CHAPTER III
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There are various factors for the deterioration of the society and drinking acts as a killer of sense, honour and discipline. Moreover it drains the income especially of the downtrodden. Drinking is a blot in the society. Morality declines and degenerates because of it. If drinking is encouraged what sort of people it could produce, and what sort of civilization it would breed? Having all these in mind Rajaji had taken a strong stand in abolishing the inebriated drinks.

The outstanding Tamil Poet Thiruvalluvar vehemently condemns the consumption of toddy in his Thirukkural. It is well emphasized in the following kurals (couplets) written by him:

1. *Men addicted to drinking toddy everyday will not be feared by their foeman and they will lose the glory already achieved.*

2. *Don't drink intoxicating toddy. If you desire it, you will not be counted as a man of esteem by all good or saintly men.*

3. *Toddler-drinking is hated even by the mother, how would it appear to the truly wise?*

4. *Unconscious sleepers are none other than the dead. Always toddy drinkers are poison takers.*

5. *Who take to drink and get tipsy will be held in contempt by the men of the locality when they find it out.*
This whole chapter is attributed to the eradication measures taken by Rajaji in his capacity as the Premier of Madras Presidency during 1937-1939 and as the Chief Minister of Madras between 1952 and 1954.

The Evil Impact of Drink

Prohibition means application of law on the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquor for use as beverage. Drinking liquor has been a popular habit from time immemorial, though this came to be discouraged from the Later Vedic Age and the Sastras condemned consumption of liquor as one of the five grave sins\(^2\) (Mahapatakas). In the cultural background of Indian society, both the user of alcohol and the one who involved in the trade have been treated as persons of low moral caliber, owing to the evils associated with alcohol. Human addiction to alcoholic drink, drugs and gambling has been considered as a social and spiritual malady by social reformers and religious leaders throughout history.

The habit of drinking was quite common during the Sangam age. In Tamil Nadu drink habit had always been regarded as an evil to be eradicated. Majority of the Backward and Depressed Classes in Tamil Nadu depended on agricultural labour. The habit of drinking was quite prevalent among them. "The comparative poverty of the Pannaiyal (peasant) class, states an official of Tanjore district, is attributed to their fondness for drink and a want of prudence and forethought in storing up paddy to provide against a rainy days. They are in
fact the most barbarous part of the community, and live precisely like animal beings to all intents and purposes, serfs attached to the soil and generally of the Pariah Caste, few being Sudras.”

The hill tribes, the weaving groups, the laborers and workers who formed the bulk of the population were also addicted to this evil habit. This habit of drinking not only marred the welfare of the individual but also upset the moral and mental progress of a backward state like Tamil Nadu. It also produced a tremendous effect in the social and economic life of the people. In fact it led the addicts to commit offences, which they would refrain from doing under normal circumstances. It also affected the health of the drunkards. Above all it kept them permanently in utter poverty as they spent their hard earned money on liquor. Hence enlightened public opinion was strongly against the evil of drink.

Even though this chapter deals with the measures taken by Rajaji in the direction of implementing prohibition in Madras Presidency it is necessary to know about the various measures taken prior to him in this regard.

A.O. Hume and Prohibition

The story of prohibition in India is interwoven with our freedom struggle right from the days of A.O.Hume the founder of the Indian National Congress. He totally denounced Abkari (Revenue derived from the liquor traffic). He called it “The wages of sin”. He said, “...If I be spared a few years
longer I shall live to see it effaced in more Christian like system, one of the greatest existing blots on our Government of India".

**Effort by W.S. Caine and Samuel Smith**

Members of Parliament of Great Britain like W.S.Caine and Samuel Smith on seeing the misery and ruin of the Indian population due to the drink habit, moved the following resolution in the House of Commons on the 30th of April 1889: “That in the opinion of this House, the fiscal system of the Government of India leads to the establishment of spirit distilleries, liquor and opium shops in a large number of places, where till recently they never existed, in defiance of native opinion and protest of the inhabitants and that such increased facilities for drinking produce a steady increasing consumption, and spread misery and ruin among the industrial classes of India, calling for immediate action on the part of the Government of India with a view to their abatement.”

The resolution was carried by 113 votes against 100. The Secretary of State forwarded the resolution to the Government of India for necessary action. On account of deriving considerable excise revenue called Abkari on the sale of toddy, liquor and other spirituous and intoxicating drinks, no attention was paid by it.
The Chief Justice of England said, “But for drink we might shut up nine out of every ten jails”.

Judge of England remarked, “I do believe that nine tenth of the crime committed in the country is engendered in drinking house”.

Lord Richie, the Home Secretary remarked, “Eight percent of the crimes were due to alcohol and drug”.6

Experiment on Prohibition in USA and its Failure

In United States of America prohibition was introduced in 1919. This was the banning of the manufacture, import and sale of all alcoholic liquor. It was the result of the efforts of a well-meaning pressure group during the First World War, which believed that a ‘dry’ America would mean a more efficient and moral America. But it proved impossible to eliminate bootleggers (manufacture of illegal liquor) who protected their premises from rivals with hired gangs who shot each other up in gunfights. Gang violence became part of the American scene, especially in Chicago where Al Capone made himself a fortune, much of it from bootlegging. The row over prohibition was one aspect of a traditional American conflict; between the countryside and the city. Many country people believed that life was sinful and unhealthy, while life in the country was pure, noble and moral.7
Herbert Hoover, the President of America called prohibition 'a great social and economic experiment, noble in motive. However to meet the economic depression in 1929 he appointed the Whilkersham Commission to investigate the working of the prohibition law. This body issued in 1931 an extremely muddled report, saying that prohibition did not work, but ought to be maintained. In 1933, the 21st Amendment was passed, repealing the 18th and thus abolishing Federal Prohibition. But the 21st Amendment was an admission on that the whole experiment had failed. For the sake of enforcement of prohibition policy the Government had spent $10,000,000 per year and arrested about 50,000 people annually. Inspite of that bootlegging was not totally crushed.

