CHAPTER 4

RAJAJI ON PROHIBITION

Human addiction to alcoholic drinks, drugs and gambling has been considered a social and spiritual malady by social reformers and religious leaders throughout history. Attempts, in the form of moral codes and social education, have been made to eradicate this evil; but the effect has not been so encouraging. A mere craving for such habits or the argument that many people drink and so drinking is not an evil, do not justify the continuance of addiction to this satanic liquid. The situation only reminds us of the need for a normative approach. In the cultural framework of the Indian society, both the user of alcohol and the one who is involved in the trade have been treated as persons of low moral calibre, owing to the evils associated with alcohol.

Among the leaders of the twentieth-century India, Rajaji was the earliest to expose this evil in a systematic way. The first systematic approach was made by him as early as 1917. He campaigned against this evil by educating the public and at times fighting against powerful opponents who were involved in the liquor traffic and against politicians with a vested interest in this business, at times risking his life. The vigour with which the early freedom fighters fought this evil can be understood from the following statement made by Gandhi: 
If I was appointed dictator for one hour for all India, the first thing I would do would be to close without compensation all the liquor shops, destroy all today palms such as I know in Gujarat, compel factory owners to produce humane conditions for their workers and open refreshment and recreation rooms where these workers would get innocent amusements.

4.1 The evil of alcoholism

In analysing the nature of the evil of alcoholism Rajaji begins from the study of the individual's health, morals and the loss to the society.

4.1.1 Loss of health to the Individual

Alcohol is supposed to be a poison degrading man both at the physical level and at the moral level. In the Indian Prohibition Manual, Rajaji shows how the health of the individual is affected by disease, premature symptoms of senility and death. In its early stage alcohol affects the brain cells and impairs self control, which is one of the highest functions of the human brain. The impairment of reason and judgment under the influence of alcohol makes the individual to see even a mild confrontation as a matter of great importance. The baser instincts of combativeness and licentiousness are levered up and knowing this fact, people consume, or make others consume, alcohol before the

commission of a criminal act.

The initial lack of control gives a false sense of courage which leads to under-estimation of a dangerous situation. The increased flow of blood to the skin causes a false sense of warmth which is mistaken by people as a stimulating effect of alcohol. From the medical point of view, Rajaji says, alcohol depresses the nerves which fail to register true conditions. The dissipation of heat in the vital centres reduces restraint and a lowering of standards of thinking and morals. Rajaji compares the 'effects of stimulation' to the increased pace of a horse when the reins fall away from the hands of the rider. Energy is lost soon and exhaustion sets in soon. Rajaji gives a list of forty diseases which trouble mankind because of the use of alcohol.

A number of factory workers and labourers are misguided by imagining that alcohol stimulates or that it contains some energy-giving substance. With this claim in the background an argument may be raised that use of alcohol removes fatigue. Removal by rest and recreation, Rajaji contends, is different from insensitivity to pain and exhaustion caused by alcohol. The opponent may still continue to maintain his point by saying that alcoholic drinks are prepared from some kind of food material like grapes, wheat, barley and so on. Rajaji goes into the
technical details in answer to this question. When alcohol is prepared out of food materials, all the energy giving substances like starch and sugar are lost in the process of fermentation, leaving no substance that can provide any calorific value to the body.

Some individuals may claim that the use of alcohol in 'tonic wines,' cannot be prohibited. Rajaji says that these commercial preparations cannot give any of the 'tonic effects' claimed by the manufacturers. As a warning to the public, we find a list of some of the popular 'tonic wines' which were in use during Rajaji's period. Alcohol taken before food to 'increase appetite' is another myth, says Rajaji, for alcohol inflames the digestive glands and in fact hardens the food, which remains in the alimentary canal for a longer time in the form of undigested food. Likewise, the use of Brandy by ladies following child delivery is considered to be a wrong practice followed by uninformed public as a poor substitute for genuine medicine. Rajaji counters another argument put forth by some that beer contains enzymes and toddy contains vitamin 'B', by advising them not to consume alcohol just to gain enzymes and vitamins, which can be got from cheaper and better sources.

