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End drunk driving, not hotels: HRAWI campaigns against liquor ban



Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), the apex body of restaurateurs and hoteliers of Western India, has initiated a full-fledged social media campaign on the recent issue of liquor ban. “Through the social media we will convey a few facts that, in normal times, would have been apparent. In the current state, unfortunately, facts are obscured by surround sound. The facts to be considered are alcoholism is a disease and a social evil; drunken

driving is a crime; and, hotels and restaurants serve alcohol. What is of significance is that these facts are not correlated. Any arrow of continuity that may exist is forced. The compulsive alcoholic will find ways and means for consuming alcohol and he will continue to drive after drinking. Just as locking up girls at home is not a solution for preventing rapes, banning hotels from serving liquor cannot be a solution for ending the menace of drunk driving. Drunk driving is a crime, and it should be treated as one,” says Dilip Datwani, President, HRAWI.

HRAWI will run a series of hashtags on Facebook that will try and explain some of the common misconceptions. “One million jobs, Rs. 200,000 crores loss to the exchequer, possible closure of 15,000 establishments is not a small thing. It is a huge social cost to pay. And we would not have minded being sacrificed if the ban were to yield any results. But reality is that all the job losses and other damages would be wasted. Statistics prove that there is a correlation between drunk driving and enforcement; and not between drunk driving and number of restaurants and bars. If true, there would be no drunk driving cases in Bihar or Gujarat where we have total prohibition,” adds Datwani. “Most of the affected hotels cater to city residents and not interstate drivers. We are legal licensed establishments that contribute to the nation’s GDP and have played a pivotal role in the growth of the nation’s tourism. With a single stroke the industry has been crippled. HRAWI has always promoted responsible drinking,” says Kamlesh Barot, past President, Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI).