



2022 TREND SURVEY ON **ALCOHOL**

Annual Trend Survey on
Alcohol Consumption in
Sri Lanka

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Sri Lanka 2022

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Abbreviations

ADIC	Alcohol & Drug Information Centre
COVID-19	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases

Executive Summary

Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC), Sri Lanka conducts trend surveys annually for alcohol since 1998. The trend survey analysis (also known as the SPOT Survey) is conducted under the main aim of mapping and tracing current trends of alcohol consumption across Sri Lanka. This report presents the findings of the trend survey for the year 2022 which was aimed at determining trends of alcohol consumption across the country thereby assisting policymakers in formulating effective alcohol policies that aid reduction and prevention.

Data was collected through a survey administered among the population of males above 15 years of age across 11 selected districts in Sri Lanka. Data analysis and results were formulated based on the responses obtained from a total of 2750 respondents who matched the inclusion criteria. From the study participants, 25.3% (n=694) were current alcohol consumers. This is a decline compared to the previous year (26%), as the economic crisis that started in the beginning of March 2022, has had a major impact on the lifestyle of people, affecting their social behaviour.

The sample was divided into three age groups for analysis, namely, 15-24 years, 25-39 years and 40 years and above. The majority of the users consumed alcohol on a weekly basis. The highest alcohol consumption rates were reported from the age category 40 years and above, which was consistent with previous trend surveys.

Beer was the most prominently consumed alcohol product among the majority of the current consumers, regardless of their age group and district. Toddy and other alcohol-related products were consumed at a lower rate within all age groups, districts and occupational categories. When considering the district-wise comparison, Monaragala reported the highest alcohol consumption rate, while Trincomalee reported the lowest. Initiation of alcohol use has occurred mostly during the age 18-20 years (45.2%). By the age of 20, 68.3% had initiated alcohol consumption and the most common type of alcohol product consumed at initiation was beer (55%). Majority of the users have initiated consuming alcohol products with friends and at parties, which shows that peer influence and pleasurable environment had mostly accounted for alcohol initiation.

Only 17.6% of the respondents had been successful in quitting alcohol consumption at the time of administering the survey, which indicates that more than three-quarter of the sample has not been able to quit. The reasons for quitting alcohol use were different among the three age groups. However, financial issues and health concerns were the two most common factors for quitting, while some mentioned they had no special reason.

The study findings emphasize the need of alcohol taxation, pricing policies and effective alcohol prevention strategies to reduce alcohol initiations and overall alcohol use in the country. The study also provides a platform for further discussions on the importance of delaying or preventing initiation and banning sales of alcohol products for underage persons.

1. Introduction

Harmful effects of alcohol use on health, social and economic wellbeing have been proven globally. Alcohol use is responsible for 5.1% of the global burden of disease, with 3 million deaths a year being reported worldwide, also leading to disabilities and poor health of millions of people¹. Alcohol causes acute non-communicable diseases. Among these health-related issues are seven types of cancers, alcoholic cirrhosis, weakened immunity and mental health disorders. Other social issues of alcohol use include road accidents due to driving under alcohol influence and violence.

Sri Lanka's present economic and political crisis has casted great hardship upon its citizens and has created the greatest provocation to the government. Various factors, mainly economic mishandling have contributed to the prevailing crisis. While tax reductions, money creation, and national policy shift towards organic and biological farming have been serious causal factors of the current crisis, additional factors such as the Easter bomb attacks, and the COVID-19 virus also played a role in advancing the prevailing issues in the country². The ongoing crisis entails record levels of inflation, a depletion of foreign reserves, rapidly depreciating currency, inability to pay for imports, and increasing interest rates by the central bank. In May 2022, Sri Lanka defaulted on its debt for the first time in its history and consumer price inflation rate breached 50 per cent³. Shortages of food, fuel, medication, and other essential supplies, resulting from the crisis have increased the public resistance towards the government, causing the political crisis to become more intense⁴.

During such circumstances, the economic hardships faced by people have increased their burdens. Therefore, people are more focused on addressing accessing their daily basic needs. In a context like this, the alcohol industry continuously engages in marketing strategies to draw people's attention towards their products. The existence of positive correlation between alcohol consumption and exposure to alcohol advertisement is well established through research⁵. Alcohol industry mainly targets people through manipulating content in social media platforms with a timely relevance. The industry is also focused on promoting the image of alcohol specifically targeting the period of crisis in the country.