4.1.2 Moral weakness:

The injury done to the moral side of man is greater than the benefits claimed by the use of alcohol. The use of
alcohol slackens the will of man and he falls prey to other vices like gambling. This leads to debt or falling into the trap of the money lender. His stories like 'Devayani,' and 'The Fatal Cart,' illustrate how the other vices follow one by one after the individual is initiated into alcoholism. To counter the sufferings of poverty the individual becomes an accomplice to some intelligent criminal, who makes use of the alcoholic for his satanic activities. Rajaji quotes a Chief Justice of England who said: "I do believe that nine-tenth of the crime committed in countries is engendered in drinking houses." Another Chief Justice is quoted to have said that, 'but for drink we might shut up nine out of every ten jails'.

Moderate drinking on social occasions, according to Rajaji, is equally bad, for "it grows by what it feeds on," endangering health by habit-formation. The mere following of the Westerners in this regard, he considers, is just a blind practice. Rajaji contends that the grafting of the Western drinking habit to India is a mistake committed by the Westerner. 'Moderate drinking' for prestige or as an expression of individual liberty are considered to be signs

of moral degeneration. Rajaji had to use his argumentative skill in countering this 'wild form of drinking,' which had supporters from the educated classes like Sri K.V. Raddy Naidu, who said:

Drunkenness had to be stopped as high-handedly as could be conceived. But the mere drinking of a glass of liquor before meals should not be restrained with the rigour that was to be found in the Bill.

Rajaji's refusal to accept 'moderate drinking' was considered to be an act of illiberallism, which he forcefully countered as follows:

I do claim the principle of individual liberty is the peculiar virtue of British life and civilization, and India does not grudge to acknowledge this heritage from the British. I do claim, however, that the right to sell liquor is not the right of personal liberty. I do claim that the right to sell poisons does not fall within the categories of personal liberty. I do claim that it is not right for a Government to sell liquor and to give material satisfaction of the morbid craving of its citizens. It becomes a mere catch word and ceases to be a political principle if we apply the phrase 'personal liberties' to questions like this.

4.1.3 Economic loss to the society:

Rajaji turned his attention to the economic side of the evil of drinking. He calculated the wastage of material


and labour involved in the production and consumption of alcohol both from the point of view of direct loss as well as indirect loss. The individual addicted to drinking spends more money in drinking than the estimated per capita income, thereby subjecting his family to all the sufferings which accompany the family of a drunkard. At the State level the money circulated in terms of liquor traffic exceeded the level of money circulated through other transactions, which Rajaji considered as an indicator of moral weakness of the whole people.

Rajaji argued that the money involved in buying drinks is more than the excise revenue collected on the sales of liquors. But the statistical information collected by Rajaji in 1931 shows that the revenue collected from excise was a little more than the revenue from land and that it was six times more than the money spent on education.

Madras drinks about twice as hard as Bengal, and Bombay drinks twice as hard as Madras, taking the population and the total quantity of alcohol consumed into account. The total Drink Bill of India is estimated to be no less than Rs.100 crores per annum. 5

As per Rajaji's analysis the Statistics of expenditure on drinking in relation to other forms of revenue and education is as follows:

what the people in India pay for
- Drink and Drugs .. 2 100 crores
- Land Revenue in India .. 5 37 crores
- Income-tax in India .. 2 17 crores
- Expenditure on Education in India .. 2 13 crores 6

The money spent by the consumer includes, the cost of material, labour, organization, maintenance of the Excise Department and the money paid in the form of Excise Revenue. During the time of Rajaji (i.e., in the year 1931) excise revenue was Rs.25 crores. Rajaji contends that it would be cheaper if the Government earned the same income in some other way instead of wasting the national resources which include, material, labour and organizational skill. Unable to bear witness to this national waste, Rajaji expresses his attitude to liquor traffic as follows:

What prevails in India is not Government control but Government monopoly, and a monopoly that furnishes a quarter of the total revenue to meet Provincial Governments. The position of Government is that of a manufacturing combine. 7

Rajaji further contends that the commercial interest involved in the sale of liquor encourages promotion of indiscriminate business by the seller, unauthorised liquor to all persons, irrespective of age and sex.

6. Ibid., p.9.
As for the direct waste involved, the materials involved in the manufacture and consumption of drinks and drugs are destroyed in so far as their value to the world is concerned. The labour used in the manufacture of drinks does not lead to any productive enterprise, but only involves a loss of national resources. He further strengthens his point by calculating the total number of coconut trees involved in the manufacture of toddy and shows how these trees could not be used in any other useful form. The fermentation of alcoholic liquors leads to a direct wastage of food materials which can otherwise go into the kitchen or to the industry.