Earlier Attempts Made to Implement Prohibition

The Indian Congress session held at Allahabad in 1888, called upon the Government to adopt measures to check the spread of insobriety among the people of the country. The tenth Indian Social Conference which met at Calcutta in 1896 in its resolution thanked Caine and Samuel Smith for their effort in insisting their mother country to implement prohibition in India and also expressed "....that the majority of total abstainers should have the power of enforcing them by some adoption of the principle of local option which can not be secured without the cooperation of the English and American Temperance societies".
In 1912, Gokhale an eminent and moderate leader of the Congress Party laid more emphasis on prohibition. He in a deputation to the Secretary of State in 1912, solemnly declared, “Total prohibition is really in keeping with the sentiment of the Indian people”.10

The Indian people being inspired and instigated by their leaders demanded the closure of the liquor shops. But on the other hand the British Government in India maintained that the closure of shops would not solve the problems of abundance of illicit supply. But the Congress continued its agitation for the complete introduction of prohibition through legislation during 1921-22.11

In 1924, Maharaja of Bhopal introduced prohibition in his territory, but within a couple of years it proved to be impracticable and with drawn.12 In the year 1925 nearly 30,000 women, mostly Indians signed and presented a memorandum requesting the viceroy to effect prohibition. But it was pigeon holed.

Rajaji's Strategy of Enforcing Prohibition

The Temperance Movement - a movement to bring about self-control in the drinking of alcohol represents a fascinating chapter in the social and political history of India. While most of the schools worked for liberating the country from the British yoke only very few carried an important social welfare measures like prohibition for the betterment of the Depressed and Backward
Classes. Thus we find that the Indian National Congress was committed to prohibition long before India achieved freedom.

The habit of taking liquor had tremendous impact in the social and economic life of the people. It very much affected the health of the drunkards, permanently kept them in utter poverty as they spent their hard earned money on liquor and also led them to commit offences which they would refrain from doing under normal circumstances. Human addiction to alcoholic drink, drugs and gambling had been regarded a spiritual and social malady by religious leaders and social reformers throughout history. Even in the cultural background of India this evil was condemned and several attempts had been made to eradicate this evil, but the effect was not encouraging.

Right from the beginning of the year 1920 prohibition was a constructive programme of the Indian National Congress. With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi into the Indian freedom struggle prohibition of liquor gained much importance. From the year 1930 onwards a new chapter began in the anti-drink campaign. Gandhiji was so averse to drinking practice that he stated “If I were 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 toddy palms such as I know in Gujarat, compel factory owners to produce humane conditions for their workmen and open refreshment and recreation room where their workmen would get innocent amusement”.

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Among the leaders of the 20th century India, Rajaji was the earliest to expose this evil in a systematic way. He started analyzing it from the study of individual health, morals and to the society at large. He narrated the evils of liquor and its demoralizing effects on one's mind and body through his speeches and writings. He wrote pamphlets and distributed among the people. He also wrote two books on prohibition. They were 'India Prohibition Manual' in English and 'Urkattuppadu' in Tamil. Like Mahatma Gandhi, Rajaji wanted to handle the drink addicts, just as a physician treated a patient. He had two different approaches in this regard: (1) Individual level (2) Society level.

At the individual level he adopted the methods of persuasion educating and exposing the evils of drink. Knowing pretty well that mere education and persuasion could not prevent a problem which had reached a higher dimension of involving the economic and social life of the society, he was prepared to make use of the state machinery also. Hence Rajaji like the Arthasastra thinkers of ancient India relied on a powerful authority, which can be none other than the state itself, adopting a judicious mixture of moral persuasion at the individual level and using coercive legal authority (danda) at the social level.

Manu and other Dharma Sastras and Sutras highly denounced drink habit. Manu (1*215) says, “Let the king instantly banish gamblers and sellers of spirituous liquor from the towns”. Apasthamba Sutra says, “All intoxication liquor are forbidden”.14
The two epics (Mahabharata and Ramayana), which were condensed by Rajaji for the sake of children and the busy modern man, indicate how man has degraded by falling a prey to the habit of spirituous liquors. In addition to that Rajaji refers to number of other Indian sources, which decry the use of alcoholic drinks. The Chandogya (5.10.9) says; “one who steals gold, one who drinks, one who dishonor the teacher's bed and one who injures a Brahmana— all these four as far as also the fifth one who associate with them”. Upanisads like the Maha Narayanopanisad (19.1) and the Kaivalyopanisad (24th Mantra) decry the use of alcoholic drinks.

While the authors of upanisads viewed the habit of drink evil from the ethical and spiritual angle, the makers of the Dharma Sastras took up the legal aspect and pronounced heavy penalties in the form of difficult compensatory rituals (prayascitta) to atone for the sin of drinking. This served as a preventive measure at the social level and as a threat to the wrong doer. According to the Yajnavalkya Samhita (253-56) the use of drinks even unknowingly is punishable. The individual has to undergo compensatory rituals which includes ordeals like drinking the urine of cow etc., Some other Sastras like Usama samhita (80) consider even touching spirituous liquors as sinful.