Therefore, the year 2022 alcohol trend survey findings put emphasis on the need to implement and facilitate the policy development, awareness programmes, and stronger institutional capacities at the community and national level to efficiently address the alcohol consumption and its harm on people's life.

¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/alcohol#tab=tab_1

² George, A., George, S., Basker, T. (2022). Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis: A Brief Overview. Partners Universal International Research Journal. 01(02), pp.9-16. [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/361571361_Sri_Lanka's_Economic_Crisis_A_Brief_Overview/link.

³ Kataria, A., Manur, A., Pradhan, s. (2022). Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis: Takshashila Case Study. [Online]. Available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/618a55c4cb03246776b68559/t/630b994699ba8e6bb2c7a5b4/1661704524368/TCS+Sri+Lanka+Economic+Crisis+V1.1+26August2022.pdf>

⁴ Sharma, D., Anawade, P., Sahu, A., Sharma, M. (2022) The economic crisis faced by island nation- Sri Lanka: An empirical study. Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government. 28(03), pg.920-926. [Online]. Available at: https://www.cibgp.com/pdf_18176_9787c3ef8018c40d413c4b98d7afa6e7.html.

⁵ de Buijn A, Engels R, Anderson P, Bujalski M, Gosselt J, Schreckenber D et al. (2016). Exposure to online alcohol marketing and adolescents' drinking: a cross-sectional study in four European countries. Alcohol. 51(5):615–21.

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of the 2022 alcohol trend survey analysis are as follows.

- Determine different trends of alcohol use within the country in terms of different products, age groups and districts.
- Analyse the trends of alcohol use and compare the results with surveys conducted in previous years.
- Identify the underlying attitudes and reasons for using alcohol among different age groups, and districts.
- Determine the age of initiating alcohol use.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study method

The trend survey for the year 2022 was conducted following the same methodology which has been continued for the past two decades, to keep the consistency of the results. However, this had been a challenging time period due to the economic crisis in the country, which led to a drastic increase in all costs and issues such as fuel shortages. But the challenges were successfully met, with the engagement of data collectors in all locations who have been specifically trained and have been working with ADIC for a long period of time.

2.2 Study locations

The survey was conducted in 11 districts in Sri Lanka. The districts which were selected as study locations were Jaffna, Matara, Monaragala, Trincomalee, Rathnapura, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa, Kalutara, Puttalam, Kilinochchi and Colombo.

2.3 Sampling

2.3.1 Sample Design

Same as in the previous years, multi-stage sample design was used in the study.

2.3.2 Inclusion Criteria

Male population above 15 years of age who were residing in Sri Lanka at the time of the survey were included as respondents for the study.

2.3.3 Exclusion Criteria

Females were not included in the study as consumption rate of alcohol products among females is relatively less compared to males in Sri Lanka. Males who were under 15 years and any Individuals who were not residing in the selected districts at the time of the study, were excluded from the survey.

2.3.4 Sample Size

From each district, 250 participants were included in the survey. Therefore, the total sample size was 2750 from all 11 districts.

2.3.5 Sampling Method

Firstly, through a randomized batch selection process, one district was selected from each of the nine administrative provinces in Sri Lanka, to obtain a representative sample of the whole country. This procedure was repeated three times to select three batches of districts out of which two were included in the previous surveys in the years 2020 and 2021. The third batch was used for the current survey in 2022. Colombo and Jaffna districts are automatically included every year as important districts. With this inclusion, 11 districts were included in total, in the survey.

In the next stage of sampling, age was divided into three sub-groups as 15-24 years, 25-39 years, and 40 years and above, to obtain a representative sample of males above 15 years. Since it was found from the previous surveys that the first two age groups have lower usage, it was purposively oversampled. Therefore, the planned sample allocation for the chosen age groups were 40%, 40% and 20% respectively. This was determined based on population figures from the census and statistics. However exact sample size might have had slight variations during the study.

Table 1: Planned allocation of survey participants

Age group	Sample allocation	Per district	Per age group
15 – 24 Years	40%	100	1100
24 – 39 Years	40%	100	1100
40 Years and above	20%	50	550
Total	100%	250	2750

2.4 Data Collection

Data collection was carried out using an interviewer-administered questionnaire, which contained 37 questions in total (Annex 1). The first few questions were developed for gathering demographic information of the study participants. Few questions were reserved for the contemporary issues directly affecting alcohol and tobacco use. The rest of them were composite questions which were developed to obtain information regarding both alcohol and tobacco consumption. The questionnaire was initially prepared in Sinhala and later translated into Tamil. Both Sinhala and Tamil questionnaires were administered in the field according to the language preference of the respondents.