4.2 Support from other sources
Although Kajaji depended upon empirical evidence based on technical opinion and logical argumentation, to lend support to his concept of prohibition, he did not leave aside the voice of the ancient law-givers and scriptural injunctions.

4.2.1 Scriptures quoted by Kajaji:
In his 'Indian Prohibition Manual', he refers to the attitude of major religions which detest those addicted to vices like drinking and gambling. The following are the authorities referred by Kajaji in his Indian Prohibition Manual:
Manu (Max Muller's edition) ix. 15: Gamblers and sellers of spirituous liquor, let the king instantly banish from the town.

'The Apastamba Sutras: 'All intoxicating liquors are forbidden'.

'One of the Five Buddhist Commandments is: 'Ye shall drink no maddening drink'.

'Koran (Chapter 'Table', para 90): 'Intoxicants are only an uncleanness and Satan's work. Shun them that you may be successful'.

The two epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana) which were re-written for the sake of children and the busy modern man indicate how man is degraded by falling a prey to the use of spirituous liquors.

4.2.2 Hindu Scriptural sources from which Rajaji derived indirect support:

In addition to what Rajaji refers, there are a number of other Indian sources which decry the use of alcoholic drinks. The Mahabharata (5.10.9) says: "One who steals gold, one who drinks, one who dishonours the teacher's bed and one who injures a Brāhma—-all these four fall as also the fifth one who associates with them." Other Upanishads like the Mahā Śrāvakaparāśpati (19.1) and the Kāivalyopanisad (24th Mantra) decry the use of alcoholic drinks.

While the Upanishads thinkers took up the issue from the point of view of ethics and spiritual development, the authors of the Dharmashastra took up the legal aspect and
prescribed heavy penalties in the form of difficult compensatory rituals (prāyāsikī) to stone for the sin of drinking. This worked as a preventive measure at the social level and as a threat to the wrong doer.

According to the Saṃavalkya Saṁhitā (253-256) the use of drinks even unknowingly is punishable. The individual has to undergo compensatory rituals which include ordeals like drinking the urine of cow etc. Some other pātras like Dvāra ṣaṁhitā (80) consider even touching spirituous liquors as sinful. The Atri Saṁhitā (164) and the Vṛṣiṣṭa Saṁhitā (XVIII) include the drunkard among the five heinous sinners named by tradition. Jūna Saṁhitā (2-3) and Gautama Saṁhitā (22) refer to rituals required to be performed by one who consumed alcoholic drinks. The Śadvarta Saṁhitā (114-117) gives a list of spirituous liquors (sauḍi-spirit distilled from molasses, Pañjī-spirit distilled from rotten rice and Māhī-spirit distilled from Maun-dewers) and prescribes the rituals to be undertaken by the sinner. The Śatapatha Brahma (III, 1-3) describes the various diseases associated with drinking in this birth and in the future births in a threatening manner, that no one would have the inclination to think of drinking even in his dream. In the fourth century B.C. Kautilya identified drinking as an evil and warned the king that vice in the army would undermine the discipline of
the soldiers.

The author of Tirukkural (which was translated by Anaji) devotes ten verses describing how man degenerates by drinking.

4.2.3 Prohibition in other religions:

One of the Sūtras of early Buddhism enumerates six sequels of drinking:

(i) Loss of property
(ii) Disease
(iii) Discord and strife
(iv) Loss of reputation
(v) Disturbance of temper
(vi) Daily loss in wisdom

Other Sūtras mention ten disadvantages and thirty six faults that arise out of drinking.

As early as 2250 B.C., King Hammurabi, the law giver of ancient Babylonia, provided in his code that, "If outlaws solicit in the house of the wine seller and he does not arrest these outlaws and bring them to the palace, that wine seller shall be put to death." This indicates the affinity between drink and other forms of crime which was recognized by the early lawgivers.

In the eleventh century B.C., one of the Chinese emperors ordered all the vintners of his realm to be uprooted,

King Solomon advised his listeners not even to look
at wine (Proverbs 23:29-32).

