SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

Alcoholism creates socio-economic problems, family problems and health problems in the social fabric. After noticing the destructive nature of alcoholism, several social workers and statesmen have suggested the banning of alcoholism from society in the past. Even during the Independence struggle, Indian elite has fought for the total ban of alcohol. The Independent India too enshrined in its Constitution the diabolical effects of alcoholism and suggested that the State shall endeavor to bring about prohibition.

However, alcoholism has spread into every nerve and sinew of the society in India. Several times prohibition was introduced in India and every time the prohibition failed. In Andhra Pradesh too, the prohibition was introduced several times earlier. At present again, the prohibition was under implementation in Andhra Pradesh since January 1995.

For the success of prohibition, police, excise and judiciary act only as three fillers. Even if these three work sincerely the success of it cannot be guaranteed.
Because the most important filler is people's co-operation. The peoples co-operation, here means, the compromise of chronic alcoholics, habitual alcoholics and casual alcoholics in their habits of alcoholism and deny themselves of the alcohol. The compromise of these groups depend on the coping strategies adopted by them to face the prohibition. If they accept the prohibition as positive aspect in their lives and society then the prohibition is expected to succeed, and if otherwise, the prohibition is bound to fail.

The coping strategies adopted by alcoholics may be either positive or negative. The negative strategies may be to overrule prohibition and continue the alcoholism and the positive ones may be to follow prohibition sincerely. Even in adoption some alcoholics may adopt few positive strategies and others may adopt strategies detrimental to the success of prohibition. Unless both positive and negative strategies of the alcoholics are properly understood, it is difficult to evaluate the success or failure of prohibition and the reasons therefor.

The present study is taken up with this aim by taking 'habitual alcoholics' as the subjects of analysis. Chronic alcoholics and casual alcoholics are excluded from the study for reasons specified in the Introductory Chapter. The main objective of the study are : 1) to trace the history of alcoholism, 2) to understand the concept of prohibition
and its implementation in India, 3) to trace the background behind the introduction of prohibition in Andhra Pradesh, 4) to understand the different coping strategies adopted by society to the situation of prohibition and 5) to suggest measures for inculcating the different coping strategies among habitual alcoholics to make the prohibition a success.

To understand the adoption of coping strategies an empirical study is conducted with a sample of 100 respondents. The sample are drawn from three villages in Anantapur district. For want of secrecy the villages are not identified by names. To elicit the opinions on prohibition and to understand the coping strategies, a schedule has been specifically designed, pre-tested and canvassed among the sample. The major areas that have been covered in the schedule are the socio-economic background of the household and the drinking patterns of the habitual alcoholics, the issue of alcoholism, prohibition and the coping strategies adopted.

ALCOHOLISM

Alcoholism may be referred as the consumption of alcoholic beverages including toddy, country made liquor, government supplied cheap liquors and Indian Made Foreign Liquors (IMFL) and beers. Drinking alcoholic beverages has a
very long history dating back to the earliest human civilization.

There are three major categories of etiological theories in alcoholism and they are biological, psychological and socio-cultural. Alcohol consumption adversely affects human health, creates socio-economic problems for the family and the individual and also effects social, moral, cultural and ethical facets of the humane society.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN ANDHRA PRADESH

In Andhra Pradesh, the consumption of alcohol has increased substantially in recent decades. The number of arrack shops has increased by more than two times between 1969-70 and 1991-92 i.e., from 7,159 to 16,507 shops. The arrack consumption has also doubled by more than two times between 1975-76 and 1990-91. The beer consumption also increased by two times between 1977-78 and 1990-91. The IMFL shops have increased by four times and its consumption by six times during the same 12 years.

PROHIBITION

Prohibition is introduced time and again in India to curb the ill-effects of alcoholism. Various methods of
controlling the drink traffic for common people were tried at different times with varying degrees of success. The early British has interlinked liquor consumption with excise revenue and its policy was one of the temperance and of restricting the consumption of intoxicating drinks. The true prohibition movement in India in the modern history can be traced along the independence movement against British. In 1920 prohibition was adopted as an essential part of the constructive programme under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Comprehensive prohibition laws were enacted in 1937 by various governments of different provinces. The economic position of British due to Second World War has made the programme a short lived.

During different plan periods both Central and State Governments have adopted prohibition as their important policy initiative. But time and again prohibition failed due to several reasons. Each of the State has played the game of 'introduce and lift' of prohibition.

