

# Do you think opening of liquor shop during lockdown is justified? (1)

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Liquor is a State subject. In States like Telangana, 65% of the income of the Government is through liquor, and is close to sufficient for running the Government. That is the reason States are eager to restart liquor under the lockdown. But, that is fraught with risk and danger, as drinkers are queuing up in long lines for liquor, again violating social distancing. It is a social evil with which we have to live under any circumstances. If a section of people are addicted to liquor, the State governments are addicted to revenue from liquor. One third of gross revenue of most State governments is derived from sale of liquor. Let more people be addicted!

During the lockdown, most of them were able to live without liquor, while a small section enjoyed rationing the liquor from their stock-piles. But overall, they were restrained and were able to live a normal life sans liquor.

Whether the war against the COVID-19 is won or not, measures to revive economy took off or not, people are safe or not; the State governments have shown where exactly their interest lies and what specifically their target is at this moment. But it has a side effect which will create chaos during lockdown:

- Domestic violence: You will see more domestic violence cases as people will drink, stay at home and lose their self control.
- Coronavirus spread: You have already seen pictures of long queue without following physical distancing on news channels and in this post as well
- More Negativity: Drinking alcohol clearly has important effect on social behaviours, such as increased aggression, self-disclosure, sexual adventuresomeness, and so on. A part of the blame should also be shared by the public. They are least bothered about the closure of barber shops, pan bunkers, snack bars, food canteen, etc. In fact, a section of people were pressurising government to open liquor shops. Schools, colleges, shops, offices, petty traders, tradesmen like mechanics, electricians, AC mechanics, can wait. The other day, a Pan Shop got opened in Surendranagar, Gujarat, and a huge crowd surrounded it for Pan and chewing Tobacco! For people addicted to liquor etc., the satisfaction of their own selfish desires is more essential than fighting the COVID-19. The common notion among people is that 'Roti kapda makaan' (bread

clothes shelter) are the most important things. But look at what's the priority for the government! The temptation to earn revenue is so tone-deaf for the governments across the states that they have simply made the pandemic a mockery. The people queuing up in front of liquor shops are being called 'economic warriors'. Rose petals are being sprinkled on the people waiting in queues, almost putting them at par with our healthcare workers, police and others who are risking their lives to minimise the spread of this virus!

No matter how much the government may earn, it will become a cause for SPREAD of VIRUS. This will reflect badly on the means the govt has adopted to get revenue. If as per the allegations and complaints, there is no money or earnings in the public, how is that the liquor consumer has enough money? Is consuming wine an essential part of life or to sustain life?

The black market is so rampant in different parts of the country, that wine is sold at 3 to 4 times the actual permissible price. The question raises another situation. As the vendors are pocketing the difference in price, but is even one vendor going to pay the tax at the price he has sold? Will he account for the entire sale value?

The consumption of liquor when encouraged will also give rise to law and order problems, violence, lawlessness, flouting of authority of the government officials, indiscipline will mount to newer heights and those who are expected to work will not be as productive as they should be, drunken brawls will become common day affair.

So either it shouldn't have been banned for so long in first place and the government should have anticipated that they might need to open wine shops in future and should have allowed restricted sales from beginning, or the government should have continued with the banning decision and in case where it was too necessary to open it, then it should have been managed better.



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