The apostle, Saint Paul associated drunkenness with rioting and immorality (Romans 13:13), with murder (Galatians 5:21), and with homosexuality, thieving, and extortion (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10).

All the evidence shown in this section are aimed at strengthening the arguments given by Rajaji to defend prohibition, although it is claimed by some as illiberal. While the ancient law codes were merciless, knowing the infectious nature, in detailing punishments, Rajaji was more humane in achieving his aim by stages.

4.3 The Solution

Rajaji's strategy to eradicate the evil of drinking begins from an understanding of the concept of 'total abstinence'. "Total Abstinence is refraining from the use of all articles causing intoxication of stupefaction like wine, toddy, whisky, brandy, arrack, ganja, bhang or opium."8 The implementation of the programme consisted of educating the people, keeping the people away from using drinks by persuasion through the help of non-official co-operation, extraction of oaths from the users of drinks, picketing in

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front of the liquor shops and legalizing 'prohibition', by bringing pressure upon the Government.

4.3.4 Education and Persuasion:

As for the first solution, namely educating people, Rajaji published a number of articles in the Harijan, Vijnana, and the Prohibition Journal. In addition to the above he published the Indian Prohibition Manual in the year 1931, in which he expounded the need for prohibition from the medicinal, social, economic, moral and the legal points of view. As far as possible technical jargon was avoided to confine to the Vidyādvara principle of sanskhara, a principle which explains the easy accessibility of God to the simple folk. His short stories vividly expose the evils of using this obnoxious liquid.

Rajaji's work at his Tiruchengode Ashram in this regard was a complimentary to what Gandhiji was doing from his Sabarmathi Ashram. Rajaji used to help poor people who gave up drinking, by providing them some means of existence in his Ashram, or by training them in some small scale industry like paper making, spinning, working on leather, etc. At times Rajaji had to combine many techniques, which involved a true understanding of the human mind and a high regard for moral values. He cites the case of a cobbler, who was reported to have got drunk despite his earlier promise that he would not take drinks. Initially the cobbler denied the
charge made against him by his wife and his neighbours.

Rajaji tried an interesting technique which was quite suited
to such simple folk as the one who was brought before him.

Rajaji asked the cobbler to tell him the truth by taking an
oath upon the leather which gave him his daily bread. The
cobbler's honesty that was dormant in him till then ebbed to
the surface. The cobbler took the leather chappals, pointed
by Rajaji, and said, "Yes, I did drink." It was the mere
force of Rajaji's personality that worked the 'miracle'.

Persuasion, Rajaji believed, does not end with mere propaganda.
He used to prepare charts showing the human anatomy and its
reaction to alcohol and would go to slums and areas which
were considered to be notorious in the consumption of alcohol.
Sometimes his social workers were discouraged or chased away
by the users of alcohol or the sellers. Then Rajaji himself
would take the risk of going to such areas to achieve his
mission. The other mass communication media like the dailies
were also utilised to stimulate public opinion.

Would you like our country to be delivered from
the drink curse? Then, are you willing to do some
work in the anti-drink campaign? Will you obtain
signatures to the total prohibition pledge from
your neighbours? Getting these signatures mean
that they join in the agitation to abolish all the

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ed. K.N. Kunhiah, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Marathiya Vidya Saman, 1976),
pp. 248-251.
liquor share in the country. If you feel inclined please write immediately to me and get a pledge book and begin work at once. 10

4.3.2 Personal Liberty and Prohibition

Both Kajaji and Gandhiji believed in the legal enforcement of prohibition. Gandhiji considered the liquor user to be a diseased person, who cannot come out of his addiction. According to him, these unfortunate men who contracted this disease should be treated much against their protests and threats, just as a physician treats a patient, though it involves causing temporary pain to the patient.

Kajaji took up the case from two points of view. At the individual level, persuasion by psychological means to serve a moral end works out to certain extent. Educating the individual and exposing the evils of using liquor do not solve the whole problem. To eradicate this evil, the programme should be launched from the level of the State also. There are some people who are amenable to reason and there are some who would just disregard any rational argument that is placed before them. More education and persuasion cannot prevent a problem which has reached a higher dimension of involving the economic and social life of the society. A problem that becomes widespread, Kajaji contends, requires a powerful

authority, which can be none other than the state itself with its legal machinery. Though, some may argue that an act of parliament cannot make men sober, such an act instills a sense of fear of punishment among those who drink and prevents people who are likely to join this satanic force of drunkards. Once a good habit is formed and a bad habit is removed, if necessary even by force, the good habit establishes itself well in the individual creating a repulsive attitude towards evil things. Like the Artha Ìśāstra thinkers of Ancient India, Bajaji believed in a judicious mixture of using moral persuasion at the individual level and using coercive legal authority (danda) at the social level.

