

Rajasthan Journal of Sociology

ISSN 2249-9334

Volume 4 • October 2012



Bilingual Journal of Rajasthan Sociological Association

Rajasthan Journal of Sociology

Bilingual Journal of Rajasthan Sociological Association

राजस्थान जर्नल ऑफ सोशियोलोजी

राजस्थान समाजशास्त्र परिषद् की द्विभाषीय पत्रिका

Vol. 4

October 2012

ENGLISH ARTICLES

Sociology and Social Transformation: Why Revisit this Connection today ? <i>Maitrayee Chaudhuri</i>	1
Challenges to the Discipline of Sociology in India <i>K.L. Sharma</i>	16
The Raika in a Rajasthan Village: A Study of Continuity and Change <i>G. Ram</i>	24
Religious Practices and Protection of the Environment among Tribals of Rajasthan <i>Sudeshna Parija /Gita Swami</i>	34
Cyber Crime, A Virtual Threat to Society <i>Pratibha Tahiliani</i>	48
Media Exposure among the Tribals of South Rajasthan <i>Manoj Lodha , Alka Lodha</i>	55
Changing Patterns of Leisure in Society <i>Yogesh Kumar Sharma</i>	63
Juvenile Delinquency in India <i>Alok Kumar Meena</i>	75
Socio-Cultural Context of Alcoholic Beverages in Rajasthan <i>G.L. Sharma</i>	83
Sociology and the Issue of Language <i>Anita Rathi</i>	89
Women in Rajasthan: Exclusion and Micro Level Changes <i>Arvind Mahla</i>	93
Sources of the Problems of the Youth <i>Shruti Tandon</i>	101

**Development: Socio-Cultural and
Ideological Constraints**

S.C. Sharma

111

DEBATE

**Globlization and Multiculturalism: A Threat to the
Nation-State in an Era of Globalization**

S.K. Mishra , Prabhleen kaur

116

**Rejoinder-Globalization and Multiculturalism:
Few Observations**

Mridula Bairwa

123

हिन्दी लेख

‘रागदरबारी’ का समाजशास्त्र

त्रिभू नाथ दुबे

127

राजस्थान की सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक पहचान

करुणा पांडे

138

अनुसूचित जातियां: समानता और असमानता के प्रश्न

बरदी चन्द ऐरवाल

143

आदिवासी युवा छात्राएं एवं संस्थागत मूल्य रूपान्तरण

ज्योति गौतम

150

अनुसूचित जातियों में महिला प्रस्थिति

सुमित्रा शर्मा

158

मेवाड़ में आप्रवासी आन्ध्र तैलंग परिवार और नृजातीय समन्वय

रचना तैलंग

165

BOOK REVIEWS

Doris R. Jacobh : *Sikhism and Women:*

History, Text and Experience *Prabhleen Kaur*

171

Ashwinini Despande: *The Grammer of Caste*

Madhusudan Trivedi

174

कान्ता मीणा : बालश्रम: जनजातीय शोषण के

सामाजिक-आर्थिक आयाम

एस.एल. शर्मा

177

गेल ऑम्बेट : दलित और प्रजातांत्रिक क्रान्ति

मोनिका नागोरी

179

Vidya Jain : *Peace, Non Violence and Gandhian Concerns*

Jyoti Sidana

182

Socio-Cultural Context of Alcoholic Beverages in Rajasthan

G.L. Sharma

Abstract

Alcoholic beverages have several demonisms in society, like food and as a part of food or non part of food. The beverages have linkages to various aspects. It is a customary, ritualistic, symbol of ethnicity and regional variations. Drinking is being considered as a normal phenomenon today even in developing countries like India. Drinking any of these alcoholic beverages heavily or abusively is associated with poor health and reduced longevity. There is a long folk tradition in the societies and cultures that use wine, spirits and beer successfully: that says these beverages bring pleasure to a gathering of friends. The sentiment is more than folk wisdom. The uses of alcoholic beverages have values in contradictions. While few local groups consider it a good value while others call it bad.

Key words

Mythology, Ethnicity, Gender, Tradition, Modernity

Sociology of alcoholic beverages in society is a complex phenomena. No society is escaped of liquor consumption. But rationale are specific to each social individual, group and communities. So many social processes are involved. Ritualistic roles, festival parts, the process of acculturation, leisure, work, leave, are the various dimensions associated with the drinking habits. Societies where the alcohol is used drinking is an essential demand of a celebration.

Looking to the wide prevalence of the drinking habits, the question arise as to why alcohol? The people consider it as a symbolic convenience, symbolic integration and differentiation. It is a societal need for some and symbol of bad practices for others. There are many reasons, which determines its acceptance in society. Cultural chemistry of alcohol means a bit of fun, conventionalized relative sum and social control (Gusfield, 1987). It also involves a pharmacological explanation and used for medicine. Such locations do have some kind of sociological explanations.

