



**Transformation of Lives from  
Illegal Liquor Traders to Dignified  
Labourers, Solapur (Maharashtra)**

## Innovation (District)

**S**olapur, the largest district of Maharashtra. Solapur shares a border with the Karnataka state. The problem of illicit liquor/illicit liquor dens (tandas) is critical in Solapur and has been prevalent since pre-independence. The handmade hazardous illicit liquor manufactured in dens has not only killed many people in previous incidents because of poisonous characteristics but also has come forward as the cause of social tensions and domestic violence in the various parts of the country as well as the state. The geographic location of the Solapur is conducive to the transportation of raw material and manufactured liquor as well as hiding purposes to the neighbouring state in wake of police action, making the problem complex in nature.

Operation Parivartan is a movement initiated to transform the lives of the people of the Solapur district of Maharashtra who were involved in the illegal liquor trade and give them numerous alternate means of livelihood. The people involved in the production, sale and distribution of liquor have been motivated

to change their businesses and were given a helping hand by providing financial assistance. Several attempts were made to stop the illicit liquor trade in the past but failed due to the reluctance of the people. This paper focuses on how Operation Parivartan, a positive campaign could bring out the people from such an illegal business. The campaign played a vital role in revitalizing them to start a new life full of respect, dignity, pride, satisfaction, and happiness.

Illicit liquor in this context is a handmade country liquor manufactured in dens that are hazardous to health and consumed mostly by low-income groups. This liquor can lead someone to death and it can also give rise to many diseases related to the liver.

## Issue

The issue of illicit country liquor in Solapur has been a top priority of Solapur Rural Police for many years hence raiding these dens remained a regular agenda of the police department. Solapur Rural Police decided



to evolve an alternative and sustainable strategy. Firstly, identifying the problem which is underlying the issue of illicit liquor was a major concern. Solapur Rural Police realised that these historically marginalized communities involved in business hardly have any knowledge about alternative livelihood. The police or excise department action was restricted to raids and seizing of liquor. The police also realised the fact that even after the periodic police raids, a longer frequency of raids kept this business profitable to people. These two crucial realisations i.e. necessity of rehabilitation of the people and finding out the modus of operation to make the business unprofitable for involved people led to the conceptualisation of 'Operation Parivartan'.

## Strategy

- To stop the production of illicit liquor completely on a sustainable basis and prevent the mishaps like mass poisoning and casualties on a proactive basis.
- To reduce the criminal incidents, social conflicts, and domestic violence associated with illicit liquor.
- To ensure alternative, sustainable and dignified livelihoods for marginalized people involved in the business of illicit liquor.
- To create an amiable atmosphere between the police and the community.

## Approach

Operation Parivartan began in August 2021 with an integrated approach for solving the problem of illicit liquor permanently. 'Operation Parivartan' consisted of four components.

- A) Regular and frequent Action/Raids
- B) Counselling
- C) Rehabilitation
- D) Awareness among its addicts, an integrated approach to solving the problem of illicit liquor.

The team could achieve success with the help of the four stages.

The police department spent considerable time in planning 'Operation Parivartan and bringing clarity to the police force towards the new approach through their training. Formal circulars were circulated to all the police stations of Solapur Rural District for better clarity to the team involved in the initiative.



## Impact

The project has brought a revival in the lives of these families by facilitating the ladies for stitching and embroidery training sessions and helping them with the new business. The stitching training was imparted to 41 women with the help of Udyog Mahamandal through MITCON. Out of which 30 ladies decided to make sewing their profession. Industrial sewing machines were made available to them through loans from Lead Bank. The women who used to produce illicit liquor are now busy manufacturing shirts, school uniforms, aprons, and several other products. They have proudly named their small unit "*Parivartan Udyog Samuh*". The Success of Parivartan Udyog Samuh motivated the team of Solapur District police to take a further step. Banjara ladies have embroidery skills and they prepare their traditional costumes on their own. As it is regularly worn by only old ladies from the family or only on festivals, it didn't have market. After several discussions, the concept of a new version of the old embroidery skill came up. The team decided to give the traditional weaving skills a modern



outlook. KKSSP Pune took many efforts in this regard. Around 40 sessions of 2 hours each were conducted in various villages/ Tandas and around 300 women were trained. After training, they were motivated to make products like embroidery sarees, blouses, jackets, kurtis, dupattas, cushion handwork, jewellerys, decorative items, wall hangings, etc. The capital required for raw material was

made available through a Government scheme called “Umed” An exhibition was arranged at Solapur headquarters to introduce these products to the market. Going one step ahead the team is now trying to provide online platforms for their products. Recently their products are introduced on Flipkart with the brand name “Gormati Art”. At present 215 women are actively involved and are getting benefitted.

Awareness is the last component of the integrated approach. Awareness drives have been organised for the people who consume this illicit liquor to convince them not to consume this poisonous liquor.

## Outcome

- Succeeded in *stopping the production of illicit liquor by 75-80 %*. It proved to be an honest proactive approach to prevent the mishaps like mass poisoning/hooch deaths.
- Reduced the criminal incidents, social conflicts, and domestic violence associated with illicit liquor. The number of total body offenses registered till September 2021 is 2270, it has come down to 2152 in 2022 for the concurrent period. It *shows reduction in body offences by 5.19 %*. If crime against women is seen separately, it has come down from 528 in 2021 to 485 in year 2022. *This shows decrease in women related crime by 8.14%*.
- Facilitated alternative, sustainable and dignified livelihoods for marginalized people involved in the business of illicit liquor.
- Achieved success in bringing the marginalized communities bearing a social tag of criminal in the mainstream. Succeeded in transforming the lives of illicit liquor traders to dignified labourers. *714 families are rehabilitated till date*.
- This initiative has helped in improving the relations between the police and citizens. As a result, the reduction in incidences of police-public conflicts is seen in year 2022.