Data collection was carried out by trained data collectors, and the survey was conducted in September 2022.

2.5 Data Analysis

Data collected by the survey was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and figures that represent trends were compiled using Microsoft Excel.

Trends of alcohol use were analysed in different aspects and the following terminologies were defined and used for this purpose. Three groups, namely, current consumers, last 30-day abstainers and lifetime abstainers were identified. 'Current consumers' were defined as individuals who have consumed alcohol within the past 30 days at the time the survey was administered, while 'Last 30-day abstainers' were individuals who had consumed alcohol all long, however, have abstained during the past 30 days at the time of the survey. Individuals who have never consumed alcohol in their lifetime were referred to as 'lifetime abstainers'. Apart from initiation and cessation, the rest of the study results were obtained based on the responses of current consumers. Key analysis of this report is based on the response of current consumers.

3. Results

3.1 Survey responses based on district

A total of 2745 valid responses from males above 15 years were received with an overall response rate of 100.0%. However, the response rate for each question may vary from the overall sample. A summary of the status of responses from all 11 districts is stated below.

Table 2: Survey responses based on district

District	Province	Age Group			Total
		15-24	25-39	>=40	
Colombo	Western	87	124	39	250
		34.8%	49.6%	15.6%	100.0%
Kilinochchi	Northern	87	109	52	248
		35.1%	44.0%	21.0%	100.0%
Puttalam	North-Western	88	112	50	250
		35.2%	44.8%	20.0%	100.0%
Kalutara	Western	93	116	41	250
		37.2%	46.4%	16.4%	100.0%
Polonnaruwa	North Central	85	124	41	250
		34.0%	49.6%	16.4%	100.0%
Nuwara Eliya	Central	89	105	44	238
		37.4%	44.1%	18.5%	100.0%
Rathnapura	Sabaragamuwa	91	119	40	250
		36.4%	47.6%	16.0%	100.0%
Trincomalee	Eastern	62	145	48	255
		24.3%	56.9%	18.8%	100.0%
Monaragala	Sabaragamuwa	96	110	44	250
		38.4%	44.0%	17.6%	100.0%
Matara	Southern	88	121	41	250
		35.2%	48.4%	16.4%	100.0%
Jaffna	Northern	72	106	76	254
		28.3%	41.7%	29.9%	100.0%
Total		938	1291	516	2745
		34.2%	47.0%	18.8%	100.0%

3.2 Demographic Information of the study participants

This section consists of the demographic information of the survey respondents. It represents the distribution of respondents based on the age categories, level of education and occupational sector.

3.2.1 Survey responses based on age

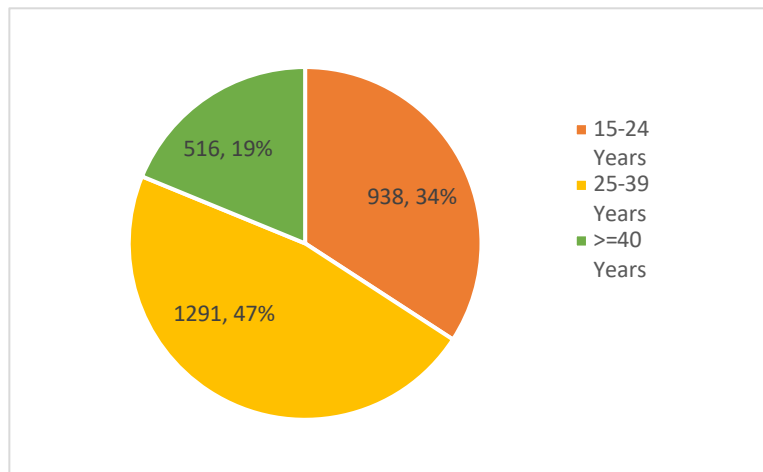


Figure 1: Survey responses based on age

From the respondents, the majority (47%) belonged to the age group 25-39 years. 34% were in the age group 15-24 years and 19% were in the age group 40 years and above. These figures showed a slight deviation from the initially allocated figures.