The Atu Samhita (164) and the Vasista Samhita (XVIII) include the drunkard among the five heinous sinners named by tradition. Yama Samhita (2-3) and Gautama Samhita(22) refer to rituals required to be performed by one
who consumed alcoholic drinks. The Samvarta Samhita (114-117) gives a list of spirituous liquors (Gaudhi - spirit distilled from molasses, panishti - spirit distilled from rotten rice and Madhvi spirit distilled from Mona-flower) and prescribes the ritual to be performed by the sinner. The Satatapa Samhita (III, 1-3) describes the various diseases associated with drinking in this birth and in the future birth 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 wine in the army would undermine the discipline of the soldiers. In Tirukkural (which was translated by Rajaji) ten verses are devoted to describe how man degenerates by drinking.

Not only the Hindus but also the Buddhist and Jains condemned this evil habit as a vice to be scrupulously avoided. Infact one of the five Buddhists commandments is... “Ye shall drink no intoxicating drink”.

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

Other Sustras mention ten disadvantages and thirty-six faults that come out of drinking.

As early as 2250 B.C. King Hammurabi, the law giver of ancient Babylon, provided in his code, “If outlaws collect in the House of the wine seller and he does not arrest these out-laws and bring them to the palace, that
wine seller shall be put to death”. In the eleventh century B.C. one of the Chinese emperors ordered all the wines 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). No wonder Pussy Fort W.E.John wrote, “There is not a Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jain or Sikhs in the world. But who feels that according to the religion alcoholic drink is an evil. No member of any of these religious groups can drink intoxicants without being disloyal to his religion”.

Even Islam and Christianity, which converted sizeable section of the Tamils to embrace their religions respectively, also condemned drinking as an evil. For example ‘Koran’ says, “Intoxicants are nothing but an uncleanness and Satans work. Shun them you may prosper. Their harm is greater than the advantage”. All these evidences are effectively handled by Rajaji to strengthen his arguments in favor of defending his prohibition policy.

Rajaji well analysed the impact of the evils of drink habits on economic aspects. He calculated the wastage of material and labour utilized 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 on it than the estimated percapita income and subjecting his family to
all sorts of sorrows and sufferings. Even though the money circulation in terms of liquor traffic at the state level was more than the money circulated through other transactions, Rajaji was not happy over that trend because he considered it as an indication of moral weakness of the whole people. Further he argued that the money involved in buying drinks is more than the excise revenue collected on the sales of liquors.

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 bad as Bengal, and Bombay drinks twice as bad as Madras, taking the population and the total quantity of alcohol consumed into account. The total Drink Bill of India was estimated to be no less than Rs.100 crores per annum”.18 As per his analysis the statistics of expenditure on drinking in relation to other form of revenue and education is as follows:

What the people in India pay for Drinks and Drugs: Rs.100 crores.19

Land Revenue in India: Rs. 37 crores
Income Tax in India: Rs. 17 crores
Expenditure on Education in India: Rs. 13 crores.

All such wrong notions that alcohol increases appetite, usefulness of consuming brandy by ladies following child delivery, beer contains enzymes and toddy contains vitamins B were totally denied by Rajaji. Moreover he strongly emphasized that the use of alcohol could bring more harm than benefit
claimed by it. His stories like ‘Devayani’ and the ‘Fatal Cart’ illustrate how vices like laziness, gambling, indebtedness develop one after another in a drunkard.

Rajaji was not prepared to accept moderate drinking of alcohol. When many people viewed such attitude as an act of liberalism, he forcefully countered: “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 poison 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 question like this.”

Rajaji very much utilized dailies also, to stimulate public opinion in favor of his prohibition policy. One such attempt is as follows: “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 signature to the total prohibition pledge from your neighbours? Getting their signature mean that they join the agitation to abolish all the liquor shops in the country. If you feel inclined please write immediately to me and get a pledge book and begin work at once.”
Rajaji's Legislative Measures to Effect Prohibition

The Government of India Act 1935 accorded Provincial Autonomy and responsible Governments in the provinces. Prohibition came under the state subject. Accordingly provinces could either control or eradicate the use of alcoholic liquor by way of introducing legislation. There was no need for the provinces to get prior sanctions from the Secretary of State for India, even though Prohibition Legislation was concerned about revenue. A responsible Government by Congress under the leadership of Rajaji came to power in the Madras Presidency in the year 1937. With the majority member of the Legislative Assembly and council Rajaji wished to experiment for the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu with the policy of total prohibition as a political concept.

