

7 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP INTERACTION

Three focus group interactions were held, one each in town, rural and slum areas. The slum group consisted exclusively of women, while the others were mixed groups. The number of individuals who participated varied from 16 to 25. Some of the key points which emerged are:

- ◆ The increasing problem of alcohol use was acknowledged.
- ◆ There was general agreement that alcohol use is under-reported especially among the not-so-frequent drinkers and among women.
- ◆ Women alcohol-users are generally older, with 'problem families' or are restricted to certain sections of the community.
- ◆ The chronic alcohol-users spend nearly 50–70% of their earnings (daily or weekly) on alcohol.
- ◆ Peer pressure promotes and sustains the drinking habit.
- ◆ "It is very difficult to stop (the habit) once people start".
- ◆ Nowadays women do not tolerate being abused/beaten by alcoholic husbands; more so when they do not undertake household responsibilities; "when he has consumed alcohol, let him come (home), eat and sleep silently, why should he beat me".
- ◆ It is difficult for other families in the neighbourhood to intervene: "it is not like earlier days when they used to help".
- ◆ Doctors generally say 'do not drink', but we need more help (referring to those who would like to quit the habit).
- ◆ Interventions should be planned and implemented at college level.
- ◆ Government should ban sale of alcohol or restrict the number of sales outlets "definitely there should not be an outlet in every village".

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