

Liquor tax

THE sight of a dreadfully drunk and miserable woman in Gobabis Road recently drew the attention of motorists who had to swerve their cars; pedestrians' simplistic reaction was either to laugh or shake their heads.

Alcoholism is the worst social problem in Namibia and of course it is linked to factors such as poverty.

While problem drugs such as Mandrax attract more of a sensation, there's a far easier means to contribute to solving part of the problem they present: 'Pushers' all over the world know perfectly well that they can ruin their lives having to serve stiff jail sentences if caught and found guilty.

But because liquor is so socially acceptable, no one thinks of those who sell it as people who share the same responsibility for social miseries as drug peddlars.

I would be most surprised if selling liquor does not carry one of the highest profit margins for formal and informal entrepreneurs in southern Africa.

How about a tax being charged on every drop of liquor which lines these merchants' pockets to sponsor a rehabilitation centre for Namibians unable to cope with alcoholism?

And let's face it, a broad range of people can be victims of alcoholism: from shanty-dwellers in Damaraland to inhabitants of posh Ludwigsdorf.

If owners of licenced bottle store outlets claim that informal 'cucas' and tombo sellers are equally responsible - tombo is frequently made from powder which originates from licenced shops with books to which the Ministries of Finance and Health and Social Services should have access.

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