Prohibition Bill was introduced in the Madras Legislative Assembly on September 25, 1937. It met with lot of opposition both in the Assembly as well as in the Council during the discussion on that matter. B.Narayanaswamy Naidu who was a public prosecutor and a member of the upper house called the Prohibition Legislation a penal Legislation. He said that under section 32 of the Abkari Act, the police could arrest a man in the public street if he behaved in a drunken or disorderly manner. But under the Prohibition Bill they could arrest a drunkard even in his house. Thus the Prohibition Bill affected the privacy of every house. He further added that the individual's rights should not be
affected in any way out of the plea of putting down the evil of drink. For these reasons he opposed the motion.23

K.V. Reddy Nayudu who was acting Governor of Madras made a virulent criticism of the Bill. He agreed that Prohibition was very desirable reform, a necessary reform but it could be achieved more by education and propaganda than by legislation. Hence he virtually criticized the Bill for destroying individual liberty.24 He further feared that the Bill would benefit the rich at the expense of the poor. For, while the rich could obtain licenses for the personal consumption of liquor, the poor could not. He also pointed out that the Bill had not curtailed the sale of foreign liquor it would result in increasing of the import of this kind of liquor and destroy the individual liberty.25

Diwan Bahadur A. Appadurai Pillai an active member of the Justice Party and a leader of the opposition in the Legislative Assembly held that temperance should come from within. In no country had it been possible to restrict human towards indulgence in liquor, and countries, which introduced Prohibition, abandoned the reform with the haste with which it was introduced.26 Frack Birley who was the member of the Upper House said that Prohibition was perhaps one of the oldest controversial concept in the world. The general opinion was that drink was an evil to be eradicated. But it would lead to serious financial losses.27
M.A. Muthiah Chettiar of Chettinad the leader of the opposition in the Assembly and who had been minister in charge of excise for a few months towards the end of the Justice Party's term of ministry before the inauguration of the new constitution held that the failure of the scheme was more certain than its success, considering the serious financial implications of the measure.28

In spite of all these the Bill was referred to a Select Committee consisting of Sir William Wright (leader of the European group in Assembly), E.H.M. Bower (representative of Anglo-Indian Constituency), Diwan Bahadur A.Appadurai Pillai (Justice Party), Akram Ali, Abdul Raworf (muslim), T.T.Krishnamachari (Industries and Commerce Representative), Mrs. Rukmani Lakshmipathy (Congress Deputy Speaker of Assembly), C.J.Varkey (Indian Christian Congress) and V.I. Muniswamy Pillai. The committee with a few minor changes ratified the Bill and forwarded it to the Assembly.29

Rajaji then asked V.I.Muniswamy Pillai to move the Bill in the Assembly so that it might be passed into law.30 The Legislative Council approved it on 27 September 1937. As an experimental measure prohibition was first introduced in the Salem District. The Government of Madras changed the collector of Salem District who was an Indian named S.V.Ramamurthi for an English man named F.A.W. Dixon. Ramamurthi noted in his autobiography that he was transferred because an European collector's testimony as to its (Prohibition) success would be better believed than by an Indian.31 Among the men who
worked in Salem, none showed a greater energy and a greater enthusiasm than F.A.W. Dixon.

Strict measures were taken to enforce the scheme. From that date all liquor shops were closed. However exemption was given to foreign travelers and some individuals on medical grounds. “Authority” was granted to Bishops and priests for the possession of mass wine for use of religious purpose according to ancient customs. Opium shops were closed and addicts to the drug were required to get licenses from a Tahsildar or a Deputy Tahsildar. No opium license was issued to any person under twenty years of age and ganja and bhang were altogether prohibited. The transport of liquor from one district to another through Salem District in motorbuses was also prohibited. A special watch was kept over motorbuses plying between towns in the Salem District and beyond to detect the transport of contraband liquor etc. Measures were also taken to prevent buses from carrying people from the Salem District to liquor shops that were situated outside the district.

All advertisements of intoxicating liquor were banned. The task of enforcing the Act was entrusted to an augmented police force. The Excise staff was withdrawn from the district. A prohibition officer was appointed to assist the police in the preventive work. The village officers were also required to assist the police. The whole work was performed under the direction and supervision of the Collector and the District Magistrate. Taluk and village Prohibition Committees were formed to enlist public co-operation.
Personal permits were granted to a limited number of persons of well known status who by habit were accustomed to the use of foreign liquor and keep in possession of only small specified quantity of such liquor at any time. As against a population of 24,33,972 the total number of such permits issued till the end of March 1938 in the whole of Salem District was only 77. The number of licenses issued to clubs in the district for the same period was only two. So there was no reason to suppose that prohibition was not effective because it allowed the issue of sweet toddy licenses, personal permits to a relatively insignificant number of persons and licenses to a few clubs. By means of the system of licenses and through supervision exercised by the authorities the tapping and disposal of sweet toddy were kept under very strict control.36

After the introduction of Prohibition Law in one of his speeches Rajaji remarked, “Look at the glory that would be ours if prohibition succeeds we can be an example to the whole world. Do you not want India to succeed where America has failed”?37

The Prohibition Act of 1937 was extended and introduced in North Arcot, Chitoor and Cuddapah districts from 1 October 1939. Ameliorative measures similar to those adopted in Salem were carried out there also. That resulted in general improvement in socio-economic and rural lives of the people particularly this policy became very popular among the people of rural areas and villages and they welcomed it whole heartedly.38
Rajaji's Enforcement Measure

To enforce the Prohibition Act of 1937, the police staff was strengthened. Such of the members of the police force known to be addicted to drink were transferred out of the district and only those among them who gave an assurance of not to indulge in drink were retained. No addicts were earmarked for special prohibition work. Village officials who had close contact with the people were specially required to assist the police and all officers of all Departments were asked to co-operate with the police in enforcing the Act. Taluk Prohibition Committees and village Prohibition Committees were constituted. Besides these official and non-official agencies, the Congress Organizations and Temperance bodies throughout the district whole-heartedly lent their support to the great experiment.39

The Madras Prohibition Act 1937 was drafted on the principle that the way of achievement of the goal of prohibition was not by local option, not by gradual reduction of number of shops, but by the bold method of total prohibition in certain selected areas large enough to maintain adequate “dry” areas within the state so as to enable the administrative machinery to gain experience and confidence. This Act repealed the Madras Abkari Act of 1886 in the areas in which Prohibition was to be introduced but retained that Act in all other areas. This Act penalized all traffic and consumption of liquor and intoxicating drugs except on medical, scientific and industrial purposes. It further provided for appointing honorary officers to help the Government in
making prohibition a success. It gave more powers to the Revenue and police officials to enforce the Act very strictly and make the prohibition measures a total success. Moreover, it also empowered the court authorities to inflict severe punishments (both cash and imprisonment) on those who violated the act.

The Madras Prohibition First Amendment Act 1938

The object of enacting the Madras Prohibition First Amendment Act, 1938 was to prohibit all advertisements of medicated wines and the like except in medical journals and in notices and literature circulated exclusively to members of the medical profession. Power to approve wines etc., as of medicinal value was to be accorded not only to the Madras Medical Council but also to other similar bodies and in the case of Indian medicines to such authorities as might be notified by the Government.

The Madras Prohibition Second Amendment Act 1938

A Bill was introduced to amend the Madras Prohibition Act 1937 further. Accordingly authority was granted to Bishops and priests for the possession of mass wine for use of religious purposes according to ancient customs.

Rajaji's Administrative Step to Compensate the Financial Loss

The most serious objection to the Government in the implement of prohibition was the loss of revenue. By way of introduction of prohibition in Salem District, the loss of revenue was amounted to sixteen lakhs of rupees per year. The total loss of revenue for the year 1938-39 was estimated to be rupees
As a result prohibition was opposed not only on the ground that it reduced the Government revenue but also it necessitated fresh taxation which proved to be heavy burden on the people.\footnote{43}

E.V. Ramasamy Naicker, a known social reformer in Tamil Nadu opposed prohibition, and questioned why prohibition should be implemented.\footnote{44} He further viewed that to make up the loss of revenue Rajaji introduced taxes which was totally unwarranted. The electricity duty, Madras Entertainment Tax, Madras Tobacco Tax and increase in registration fees were additional burden to compensate the loss.\footnote{45} Rajaji was ready to increase such fees (tax) obviously for the reason that it would fall on only the affluent and not on the poor who were caught by the temptation of consuming liquor. Rajaji told his critics that right from 1920, prohibition was a constructive program of the Congress and that his Government would impose fresh taxes to compensate loss of revenue. For the first time in the history of whole India ‘Sales Tax’ the brainchild of Rajaji was introduced in the Madras Legislative Assembly. When the Sales Tax Bill was passed by the Legislature and sent to the viceroy, there was an apprehension that the necessary assent might not be given to the Act, but Rajaji made him understand that his ministry was likely to take up the step of resigning if the assent was not forthcoming. So the viceroy gave prompt assent to the Sales Tax Act.\footnote{46}

The increase in taxation especially sales tax to overcome the revenue loss from prohibition was a milestone in the work of Rajaji as Premier. He
himself said that "the rich would have to be taxed if the poor were to be saved from the drink evil".\textsuperscript{47} The introduction of sales tax put an end to the traditional dependence of Provincial Government on land revenue. Rajaji shifted the burden from the country to the town.\textsuperscript{48}

The Government had to levy taxes on tea, coffee and on imported clothes to compensate the loss of revenue. The merchants and trading community vehemently opposed the taxation measure of the Government.\textsuperscript{49}

Lord Erskine the Governor of Madras had never liked the Prohibition Policy of Rajaji and in fact used his hostility to it in a way of challenging Rajaji's effort to reduce the salaries of the Civil servants. But he did not stand in his way of implementing the policy. On the other hand in appreciation of the policy he wrote to P.J.Griff, Finance member, Government of India ".....you and I may think that prohibition is a ridiculous policy and we may well believe that it will only result in throwing away a large amount of money without at the same time doing a great deal to minimize the drink evil".\textsuperscript{50}

On seeing the successful implementation of the Prohibition Policy in five districts of Madras Presidency Lord Erskine wrote after his return to England, "..... All that could be said was that very substantial diminution in the consumption of liquor had been brought about in the dry area, but whether that diminution will continue over a period of year is in my view still uncertain".\textsuperscript{51} Regarding the introduction of Sales Tax to compensate the loss of revenue he
wrote, "... Of course, an extensive loss of revenue resulted from the legislation, but it was made good by economies and the imposition of sales tax, which could hardly be described as unpopular with the merchant community".\textsuperscript{52}

Lord Erskine wrote to the king that prohibition had succeeded far better than was expected. The king's secretary wrote 'your Prime Minister seems to have plenty of character', he further added that the news of prohibition had 'particularly interested' the king.\textsuperscript{53}

The annual budgetary revenue of the Government in 1937 was Rupees 1.71 crores. But after the introduction of prohibition it was raised to Rupees 4.5 crores by enhanced additional taxes. It brought more hardship to the tax payers and resulted in vehement opposition from the merchant community.\textsuperscript{54}

The taxes introduced by Rajaji even today constitute the main stay of the revenues of our state.