PROHIBITION IN ANDHRA PRADESH - THE RECENT HISTORY

By 1990-91 Andhra Pradesh occupied first rank in the country in arrack consumption with 111 million litres per annum. New innovations were made to maximise the liquor vending. Government production of cheap liquor, auctioning
of liquor shops, supply of liquor in small sachets, giving a mythological name 'Varuna Vahini' to liquor sale are only a few to name.

The social evil of alcoholism reached the shape of 'social devil'. Only a spark is awaited for the society to react and to develop the 'peoples policy' of prohibition. This was made possible by most unexpected source of inspiration. An Adult Education Programme called 'Akshara Jyothi' was the first fillip. A rebellion was started against alcoholism in an unknown village called Dubagunta in Nellore district and spread to entire Andhra Pradesh like a wild fire. The movement started spontaneously. The prevailing social, economic and political factors have all contributed for the success of the agitation. In response to this, the then Government prohibited the arrack from October 1st, 1993. The complete prohibition, except toddy, was announced by the Government in December 1994, followed by the Ordinance implementing complete prohibition from December 29th, 1994 and it came into implementation from January 17th, 1995.

COPING STRATEGIES AND ALCOHOLISM

Coping strategies in the present context refer to the methods adopted by 'habitual alcoholics' in becoming
'non-alcoholics'. A person allowed access to alcohol, and who has become habitual alcoholic has been forced to become a non-alcoholic through prohibition. In general, there are innumerable coping strategies that are adopted by social workers, psycho-therapists and physicians in dealing with their subjects. Chronic alcoholics are dealt with suitable coping strategies at clinical level. But in the case of habitual alcoholics, no clinical supervision is involved. A habitual alcoholic has to adopt his own coping strategies to live in the realm of prohibition i.e., forced non-alcoholism.

For the purpose of the present study, the identification of the coping strategies adopted by the habitual alcoholics has been done in the following manner. Different methods adopted by the respondents have been enlisted initially and the same have been synchronised into eleven coping strategies. The eleven strategies derived in our study are control, optimism, escape, welfare, action, interpersonal, fatalism, perseverance, intellectual denial, restrain and drawing strength from adversity.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE VILLAGES

All the three sample villages are geographically medium size villages. Only very little forest is reported in the sample villages. Rice, groundnut and orange are the
important crops grown in these villages. Agriculturally, by Rayalaseema standards, one is developed to average level, second to below average level and the third to above average level. All the three villages have agriculture and agriculture labour as the main occupations. Very little secondary occupation opportunities are reported in these villages. The villages are multi-caste villages. The population of them represent moderate literacy levels.

PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

In our sample, 30.0 per cent are from Scheduled Castes, 2.0 per cent to Scheduled Tribes, 50.0 per cent to Backward Castes and the rest 18.0 per cent to Other Castes. About 72.0 per cent of the households of the respondents are nuclear and the rest joint families. The sample provides fair representation to different age groups, with more than two-fifths representation to the age group of 31-50 years. About 60.0 per cent of our sample are literates. Level of literacy is far less among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respondents as compared to Others. Eighty per cent of the respondents are married and are living with their spouses. About 10.0 per cent belong to the category of unmarried and the rest 10.0 per cent are either widowed or separated.
Nearly 50.0 per cent of the respondents are living in thatched houses, and further worse, another 10.0 per cent are living only in huts. The percentage of respondents living either in thatched houses or in huts are more among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Castes as compared to the respondents belonging to Other Castes. About 46.0 per cent of the respondents have official electricity connection, 28.0 per cent depend on non-official connection of 'line to bulb' method, 10.0 per cent depend on neighbours for their household electricity needs and the rest 16.0 per cent have no power connection.

As many as 40.0 per cent of the respondents are agriculturalists and 38.0 per cent are agricultural labourers, 10.0 per cent depend on sheep rearing and the rest 12.0 per cent depend on mechanism, tailoring, driving and artisan activities for employment.

The land distribution between respondent households are very skewed. Nearly 42.0 per cent of the respondents are landless. The distribution of land is awkwardly skewed in favour of Other Caste respondent households. The average value of household and other assets owned by the respondent households are Rs.5,800. This asset structure is also skewed against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The asset component consists of 13.6 per
cent in the form of agricultural implements, 10.8 per cent in household articles, 31.2 per cent in ornaments, 40.1 per cent in livestock and 4.3 per cent in others.