3.2.2 Survey responses based on education level

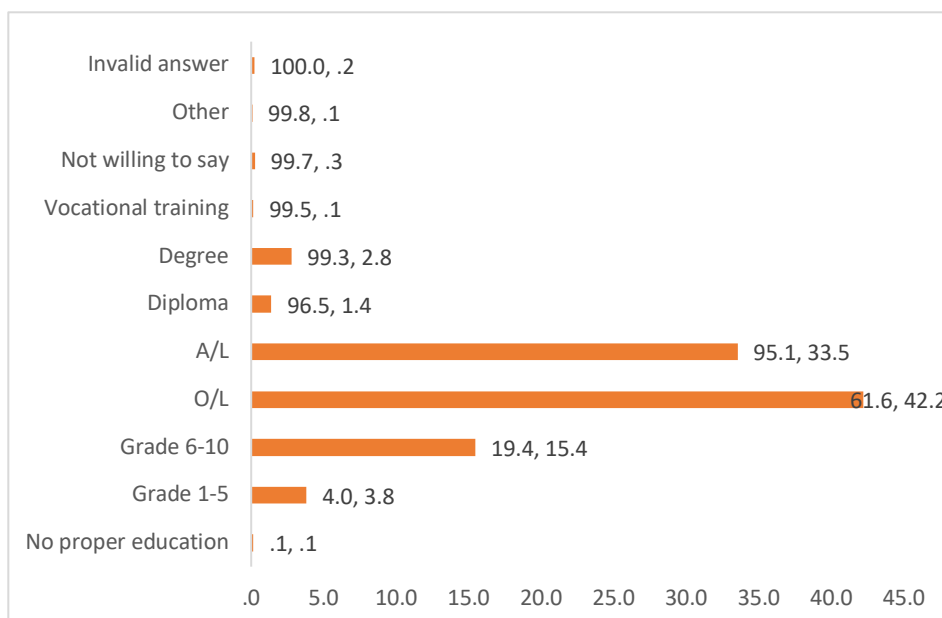


Figure 2: Survey responses based on education level

The respondents belonged to various education levels. The highest percentage of respondents (42.2%) stated that they have completed G.C.E. Ordinary Level (O/L) while 33.5% of the respondents have completed G.C.E. Advance Level (A/L). Apart from that, 15.4% have only continued their education only up to grade 6-10. The sample also consisted of Degree (2.8%) and Diploma (1.4%) holders.

3.2.3 Occupation sector of the survey respondents

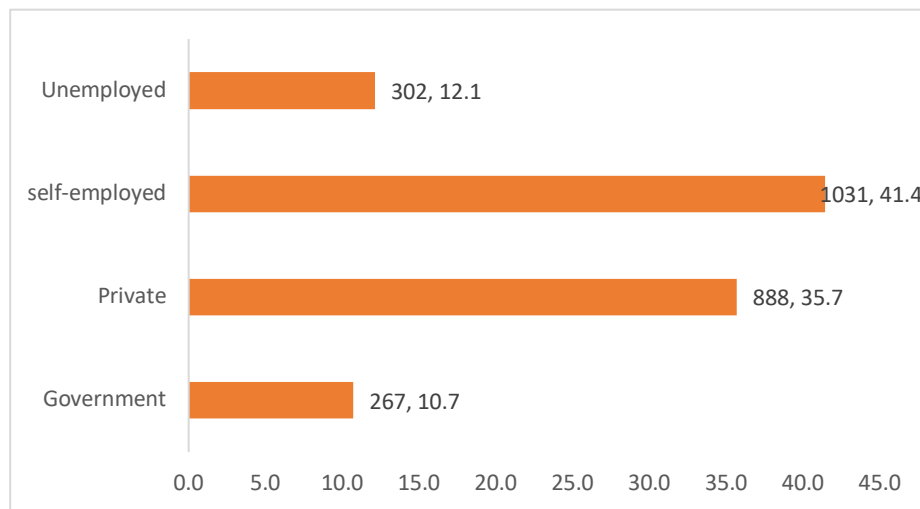


Figure 3: Occupation sector of respondents

The highest percentage of the survey respondents were self-employed (41.4%), while the second highest percentage was reported in the private sector (35.7%). From the respondents, 12.1% were unemployed, and the lowest percentage (10.7%) were reported in the government sector.