\textbf{Rajaji's Steps in Tackling of Unemployment Problem}

The abolition of toddy shops resulted in unemployment of the toddy tapers. The income of the tappers fell from Rupees fifteen per mensem to a mere Rupees nine and taping of sweet juice was also unprofitable.\textsuperscript{55} To meet this problem Government allowed taping of sweet juice from the trees. This measure gave only partial solution. As per the statistics available as on 1\textsuperscript{st}
October 1937, about 23,109 took to agricultural occupation and 1,717 adults migrated to other districts in search of employment.56

Rajaji not merely enforced the Prohibition Act very strictly and sincerely but also undertook ameliorative measures to provide employment to the ex-tapers. District co-operative societies, Land Colonisation Societies and Land Development Banks were started. Some of the ex-tapers were absorbed in these societies, others went to cultivation which was also their former side occupation while some others emigrated to Malaya to work as laborers in the plantation. With these measures within a few years the problem of unemployment among the toddy tapers was solved without causing much concern to the Government.

Through the co-operative societies at Salem, Rasipuram and Tiruchengode, cotton and groundnuts were sold to the tune of six lakhs of Rupees per year. This benefited the agriculturalists of the district. In the same line three minor co-operative societies were started in Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Kelamangalam all in Salem district. These societies rendered meritorious service for the welfare of the people.57

The Government further ordered for the formation of Jaggery manufacturing and sales societies. The development departments of the Government conducted demonstration and taught the agriculturalists the method of making superior quality of Palmyra jaggery, coconut and Palm
Many co-operative credit societies, urban banks and thrift societies were established in rural areas. Hundreds of hundi boxes were distributed among the people to encourage and develop the habit of savings. So that the money formerly spent on drink and now saved, might not frittered away but used for the economic betterment of the family. Hence the people of Chittor, Cuddapah and North Arcot extended their whole-hearted support to the prohibition policy.

**Rajaji's Techniques in Strengthening the Prohibition Policy**

The methods employed against drink evil were followed by positive and constructive measures. For that Rajaji found out some broad, rational and practical methods of counter balancing the various motives that lead men to patronize the toddy shop. While taking measures of strict enforcement of the Act, Rajaji carried on steadily an intensive but unobtrusive propaganda against drink and at the same time to do whatever possible to provide counter attraction and to encourage Rural uplift works. Ex-addicts were provided with amusements, games, sports, tea and coffee and taught to increase their income to clear off their debts to save money and generally to raise their standard of living. For all these purposes a special Development officer was appointed to function as the personal assistant to the collector and he was assisted by two Assistant Development Officers one for the office and another for the field. Each Taluk was provided with a Rural Guide. The rural recreation clubs toured village after village, got into touch with the young men there, organised sports.
clubs, taught them village games like chadugudu and periodically held taluk tournaments in those games.

These tournaments not only attracted the people of the locality but also the people of the villages, which sent up their teams. During these gala days recreation officers addressed the crowds that assembled on the benefits of prohibition and other welfare schemes initiated by the Government. These activities kept the whole district ‘agog with enthusiasm’ and made the people understand that the grog shop was not the only place where enjoyment could be found.  

Rajaji undertook measures to brighten up village life by opening public reading rooms, public parks by providing music, as well as instruction through publicity vans. Tea market expansion board and the Coffee Chess Committee were asked to take measures to cultivate and popularize the habit of drinking coffee and tea by the ex-addicts instead of liquor. These organisations came forward to provide tea and coffee in many places for some time free and later on at a cheaper rate. As a result of that very soon the number of tea shops and coffee shops in the district increased. Social and economical conditions in rural areas considerably improved by organizing holiday exhibition bhajans, rural uplift schools and thrift movement.
Appreciation and Advantages of the Prohibition Policy

Mr. A.F.W. Dixon, the collector and District Magistrate of Salem, very much inspired by the ideas of the Premier, implemented the Prohibition Act with great zeal and did his best for the success of the programme. It is quite clear from the periodical reports, which he submitted to the Government in which he stated that prohibition in the district of Salem was a great success beyond the expectations of the Government. He even accepted that the Prohibition Act had produced marked improvement among the poverty stricken classes, which stood much in need of help and reformation. It resulted in the general improvement in the standard of living and reduced indebtedness on the part of the poor. Socially it resulted in betterment of life, a better outlook on life steadier and more stable character.

The implementation of this policy very much improved the social and economic conditions of the poor people. After this the workers absenteeism in factories disappeared and their quality of work and discipline distinctly became better, their earnings increased and their dress and health also vastly improved.

Women folk warmly welcomed the prohibition policy. It brought remarkable changes in the day-to-day life. It put an end to street brawls and family quarrels very much improved the good supply especially at the evening meal, improved cleanliness and children welfare very much reduced
indebtedness gave more hopeful outlook on life and untold miseries of many families disappeared.