The use of legal authority in support of prohibition involves two questions: One is that of the charge that individual liberty is curtailed by legal enforcement. The second question deals with the responsibility of the state in introducing prohibition which may involve losing popularity at times.

Being a successful legalist, Bajaji justifies the introduction of prohibition from the legal point of view as follows: "Freedom does not constitute allowing people to alienate their own freedom. This is just what the right to drink degenerates into." "A man's right to drink what he pleases is subject to his family's right to a fair share in his income." The mere exercise of such a right to satisfy the
morbid craving of the individual, involves not only his life but involves the whole society, which Rajaji expresses as follows:

The right of the individual to commit acts injurious to himself, his family and to his society in general is fiction born out of outworn theories of the liberty of the individual which have long since been discarded by progressive nations. 11

Having explained the responsibility of the individual to choose that which is good for him and for his society, Rajaji takes up the question of the individual's responsibility to obey the laws of the State.

Liberty is not unrestricted licence to act according to one's will. Liberty must be regulated by law. The State has a right to determine what shall be permitted and what shall not be permitted as being prejudicial to public good. 12

As for the second question, which involves the responsibility of the State, Rajaji refers to the democratic principle involved in the modern state and the Utilitarian principle of the greatest good of the greatest number. Rajaji quotes Lord Bryce who said: "The principle of protecting a man against his own propensities when these are injurious to the community is deemed legitimate." 13

11. C. Rajagopalachari, "The Right to Drink, India (Dec. 13, 1928), cited in Drinker, Bryce and p.44.

12. C. Rajagopalachari, "Platform Points," Indian Prohibition Annual, p.44.

13. IMD., p.44
maji fixes the responsibility of the State to compel obedience from the individual if he is going out of the way.

If we are to have government and order, laws must be based on the principle of the greatest good of the greatest number. The law has just as much right to prevent the drink traffic from placing pit-falls before weak people and to make me a tool in the crime against my will, as it has to make me send my children to school or to keep to the left on the public highway. 14

The answer to the charge of illiberalsism levelled against maji justifies obedience to the State on one hand and on the other, reminds the State that the passing of laws should be based on ethical responsibility. In this regard, maji refers to the system of issuing licenses to the sellers as a mere legal protection to the individual seller. The seller feels that he has secured the legal right to sell liquor and ignores the moral question involved in his sales. The business of the State, according to maji, does not consist of simply compelling obedience from the individual or in legalising acts considered to be injurious to public good.

The introduction of prohibition on a legal level is fully justified both from the technical point of view as well as the psychological point of view.

4.3.3 WILL PROHIBITION REPEAL?

A number of pessimists and those who observed the failure of the American attempt at prohibition, argued that prohibition in India would fail just as the American experiment failed. A brief account of the American attempt may serve as a social model to estimate and improve the condition in the sub-continent.

The earliest attempt towards temperance in the U.S.A. is recorded to have been made at Litchfield, Connecticut, in the year 1769. In the year 1776 George Washington ordered his officers to prevent his soldiers from visiting the liquor houses. In 1777 the Continental Congress recommended to the State Legislatures that orders should be passed to prevent the distillation of wines to prevent the excessive evils arising out of the use of alcoholic liquors. In 1802 President Jefferson prohibited the sale of alcoholic liquors to the Red Indians. The Anti-Saloon League which was formed in the year 1893 gained momentum and enjoyed the confidence of the Churches. A number of temperance societies were formed to create a public opinion against the use of alcoholic liquors. Between 1907 and 1913 six States opted for prohibition. Although the U.S.A. adopted prohibition for a period of fourteen years (1920 to 1934), there was not much progress,
as "its enforcement was in the hands of its enemies." 15

Mr. Herbert Asbury in his The Great Illusion says, that the period between 1920 and 1934 was a period of crime and corruption, which supported the 'Big Lie' as follows:

The dope lied to make prohibition look good; the vats lied to make it look bad; the Government officials lied to make themselves good and to frighten Congress into giving them more money to spend; the politicians lied through the force of habit. 16

Finally the world economic Depression broke the back of the canal and on February 20, 1933, President Roosevelt signed a measure, repealing the Prohibition Act.