3.3 Results obtained from the survey

3.3.1 Status of alcohol consumption among the study respondents

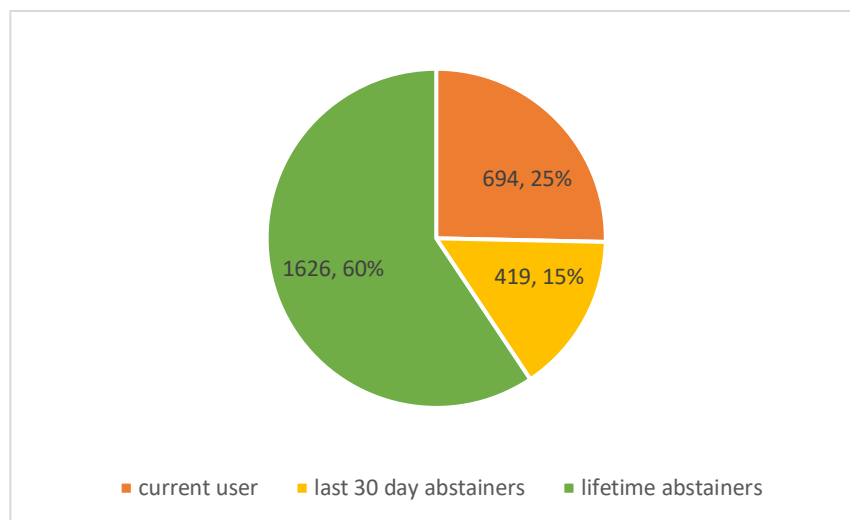


Figure 4: Status of alcohol consumption

According to the survey findings, more than half of the respondents were lifetime abstainers (59.4%). Only 25.3% of the respondents were found out to be current consumers, while 15.3% had reported that they had not consumed alcohol during the last 30 days at the time of the survey.

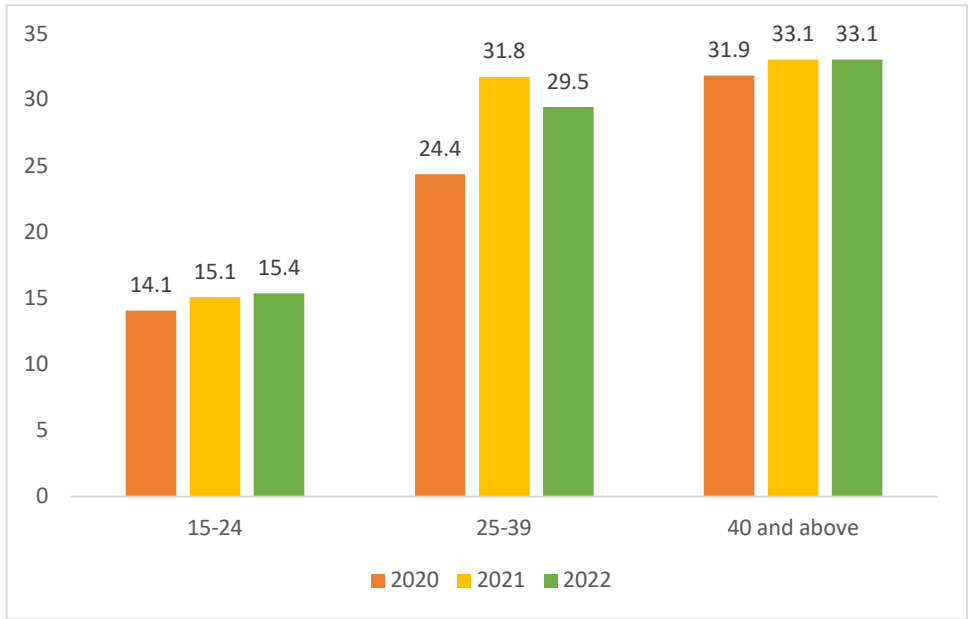


Figure 5: Comparison of alcohol use within the 3 age groups among 3 consecutive years

The above figure shows a comparison of the consumption of alcohol in the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. An increase in alcohol use can be observed in the 2 age groups 15-24 and 40 and above within the 3 years, while the age group 25-39 years show a decrease in alcohol use from 2021 to 2022.