Today drinking is considered as a normal phenomena rather than a deviated behaviour or taboo. In terms of lives lost, the benefits of alcohol consumption may outweigh its detrimental effects in some countries. (WHO Report, 2010.) Indeed, the number of deaths "prevented" by alcohol in some age groups may be greater than the deaths caused by alcohol. This is mainly due to the beneficial effect of low and moderate alcohol consumption on cardiovascular diseases. It applies mainly to developed countries with high life expectancy where moderate amounts of alcohol are regularly taken with meals.

There is no simple threshold between the experience of drinking and the pleasure it can bring on the one hand and the pain and suffering caused by alcohol abuse on the others (Ford, G. 1988). But if we are to understand the role of alcohol in society, then at the very least you need to acknowledge the pleasure as well as the pain. Alcohol and pleasure aims to bring together existing knowledge on the role of pleasure in drinking and determine whether the concept is useful for scientific understanding and policy consideration along with health issues.

Leisure activities may be intellectual, recreational or a free-choice activities like drinking. In leisure time activities a person may indulge in his/her own free will, either to rest, to one's knowledge or to maintain one's voluntary participation in the life of community. In modern materialistic age drinking has become a normal phenomena . Alcoholic beverage are being served in parties conference, seminars as an essential and acceptable part of the event. Drinking has its impacts on health, hygiene and happiness of the social unit, the family, the community and the society at large. It has far reaching impacts on individual's whole life. Drinking alcohol affects other persons directly such as - spouse, parents, children, siblings, friends and co-workers but the problem affects indirectly millions of people. The aim of this research paper, being interdisciplinary in nature, is to assess the inter-relationship between leisure activities, drinking and health issues and to unveil the reality of related modern friends as well.

Drinking is associated with increased risk of physical injury from road accidents, falls, fires, self-inflicted injuries and violence. The presence of alcohol in the body may also aggravate injuries. A number of diseases

are wholly attributed to alcohol. These include alcoholic psychoses, alcohol-dependence syndrome, as well as some diseases affecting the nerves, the heart, the stomach, and the liver.

Socio-cultural Aspects of Drinking

In Rajasthan society has a feudal background. The life style of feudal class was not only of romanticism, but also of a luxury associated with drinking. The recipe for Rajasthan Kesar Kasturi has trickled down from the royal breweries of the past. It is made from exotic ingredients like saffron, dry fruits, herbs, nuts, seeds, roots and spices by blending them into Ghee (clarified butter), milk and sugar and then distilling them into alcohol. It was traditionally consumed like a therapeutic drink during the winter season. However, it can also be taken on the rocks in the summer season, in small quantities. This isn't a very strong drink. Kesar Kasturi is pretty much an upper class brew and is served in select places only.

In the princely states (riyasat, jagir or thikana) of erstwhile Rajputana certain dominant castes have the customary traditions of social drinking exist even today. Drinking is prevalent among these communities not only during celebrations and festivals but in daily life also. People also used liquor in worshipping bhenru-baba (bhairav) and lok-devi. Generally in shakt-cult, (devi or mata) are worshiped with prasaddaru.

Royal families in the state hold on to several exciting, authentic, aristocratic recipes of beverages like-mahansa and asha were very popular. Rajasthan State Ganga Nagar Sugar Mills (RSGSM) has launched six brands of Royal Heritage Liquor, i.e. Royal Kesar Kasturi, Royal Jagmohan, Royal Elaichi, Royal Rose, Royal Apple Orange and Royal Saunf. It has further launched two premium brands viz. Royal Chandr-Hass and Mawalin.

Mahansar is a village in the Shekhawati region in Rajasthan. It was founded in 1768 by the branch of Shekhawats. It is located in Jhunjhunu district near the trifurcation of Jhunjhunu, Churu and Sikar districts. Mahansar region is very well known for its famous heritage liquor, it will not be a hyperbole to say that it is the region of Rajasthan that has kept the traditional brewing system in India alive. Rajendra Singh Shekhawat (Director Shekhawati Heritage and Herbal Pvt. Ltd.) is from the 8th generation of Mahansar royal family. He wants to take Mahansar on international arena regarding its heritage liquor. It is also known for the

Sone-Chandiki Dukan dating from 1846. It incorporates gold leaf in its intricate paintings.

Asha is an other old royal heritage drink, originally developed under the patronage of the Maharaja of Udaipur. Asha Liquor is made from over 40 ethnic Indian spices and herbs - including cinnamon, almond, clove and saffron amongst others. The drink is targeted at connoisseurs who seek "the mystical aura of the true oriental experience". The UB group's flagship spirits company reigning this royal heritage drink, Asha Liquor, in its portfolio. The revamped product is now being marketed overseas, which could bring in sizable revenues from overseas.