The study of the American experiment encouraged the opponents of prohibition in India to doubt the very success of prohibition in India. One of the objections raised was, that law would be ineffectual when it goes very much against human nature. Basajji returned to this criticism as follows:

The argument that laws are ineffective to stop drink is no more sound than the argument that laws cannot altogether stop theft or adultery and therefor, let us repeal the Penal Code. 17

Some of the opponents urged that prohibition in India would

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16. Ibid., p.40.

17. C. Basajji, "Has Prohibition Failed?" Indian India (27.1.27), cited in Drugs, Drink and Gambling, p.85.
encourage the illicit distillation for which Gandhiji answered as follows:

"Thevìng will abide till Doomsday. Must it therefore be licensed? Is stealing of the mindless criminal than stealing of matter? Illicit distillation to an extent will no doubt go on... But my submission is that this constructive effort is doomed to failure if it is not preceded by total prohibition. So long as the State not permits but provides facilities for the addict to satisfy the craving, the reformer has little chance of success."

Some contended that Prohibition in America indirectly encouraged the production of 'deteriorous concoctions' which replaced 'good' liquors. Rajaji departs upon an argument based on human psychology to answer this charge. The nature of the hardened addict is such that nobody can save him from the disease of taking anything that is intoxicating. Being incurable, Rajaji suggests, such persons should be left for themselves. Once the shops are closed and legal force is brought in, the drink evil will die gradually, because it cannot at least take new recruits into its fold.

It may be urged that smuggling will increase after the introduction of Prohibition. Rajaji gives a practical answer, saying that smuggling is not restricted to alcohol alone. "There is considerable amount of smuggling of every article on which there is a high duty."

some of the opponents are of the view that legal 
enforcement would create contempt for law in the minds of 
the public, or which Rajaji answered from the point of view 
of practical politics as follows:

In the beginning a mere spirit of adventure may 
impress some men to disobey and place themselves in 
the service of the scheming interests that seek to 
carry their point by sheer lawlessness. But after 
a time, when vigorous enforcement has proved the 
futility of such efforts, the misguided victims 
will realize the error of their allying themselves 
with interests selfish. 19

A vital argument based on the loss of revenue was 
raised by the Government for which Rajaji, said that the 
revenue gained by the sale of liquor is an intoxicating to 
the Government as liquor is to the individual victim of this 
disease. Like the exhaustion that follows the use of liquor 
the Government will also experience a state of exhaustion of 
its economic resources in the long run. The Government tried 
to delay the problem by suggesting a gradual reduction of 
shops selling liquor. The idea of Gradual reduction was not 
acceptable to Rajaji. "Total Prohibition will save for the 
homes five times what is now paid into the Government 
Treasury."

The Government reduction of shops is only a 
consolidation of business, like abolition of 
small holdings and making up large estates. 
Moreover, the larger renter knows how to keep

19. C. Rajagopalachari, "Contempt for Law," Indian India, 
53.37, cited in Arinna, Drink and Gambling, p. 84.
unlicensed branches, wherever he finds sufficient business for them. 20

He gives two more reasons: gradual reduction of shops is too slow and the victims do not reduce their indulgence in the same proportion. The government insists upon gradual reduction under the pretext of adjusting itself for the loss of revenue from liquor traffic. Rajaji, being a seasoned politician, suggested that governments have a tendency only to increase expenditure year after year and that gradual reduction is another way to say 'never in the future'. From the individual point of view, the individual learns to walk a little more distance than usual to satisfy his craving. Nothing short of total prohibition can solve the problem and for the myth of less of revenue Rajaji suggested levying fresh taxes which are definitely cheaper than earnings through liquor from the point of view of the nation.

Rajaji's insistence upon total prohibition is fully justified, though it may appear an uncompromising one, to save the country from the evil of drink.