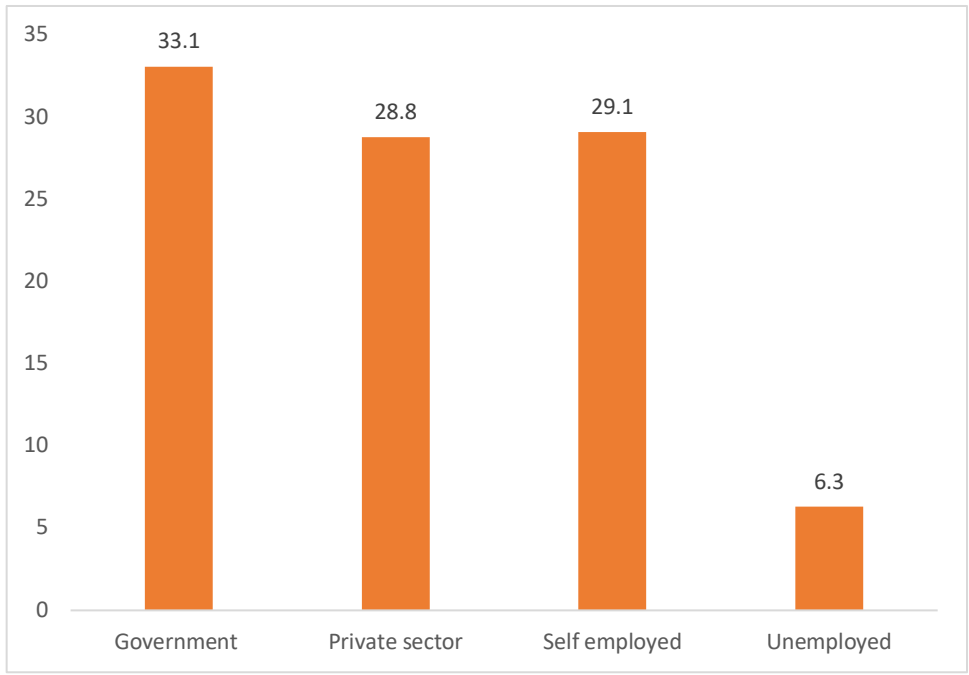


Figure 6: Alcohol consumption by occupational sector

The participants from the Government sector represented the highest percentage in alcohol consumption (33.1%), while the unemployed group reported the lowest rate (6.3%). Moreover, the self-employed participants represented the second largest alcohol consumption (29.1%).

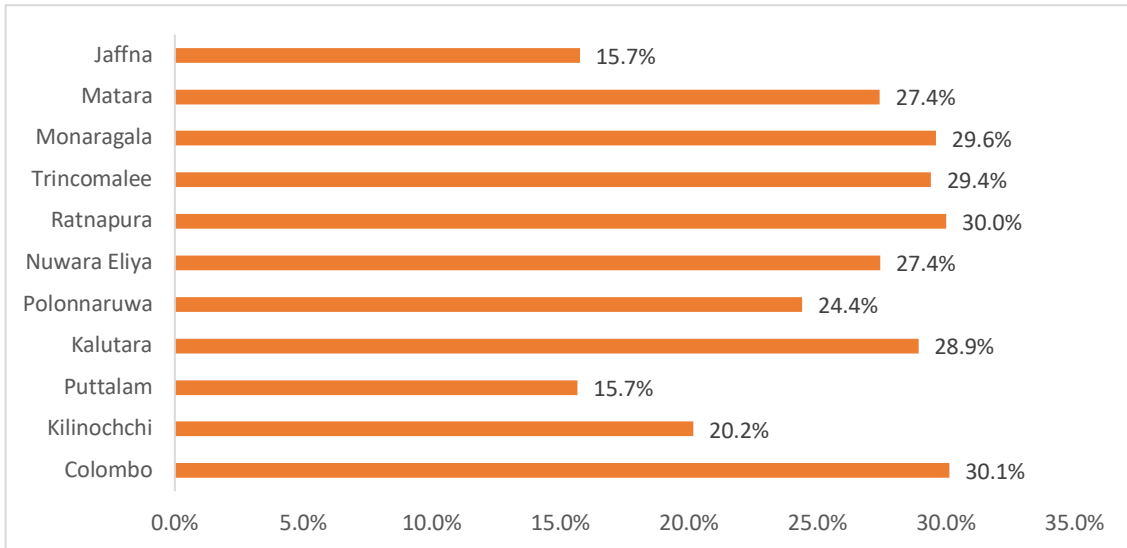


Figure 7: Status of alcohol consumption by district

When considering the districts included in the survey, the highest percentage of alcohol users was reported from Colombo district (30.1%) while the second highest percentage was observed in Rathnapura district (31.0%). The lowest number of alcohol users was observed in Jaffna (15.7%) and Puttalam district (15.7%).