The average income of the households of the sample respondents was Rs.16,095 per annum. The average household income was Rs.11,463 in the case of Scheduled Castes, Rs.8,231 for Scheduled Tribes, Rs.17,200 for Backward Castes and Rs.21,667 in case of the households of Other Castes. About 35.0 per cent of the sample are living below the poverty line and, of them, four respondents are leading the household with less than Rs.6000 income per annum.

About 87.0 per cent of the respondents are in debts. All the 30 households of the Scheduled Castes and both the respondents of Scheduled Tribes are in debt. As compared to this, 82.0 per cent households of the Backward Castes and 77.8 per cent households of the Other Castes are in debt.

ALCOHOLISM AMONG SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

All the 100 of the sample respondents are 'habitual alcoholics'. One-fourth of our sample have become alcoholics before they entered their 20th year. More than
one-third of the respondents have become alcoholics for the first time, after they crossed 25 years of age. About 38.0 per cent of the respondents have been initiated to alcoholism when their age was between 21 and 25 years. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respondents have been initiated to alcoholism at an early age as compared to Backward Caste or Other Caste respondents.

Festivals have been the first occasion for two-fifths of the respondents for their initiation to alcoholism. Elections have been the next culprit in introducing 22.0 per cent of the respondents to alcoholism. Marriages, post-harvest seasons and deaths are the other occasions that initiated many respondents to alcoholism. Festivals and marriage occasions had more crucial impact among Scheduled Caste respondents (73.2 per cent) in becoming alcoholics as compared to Others.

About 52.0 per cent of the respondents had friends and 22.0 per cent had relatives as company on the first occasion of their alcohol consumption. Mostly relatives have been company for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respondents in their initiation to alcoholism.

Only 22.0 per cent of the sample respondents are reported to have below five years of practice of habitual
alcoholism and, sadly, 14.0 per cent have been habitual alcoholics for more than 30 years. Others are habitual alcoholics for a period of between 5 and 30 years. Caste is playing a very crucial role in the length of alcoholism and Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respondents have more age of alcoholism.

Twenty six per cent of our respondents are everyday consumers of alcohol. As many as 48.0 per cent consumed alcohol once or twice in a week, 3.0 per cent once in a fortnight, 11.0 per cent once in a month and 12.0 per cent rarely.

IMPACT OF PROHIBITION ON FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

The everyday consumers were 26.0 per cent in our sample before prohibition and their percentage declined to 16.0 per cent after prohibition. The 'once or twice in a week' category of respondents have increased from 48.0 per cent to 54.0 per cent. The respondents of 'once in a month' or 'rarely' has declined considerably. Only 12.0 per cent of the habitual alcoholics have completely stopped consuming alcohol after prohibition. Which means, only 12.0 per cent of the sample have adopted the strategy of 'control' fully and few others adopted partially.
As many as 56.0 per cent of the respondents have expressed that there is no change in the frequency of alcohol consumption after the introduction of prohibition. About 14.0 per cent have expressed that frequency of their alcohol consumption has decreased substantially, while the other 18.0 per cent have said that the consumption frequency has decreased but not substantially after prohibition.

About 88.0 per cent of the respondents have said that 'country made liquor' is available at Rs. 60 to Rs. 70 per litre at present as compared to pre-prohibition sale price of Rs. 55 per litre. The average price of normally consumed IMFL brands has almost doubled at present as compared to pre-prohibition prices of the same. Which means, perseverance strategy was adopted and paid more and still consumed alcohol by a majority of the respondents.

About 84.0 per cent of the respondents have revealed that liquor is available within the village, though prohibition is there. Mostly IMFL users are depending on nearby towns for their brands of liquor.

Though nobody agreed that they are making alcohol, in 18.0 per cent of the respondent households the present researcher has deserved something or other connected to alcohol making. Which means, few households are producing
alcohol at least for their own consumption and few are producing to sell it within the village indicating the adoption of perseverance strategy by many.

