There is significant difference among the type of persons involved in brewing/sale/buying of alcohol.

Since the calculated \( \chi^2 \) value (477.85) is more than the table value of \( \chi^2 \) 0.05 (12.592), the null hypotheses is disproved. Hence the hypothesis ‘There is significant difference among the type of persons involved in brewing/sale/buying of alcohol’ stands proved at 5% level of significance for 11 degrees of freedom.

It is indeed sad that there is exploitation of women in the field of brewing and selling illicit liquor. Women are used in brewing or distilling (0.4% girl children, 72.9% women) and 55.4% said girl children are used in sale of illicit liquor and 76% said women are employed in the sale. 66% women said that girl children are asked by men alcoholics to buy liquor and 76.2% said that women are used by men for buying liquor.
This naturally makes us ask the question why girl children and women in large number are involved in brewing / distilling / sale of illicit liquor and buying it. We have to ask whether women get involved in the production and sale of illicit liquor as they would take part in any other trade in the society or whether illicit liquor trade is another field where women are exploited. We should also verify whether there are risks involved in the women taking part in liquor trade. One of the reasons for involving girl children in illicit liquor trade is that they will very easily escape the suspicion of the law enforcing authorities. Further it is comparatively easier to coax girl children as they are not likely to show much resistance. Though lucrative income is one of the major causes for luring women, illicit liquor trade is a field where we witness exploitation of women. How much of pain and suffering girl children and women experience need to be studied.

This study also revealed that girl children (66%) are used by men to procure IMFL from the open market. It is a known fact that children who are used to procure alcohol for the adults have a tendency to smell it and subsequently taste it. The data makes us think that it is very common that girl children are used by the fathers or other elders in the family to get alcohol. Such girls are exposed directly to bad role models and they have the risk of experimenting with alcohol.

**WOMEN IN ALCOHOL TRADE AND LEGAL ACTIONS**

Are women caught in the net of the prohibition implementation and law enforcing powers? If so how are they treated? Who arrests them? Does a
woman get a decent treatment if she is arrested on a prohibition offence? One should know whether getting involved in prohibition offences becomes another cause for women to be oppressed.

Law requires that anyone involved in brewing / distilling / selling illicit liquor be taken to the police station and, being a criminal offence, then to the Magistrate’s court who remands them to custody. Depending upon the seriousness of the offence, there will be delay in getting bail. It is a cumbersome legal process and hence the investigator wanted to find out how many and how frequently women were caught by law enforcing authorities in prohibition offences. 41.9% of the respondents said that they knew instances of women being taken to the police station in connection with prohibition offences. It is necessary that we enquire into how women prohibition offenders are handled by the law enforcing authorities. It must be analysed whether they are treated with dignity. Many interviewees said that whenever the law enforcing authorities conduct a raid, women also get caught along with men.
Diagram 18

Authorities Arresting Women Prohibition Offenders

Men police: 6.1%
Women police: 0.9%
Enforcement: 83.4%
Excise Department: 97.6%
Table 54 Women Taken to Custody in Connection with Prohibition Offence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidence of women taken to custody</th>
<th>No. of Respondents (n:504)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In India there are many laws regarding handing women detenus and who and when they should be arrested. In spite of this, there have been complaints of women being even sexually abused by law enforcing authorities. Law prevents men police arresting women, that too after sunset and detaining them in lock up. Hence it is necessary to find out the details regarding the arrest of women caught in prohibition offences.

Table 55 Who Took Women Prohibition Offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency taking women prohibition offenders</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men police</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>97.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women police</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibition enforcement wing</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>83.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excise department</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>396</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The total exceeds the sample size as there are more than one answer given by the respondents.
**Null hypothesis**  
There is no significant difference among the authorities who take legal action on women prohibition offenders

**Hypothesis**  
There is significant difference among the authorities who take legal action on women prohibition offenders

Since the calculated $\chi^2$ value (343.13) is more than the table value of $\chi^2_{0.05}(7.815)$, the null hypotheses is disproved. Hence the hypothesis 'There is significant difference among the authorities who take legal action on women prohibition offenders' stands proved at 5% level of significance for 3 degrees of freedom.

There are rules regarding the arrest of women and to uphold the dignity of women, only women police are empowered to arrest and make searches on women. But this is not followed on many occasions and the general complaint is that women caught on charges of prohibition do not get that treatment which women are entitled to.

Hence, the investigator wanted to find out who took away the women prohibition offenders. Only 6.1% of women said that women police took women offenders away. 97.6% of the respondents said that it was the men police personnel from the local police station who took them away. 83.4% of the respondents said that Prohibition Enforcement Wing took the women away. It is clear that by and large, women involved in prohibition offences are arrested and interrogated by men law enforcing officials in spite of the repeated hue and cry against this practice.
When women involved in illicit liquor brewing and sale, there is no legal mechanism to handle them with exclusively women police. They are arrested and prosecuted by men police only. This very often violates the liberty and right of the woman. In the absence of any study being conducted as to how women offenders under prohibition law are treated, one is constrained to suspect that all can not be well with the system from the point of view of women’s rights. Urszula Nowakowska states,

We all know fundamental human rights standards such as right to life, liberty and security of persons, freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. They are stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and later repeated in the legally binding international human rights conventions and national constitutions. We all know that universality of human rights means that everybody is entitled to all fundamental human rights and freedoms without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language or other status. Nobody questions that. In practice, however, many violations of human rights that are specific to women have not, for a long time, been recognised as human rights violations. Most women’s human rights violations are gender-based, and numerous forms of discrimination or abuse occur only because the victim is female. Women’s human rights are violated in a variety of ways. Women are subjected to rape and sexual abuse by soldiers, police, employers and family members and other violent acts which infringe upon their rights to liberty and security and their right to life.

The suffering and pain for women in the coastal fishing hamlets of Kanyakumari District come not from the alcoholic husband alone. There are many factors that do a lot of harm to them. They are constrained to put up with the alcoholic habit of men, not because they approve of it, but because they feel helpless. As the study shows they accept the habit of the husband with passivity. Social and economic situations are such that they get involved in the production and sale of illicit liquor. When law-enforcing authorities
apprehend them, very often they do not get the treatment which law guarantees. This clearly shows that the woman is always the victim of male alcoholism.

No study is complete without analysing women’s legal rights and this is very much true when we discuss eradication of alcoholism. This is discussed in the next chapter.
FOOTNOTES

1 <http://static.highbeam.com/>