Kalal (Mewara, Syhalka, Jaiswal, Tank etc.), a liquor dealing caste, are traditionally involved in the profession of alcohol. Sansi, Kanjar and Bagariya like castes are also indulged in illicit business of liquor. Such cases were identified by their association with liquor production and selling.

Mahua is widely used in preparation of moonshine (indigenous beverage) in Southern Rajasthan. Bhil and Bhil-Meena tribal communities produce and consume Mahua based liquor. Mahua (*Madhuca Latifolia*) is large, handsome, deciduous or semi-evergreen tree native to India. It has thick leathery leaves and small, fleshy, dull white musk-scented flowers which appear beautifully in clusters near the end of branches. Mahua is one of the most important trees in the tribal belt of Central India and that's too because of its delicious & nutritive flowers. The tree has got cultural and economic importance. The flowers are edible and rich source of sugar, protein, vitamin & minerals. Mahua is a significant source of food for tribal people in Central & Western India. Its sweet flowers are eaten unprocessed or cooked. Though almost all of flowers collected in tribal region are utilized for liquor production, there is huge potential and technologies available for product diversification of Mahua. It is used for curing rheumatism. Medicinally, it has immense usefulness ranging from common, everyday illness to chronic ones like bronchitis, rheumatism, diabetes, pile or bleeding gums.

The tribal food is associated with the consumption of liquor. The Bhils drink liquor daily the consumption of other beverages do not constitute the part of Bhil food. Manufacturing of liquid is done by Bhil themselves. This is part of their culture (Doshi 1995). However, the liquor

among Bhils is not only for drinking purposes. Ritualistic ceremonial occasions are marked by presenting liquor to gods and deities, which they worship (Naik 1956).

Village studies also reveal a wide spread prevalence of drinking among different castes. Generally the reports reveal that Brahmins do not usually take liquor. However, most of the other castes, especially the lower castes do take liquor. Ritualistic use of liquor for little tradition region is very much prevalent in Rajasthan (Gupta, 1961). Alcoholism and Mental Health Major depressive disorder occurs in heavy drinkers and those who abuse alcohol. Controversy has previously surrounded whether those who abused alcohol who developed major depressive disorder were self medicating (which may be true in some cases) but recent research has now concluded that regular excessive alcohol intake itself directly causes the development of major depressive disorder in a significant number of alcohol abusers. Alcohol misuse is associated with a number of mental health disorders and alcoholics have a very high suicidal rate. A study of people hospitalized for suicide attempts found that those who were alcoholics were 75 times more likely to go on to successfully commit suicide than nonalcoholic suicide attempters. In the general alcoholic population the increased risk of suicide compared to the general public is 5-20 times greater. About 15 percent of alcoholics commit suicide. Abuse of other drugs is also associated with an increased risk of suicide. About 33 percent of suicides in the under 35 years are due to alcohol or other substance misuse.

Traditional Drinking and Health Issues

There's a long folk tradition in the societies and cultures that use wine, spirits and beer successfully that says these beverages not only bring pleasure to a gathering of friends. They can also improve our health. A Russian saying "Drink a glass of schnapps after your soup and you steal a rule from the doctor."

The sentiment is more than folk wisdom. The evidence is increasingly clear that the moderate consumption of alcohol is associated with greater health and increased longevity. The truth is that the benefits come from the substance alcohol and they come from using it in moderation. The media attention a few years ago to the so-called "French

Socio-Cultural Context of Alcoholic Beverages in Rajasthan

misconception that the health benefits are limited to red wine, and that simply isn't the case. There are equivalent benefits from the moderate consumption of spirits and beer. Is there a way for us to overcome our confusion and ambivalence about use of alcohol in this country? A good place to start is by paying attention to traditions and cultures outside our own that do use alcohol successfully and with less controversy than us. They include Italian, Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, and Jews. We in this country can benefit a great deal by learning from the experience of these societies in which most people use alcohol with few problems.

References

- Dixon, S.L. (1995). *Anthropology of Food and Nutrition*. Jaipur: Rawat.
- Ford, G. (1988). *The Benefits of Moderate Drinking: Alcohol, Health and Society*. San Francisco, California: Wine Appreciation Guild.
- Gupta, C.S. (1961). *Census of India Village Monograph: Rang Mahal*. Census of India, Government of India Publication.
- Naik, T.B. (1956). *The Bhils*. Delhi: Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh.
- WHO (2010). *Global Status Report on Alcohol*.
- G.L. Sharma & Vishweswaraiya Nagar Jaipur