FEAR AND PROHIBITION AND COPING STRATEGIES OF THE RESPONDENTS

The frequency of the police and excise staff visits to the sample villages has increased substantially after the introduction of prohibition. Even the frequency of police and excise staff visits to the sample households has also increased considerably at present as compared to pre-prohibition days. The strategy of 'intellectual denial' is adopted by few and stopped consuming alcohol and few others have reduced the frequency of alcohol consumption due to the police pressure. However, majority are continuing the alcohol consumption by adopting different strategies in procuring alcohol. This group considered to be adopting 'perseverance strategy'.

IMPACT OF PROHIBITION AND COPING STRATEGIES

About 38.0 per cent of the respondents have concurred with the statement that 'social standing is better for a non-alcoholic compared to an alcoholic'. Which means, this many may have adopted 'welfare strategy' to face prohibition while considering the social status. About 15.0
per cent considered the economic benefits to families due to prohibition and seem to have adopted 'welfare strategy'. But for many, the economic position of their families have ruined due to higher cost of alcohol at present as compared to pre-prohibition days. This group mostly consists of IMFL consumers.

In general about 24.0 per cent of the respondents have agreed with the statement that 'quality and quantity of food consumption has improved due to prohibition'. Among Scheduled Caste respondents, 40.0 per cent have agreed that the food consumption has improved due to prohibition. Further, about 22.0 per cent of the total respondents have agreed that 'clothing and consumption of soaps, oils etc has been better in the households due to prohibition'. Even in this context, more percentage (40.0) of Scheduled Caste respondents have agreed to this statement as compared to others. All this gives scope to infer that, whatever money the Scheduled Caste people used on alcohol would normally go to food, clothing and other household expenditure, if there is prohibition.

About 15.0 per cent of the respondents have reported some economic benefits due to prohibition. Six of the respondents have purchased new assets like bullocks, bullock carts, sheep and land. Three released their assets
from mortgage and another three reported that they have cleared the old debts and three more reported that, they would have borrowed money if there is no prohibition. Which means prohibition is viewed positively by few respondents, which according to them, has helped in better social standing, food quality, clothing, and availability of household articles. This adoption of welfare strategy is more pronounced among Scheduled Caste and Backward Caste households.

ADOPTION COPING STRATEGIES AS EXPRESSED BY SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

For the momentary relief from desire for alcohol, 42.0 per cent of the respondents have adopted smoking and 10.0 per cent are dependent on chewing of betel nut, and such other ingredients. Going to movies and other such entertainment have been adopted by the 44.0 per cent of the respondents to forget the momentary desire for alcohol. As many as 32.0 per cent of the respondents tried to avoid the thoughts of alcohol. All this indicates that, majority adopted the strategy of escapism to face prohibition.

About 26.0 per cent of the habitual alcoholics have adopted the interpersonal strategy to cope with the prohibition.
Only 12.0 per cent of the respondents have recalled the economic benefits and six per cent recalled social standing while coping with prohibition. Only 4.0 per cent have recalled the consequences of police and excise cases while coping with prohibition.

Spouses, village elders, household elders, teachers, doctors, excise officials and politicians in that order are the important sources in adopting interpersonal discussion and strategy. Teachers were the more important factor for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe respondents in this regard.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON COPING STRATEGIES

Important sources of information on coping strategies are spouses (46.0 per cent), village elders (44.0 per cent), household elders (32.0 per cent) and teachers (13.0 per cent).

Control strategy, escape strategy and welfare strategy are very important strategies suggested and adopted by the respondents. The other strategies suggested in the order of importance are action strategy, fatalism, drawing strength from adversity, interpersonal strategy, intellectual denial, optimism, perseverance and restrain.
SUGGESTIONS

1. People aged between 20 and 30 are to be made targets of education about the ill-effects of alcoholism. The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people are to be targeted for this purpose from the age of 15 years itself.

2. Festivals, marriages, elections and deaths are the important occasions for the people becoming alcoholics. Psychological pressure must be mounted through police and excise about the unexpected raids of them just before these occasions.

3. As country liquor is produced within the village and IMFL is available in nearby towns, they should become the focal points for creating psychological pressure on the makers of country liquor and suppliers of IMFL.

4. Women, household elders, village elders and teachers have found to be opinion makers on habitual alcoholics. The anti-arrack education should target these groups for the purpose.

5. The teachers in Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe inhabitats should be educated on different coping strategies as they were found to be better opinion makers in such habitats.
6. Cultural programmes explaining the ill-effects of alcoholism may be taken up in Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe habitations. The urge should be developed within the youth of villagers to promote such cultural programmes from within their villages.