



Total liquor ban inimical for Chhattisgarh: CIABC

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Amid talks of prohibition in Chhattisgarh, the Alcoholic Beverage Companies have urged the Bhupesh Baghel Government not to consider total liquor ban in the State as it would prove detrimental to State's growth and progress. In its letter to Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, the Confederation of Indian Alcoholic Beverage Companies (CIABC) said the State needs to consider the case of Bihar which is facing deep financial and law and order problems due to failed implementation of prohibition. CIABC has also drawn attention towards the example of Gujarat which has taken more practical approach while implementing partial prohibition to safeguard interests of tourists while banning liquor.

CIABC letter also highlights how states like Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala

first hastily implemented prohibition only to roll it back to safeguard interests of the state and its people. Similarly, in many states political parties included prohibition in their manifestos but failed to implement it after coming to power due to practical difficulties.

"Prohibition also has consistently failed to bring about any social and health benefits, while during prohibition drug abuse increases manifold. Prohibition also affects tourism with the MICE (meetings, conferences, expositions) industry being worst hit. Finally, the cost of enforcing prohibition becomes enormous and proved counter-productive", CIABC Director General Vinod Giri said. According to Giri the apex body of alcoholic beverage companies have sought time from the Chhattisgarh CM to present their view point. Chhattisgarh government earns Rs.5200 crore every year from excise tax apart from GST

earning which comes from sale of dry goods worth Rs.750 crore used by the industry.

Referring to Bihar's failed experiment with prohibition Giri said that liquor ban has crippled state judiciary and police administration as today there are over 40,000 bail applications related to prohibition pending in various courts. "Nearly 40% of all jail incarcerations in Bihar are estimated to be prohibition related. Jails are overflowing. Even the prominent Beur Jail of Patna has now nearly 100% more inmates than its capacity. Situation in smaller jails is even worse," Giri said.

Prohibition in Bihar was imposed on the premise that it would result in a significant social dividend given state's extreme backwardness on economic and health parameters. Four years down the road, there is no evidence of any such gains, while there has been no improvement in law and order situation.