4.4 Public Opinion and the Development of Prohibition Act:

Prohibiting the use of alcoholic liquors is justified both from the point of view of public opinion and from an ethical point of view. Any legal enactment cannot be passed

without support from public opinion based on rational grounds. When the liquor evil was found to be injurious to health and morals, enlightened individuals and social organizations committed to social reform, took up the issue. The social strain involved in the evil of alcohol was building up gradually over since (1790 A.D.) the East India Company thought of earning revenue from excise duty on the sale of alcoholic drinks, an act which even the Mughals did not contrive to exploit the subject population.

The first organised resistance was expressed by the Indian National Congress in its fourth session (1880 A.D.) by passing a resolution to bring down this evil. In the year 1892 Kesu Chandra Sen (19th Century reformer), prevailed upon the British Government to regulate the sale of liquor by heavy excise duty. Senhale, in a deputation to the Secretary of State of India in 1912 solemnly declared: "Total Prohibition is really in keeping with the sentiment of the Indian People." The Swadeshi movement which included social reform as one of the policies was gaining strength. On 31st January 1925, a memorial signed by over 20,000 women was submitted to the Viceroy to introduce total prohibition. On 2nd September 1925, by a majority of votes

representing the undivided strength of non-official opinion, the Legislative Assembly adopted and presented a resolution, against the use of liquor, which was presented to the Governor-General-in-Council. On 9th January 1927, Mr. Ramlal Pantulu moved in the Council of State, a similar resolution. The British Government twisted the resolutions to suit their stepmotherly attitude towards the implementation of prohibition policy. In December 1928, the All Parties Convention that sat in Calcutta for considering a draft Swaraj Constitution for India adopted a clause concerning prohibition in the chapter dealing with fundamental rights. The Indian National Congress adopted the clause on prohibition of the use of alcoholic liquors in the Bill of Rights which reads as follows: Clause 13: "Intoxicating drinks and drugs shall be totally prohibited except for medicinal purposes."22

Rajaji's reform work was in line with the Indian opinion which was against the use of alcoholic liquors in any form except for medicinal purposes. The opportunity came in the year 1917, when Rajaji was Chairman of the Salem Municipality. With the help of enlightened public he ordered the closure of local shops. The British Government had to oblige him half-heartedly under the 'local Option clause.'

Majaji was of the opinion that the persuasively and reformative approach, with an appeal to the inner restraints of conscience and religion were inadequate without the backing of law. 

Majaji, as the Premier of the Madras Province, in his first budget speech on 1.9.37, expressed his decision to close all liquor shops in the Salem District with effect from 1.10.37. His official attitude towards the evil was revealed with optimism in the following statement:

'... We deem it wrong for Government to be party to the organizing of evil temptation calculated to ruin weak-willed people and cause the destitution of the women and children of their families. With time for financial adjustments and experience in the work of enforcement, it is confidently hoped that the prohibition of drinks and drugs throughout the Province will be an accomplished fact.'

Majaji began the experiment of introducing the Prohibition Act from his native district with a practical eye for possible troubles. Penalties for those guilty of drinking, selling or helping the liquor traffic in any form, were made severe and to aid this he transferred all the police officials given to drinking from the dry districts. In the year 1938-39 more districts were covered by the Prohibition Act. Though the experiment was like a small oasis in a desert, it fetched good dividends. Mr. Dixon, the District Collector,

though a foreigner, made an observation that prohibition brought a remarkable improvement in the economic, social and moral level of the Salem people. Rajaji's success in his experiment scored a point in winning the favourable opinion of the general public as well as the intellectuals which resulted in drawing up of the Article 47 of the Indian Constitution, which reads as follows:

The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and in particular the State shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to health.

The whole state of Madras went dry in 1945 and the other states adopted the programme of increasing the number of dry districts. The scrapping of Prohibition by the Tamil Nadu Government, in the later years of Rajaji, was a heart rending event, which remained a source of pain and restlessness to Rajaji. The arguments in favour of repealing the Prohibition Act were mere excuses, which derived support from particular groups with vested interests. The whole concept of the temperance movement was put in reverse gear. It was a sign of temporary social regression, which once again tempted the people of the possibility of reviving a forgotten habit. The free flow of this atonic liquid brought in its trail the other vices which accompany this human
weakness. An examination of the criticism levelled against the legal enforcement of Prohibition will reveal that the charges are unfounded.