3.3.2 Frequency of alcohol use among the study respondents

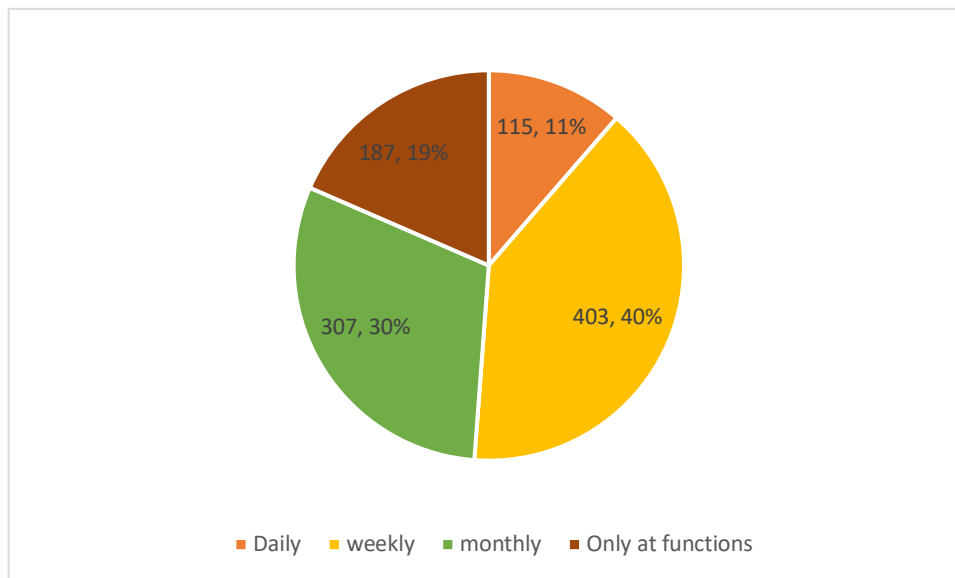


Figure 8: Frequency of alcohol use among current consumers

It was observed that the majority (40%) of the respondents were weekly users while the lowest percentage of respondents (11%) used alcohol daily. From the participants, 30% of the users reported that they consume alcohol monthly, while 19% of the users consumed alcohol only at functions.

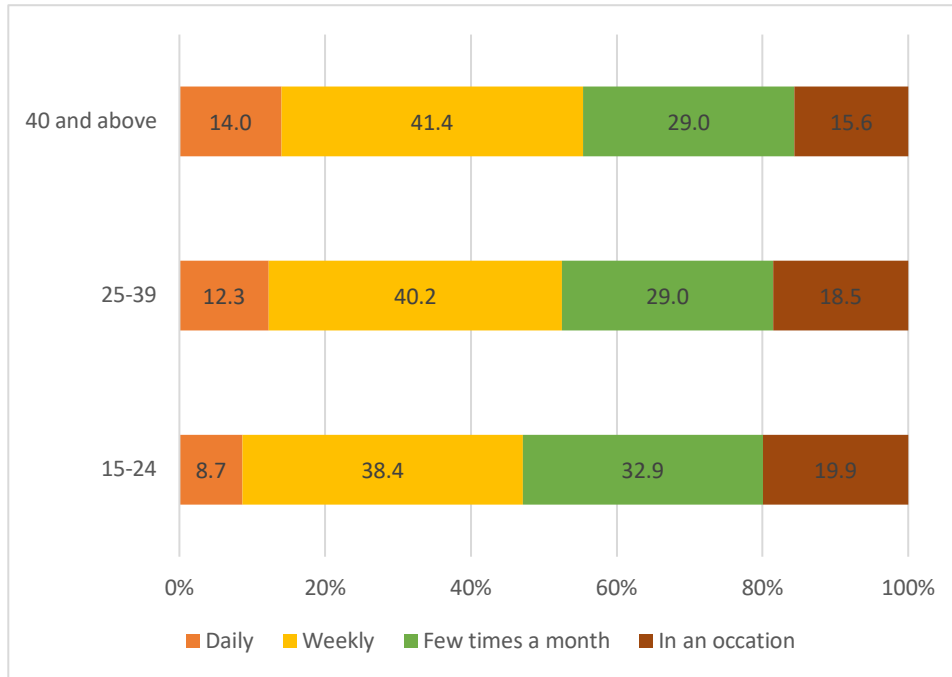


Figure 9: Frequency of alcohol consumption by age group

In all three age groups, majority of the users were weekly alcohol consumers. The age group 40 years and above showed the highest percentage of weekly alcohol use (41.4%). In all the age groups, only few percentages consumed alcohol daily.