Prohibition was a substantial boon to the weavers. It had not in the least reduced the stamina and output of laborers, on the other hand it had increased them. It had contributed to a 'phenomenal improvement in the moral and social life' of the people in general. It very much reduced crimes and improved social harmony. It had benefited every body and for all these reasons which ever party might come to power it should be retained.65

Till prohibition was actually suspended every one reported that the money that formerly found its way to liquor shops was now usefully spent on better food and better clothing. The balance amount was utilized to liquidate previous liabilities or spent on jewels or investment in thrift societies. There was now more harmony in family life that prohibition was considered a great blessing by all especially by the women.66

Set Back to the Prohibition Policy

Rajaji introduced Prohibition with the good intention of improving the condition of the Depressed Classes in the Madras Presidency. Illicit distillation and illicit tapping slowly began to raise their heads. It was partly due to the gradual waning of public enthusiasm and largely due to the sudden waxing of incomes of the working classes with the outbreak of the Second World War. With the British involvement in the World War II, the Government of India
declared India as a belligerent nation without consulting Indian representatives. As a protest against Indian entry into World War II Rajaji resigned on 26 October 1939. With that public enthusiasm for prohibition began to wane perceptibly. This proved that public co-operation had completely disappeared. In November 1943 the Government seeing no hope in its continuance but very hope in its discontinuance enacted Act XXII of 1943 suspending the operation of the Prohibition Act of 1937 except its section 1,3 and 6 in all the four Prohibition Districts.

The new Government continued the prohibition policy for a time being. In Chittor and Cuddapah illicit distillation was done on an extensive scale. It became life in Arkonam, Gudiyatham and Jolarpet. Even in Salem large quantities of ganja moved freely. There after this policy received a severe setback. Along with the Congress Government their policy and programme of prohibition also out went. Toddy and ganja shops were opened from 1st January 1944, opium shops were opened from 1st April 1944 and the arrack shops were opened from 1st October 1945. Thus from 1st October 1945 Prohibition vanished from Madras Presidency.

Prohibition Policy between 1946 - 1952

The prohibition policy that was followed by the advisers Government soon suffered a lot and was ultimately suspended in November 1943. Hence the period between 1943 and 1946 came to be known as the dark age of prohibition.
policy. However, in 1946 when T. Prakasam formed the Government in Madras Presidency, he followed the steps of Rajaji and introduced prohibition once again in eight districts without much difficulty. India became free from the British Control as a result of the Independence Act, passed by the British Parliament in July 1947. O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 23 March 1947. He earnestly took up the Prohibition Policy and introduced it in eight districts. Tanjore, Tiruchirappali, Madurai, Nilgiris, Guntur, Nellore, Malabar and South Kanara from October 1 1947 and in the remaining nine districts East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Vizagapattinam, Tirunelveli, South Arcot, Ramnad, Chingleput and Madras from October 2 1948. Then it was introduced in Pudukkottai and Banganapalli.

The ministry under the leadership of O.P. Ramasamy Reddiar resigned on the afternoon of April 6, 1949. Then P.S. Kumarasamy Raja formed the ministry. He also continued Prohibition Policy. The total loss of revenue during 1947-1948 and the subsequent three years would be as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Rupees in Crores</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-1948</td>
<td>6.55</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948-1949</td>
<td>9.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949-1950</td>
<td>13.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1951</td>
<td>16.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By the end of 1950, the total number of prohibition cases rose to 84,957. The consumption of denatured spirits during 1937-38 was 115,402 gallon. Whereas total quantity of spirit consumed during 1950-51 was 959,812 gallons. The Government got excise revenue to the tune of 168 crores.74

**Rajaji's Prohibition Measure between 1952-54**

Rajaji assumed office as Chief Minister of Madras state for the second time on 10 April 1952 and took a resolve to introduce prohibition all over the state irrespective of the reaction from the opponents.75 A discussion on this regard took place in the Madras Legislative Assembly on 16 July 1952. In fact at that time, the state reeled under severe famine. The economic distress of the state made even some of the Congress members to suggest the scrapping of prohibition. But Rajaji did not relent.76

Not being moved by any other consideration but motivated by the spirit of social welfare, Rajaji asked Palaniswamy Gounder, the minister of prohibition to introduce a Bill on total prohibition in the Legislative Assembly. The provision of the Bill was subsequently published in the Gazetteer on 6 August 1952. On 7 November 1952, the Bill was moved by the Minister of Prohibition in the Legislative Assembly and it was passed without any discussion on it. The same was ratified in the Legislative Council on 17 November 1952.77 This Act was largely based on the Prohibition Act of 1937, with some changes so as to suit the situation.
Opposition to the Policy

Majority of the members vehemently opposed the prohibition policy and only a few favoured it. T. Viswanathan, a member of the Legislative Assembly pointed out that the enforcement of total prohibition would be a hard task. He strongly insisted on scrapping of the policy altogether. Further he argued that prohibition was not an all India policy and as per the constitution of India, the state should endeavour to bring about it. He also emphatically stressed that the prohibition was impracticable and proved to be failure even in foreign countries. He further justified that "If a man drinks he pays and if he does not drink, he does not pay at all".78

Koti Reddy, another member, who had been the Minister in charge of Prohibition, in the Ministry of T. Prakasam contended that the enforcement of Prohibition policy in the past resulted only in widespread production of illicit liquor. He told the members that he was constrained to take the stand because he had complete knowledge of the working of Prohibition Act. D. Krishnamurthy Gownder another member also argued in support of those who opposed prohibition. He said that after the introduction of prohibition policy bootlegging had become a ‘Cottage Industry’. Before the introduction of Prohibition the addicts had to go at least five miles for drink, now illicit liquor was available at the doorsteps. As a result, even women and children stood a chance of falling an easy prey to the evil habit. Hence he strongly pleaded for a repeal of the Act.79
P. Jeevanantham, who represented the Communist Party in the Legislative Assembly vehemently, criticized the Congress policy of prohibition. He pointed out that the enforcement aspect of the policy caused many problems in the state.

Support to the Policy

All the members of the Congress Party appreciated the measure of Rajaji. They came forward to co-operate with the Government and make the policy a complete success. Palanisamy Gowndar, the minister of prohibition in Rajaji's ministry, made it clear that the Government would enforce prohibition at all costs. While constituting his ministry Rajaji wished that a woman should be included in his cabinet. Hence Mrs. Jothivenkatachalam was appointed as the Minister for Prohibition and Women Welfare. She was the first woman to become a Minister of this state after independence of India. She too believed the Prohibition Policy of Rajaji as one of the greatest moral and social reforms. Hence she devoted more attention to the propaganda side of it. She also evolved a detail scheme for effectively putting down illicit distillation in villages. A small official Committee with herself as its chairperson was constituted.

When the opposition members of the Legislative Assembly pointed out that the prohibition policy was not properly implemented and free smuggling of liquor was going on from Pondicherry (French settlement), she categorically
replied them that a great social reform like prohibition would naturally take time to become a complete success. She further added that so long as these French pockets remain this problem had to be faced.83

V.C.Palanisamy Gownder, the Minister who looked after Prohibition said that the policy had helped the poor working class that spent their hard earned money in shops, which sold toddy and arracks. He expressed the firm view that the policy had improved the morale and economic regeneration of the people of the state.

Swami Sahejananda who represented the Harijan Community in Assembly strongly supported the continuance of the prohibition policy. Dr.Soundara Ramachandran a lady social worker expressed her strong approval of the policy. She strongly pointed out that the women folk never gave their consent for scrapping of prohibition.

Rajaji's Considerative Measures

Rajaji was highly considerative while implementing the prohibition policy. Certain concessions were given. Accordingly non-Indians were given permits not exceeding eight units per month. The foreigners got their permits on the production of certificates from tourist agencies.84

Indians were also as before given permits on the strength of medical certificates issued by the Medical Officers not below the rank of a Civil Surgeon. However, the quantity of liquor to be issued to them was restricted to
a maximum of four units per month. Those Indians visiting Madras state from other state in which prohibition was in force were also given permits on the strength of the certificate health issued by the medical officers. Ganja was allowed to be consumed by registered persons alone. However, certain restrictions and regulations were imposed in sanctioning of opium permits.85

Impact of the Policy

The imposition of prohibition curtailed the financial resources of the government to a great extent. To mobilize funds and to compensate the loss, it became necessary for the Government to levy fresh taxes on textile mills and industries. Such move on the part of the Government estranged its relationship with the merchants and industrialists.86

The total revenue of the Madras state in the second six-month of 1953-54 was Rs. 1302 lakhs. While expenditure amounted to Rs. 1375 lakhs resulting in a deficit of Rs. 73 lakhs.87 Being an ardent prohibitionist Rajaji did not want to compensate the deficit by relaxing prohibition. On the other hand to equalise it the Government raised a loan of rupees 1033 lakhs in July 1953 carrying an interest at 4 percent per annum and repayable on July 15, 1963. Further Rajaji obtained loans from the Government of India to the extent of Rs. 1208.92 lakhs during 1953-54.88

The strict enforcement of prohibition by the Government of Madras Presidency created bitter resistance from the neighbouring states. Illicit
distillation and tapping of fermented toddy became prevalent in the districts of West Godavari, Nellore, Tirunelveli, Chenglepat, Chittor, East Godavari, Kurnol, Salem and Coimbatore. Hence the Government permitted as an experimental measure, tapping of dates and palmyrah for sale and consumption as sweet toddy in Vizakkapatnam, Kakinada, Narasampur and Vijayawada and the public co-operation also did not come forth upto the level of expectation.⁸⁹

The Government of Hyderabad, Mysore and Travancore failed to extend their full support to the Madras Government. Flying squad sub-inspectors were posted near the border area to detect cases. Moreover constant negotiations were also conducted with the neighbouring states. Accordingly they came forward to cooperate with the Government of Madras. They also agreed to disband all the toddy and arrack shops lying at a distance of five miles from the borders of Madras State. Thereby the free movement of illicit arrack was stopped.⁹⁰

With all these arrangements Rajaji was in a position of introducing prohibition in all the 25 districts of the province. Thus the Government of Madras introduced a social reform of vital significant and set in motion a silent but glorious revolution.⁹¹ The entire efforts of Rajaji throughout his career constituted a landmark in the history of the Madras Province. The Madras Government thereby raised a glorious monument to Gandhiji, the father of nation to whom prohibition was a cause most dear to his heart.⁹²
Kamaraj who succeeded Rajaji in 1954 was very firm in implementing prohibition policy and regulating licenses issued by Rajaji's Government. Even though the state suffered deficit budget, he did not think of increasing excise revenue. He raised even the salt price. For example according to budget estimated for 1955-1956, a deficit of rupees 116.11 lakhs was anticipated in the Revenue Account. Kamaraj did not want to raise the state revenue by relaxing prohibition. To equalise the deficit Government raised a loan of about Rs.10.5 Crores in the open market. The balance loan requirement, it decided to obtain from the Government of India. Kamaraj enforced prohibition at a time when the Central Government was considering it as a social welfare measure of immense signification. To that extent, Tamil Nadu, under Kamaraj was a model state to be emulated. Kamaraj did not introduce any radical change in the tax structure relating to prohibition. He continued the policy of Rajaji with minor modifications.
END NOTES


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