3.3.3 Types of alcohol products

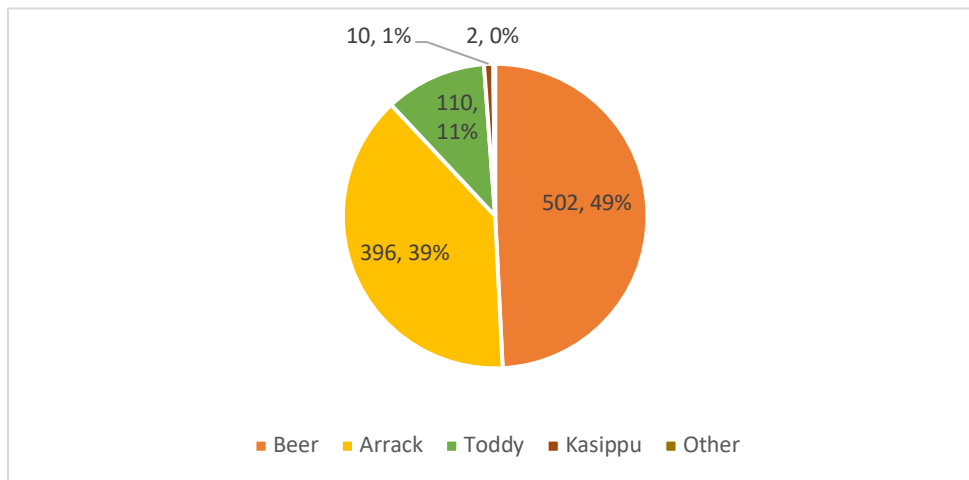


Figure 10: Alcohol consumption by type

Beer is the most popular type of alcohol product. Among the users, nearly a half of the study participants have reported the commonly consumed alcohol product as Beer (49%). The second most popular product is Arrack (39%), while only 11% of users consume Toddy. Very few percentages have reported the use of other alcohol products such as kasippu, which was not specified in detail as the consumption rate is very low.

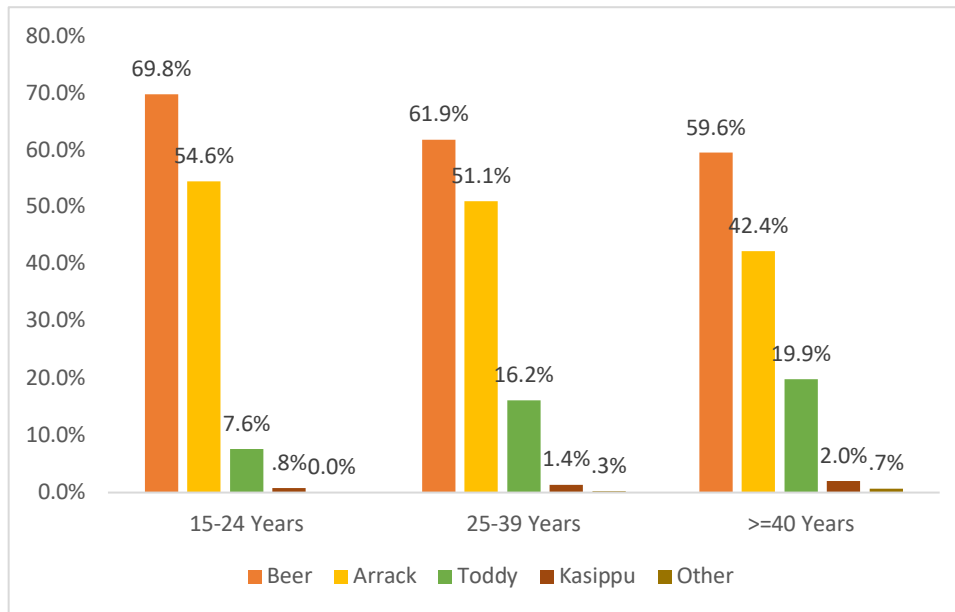


Figure 11: Types of alcohol products consumed by different age groups

Beer shows the highest consumption in all 3 age groups (15-24 years: 69.8%, 25-39 years: 61.9% and 40 years and above: 59.6%). Arrack is the second highest consumed product among all 3 age groups. Toddy consumption is low among the 3 age groups compared to arrack and beer. Kasippu is also consumed at a very low prevalence in all three age groups, but consumption of other types of alcohol products in the three age groups is almost negligible.

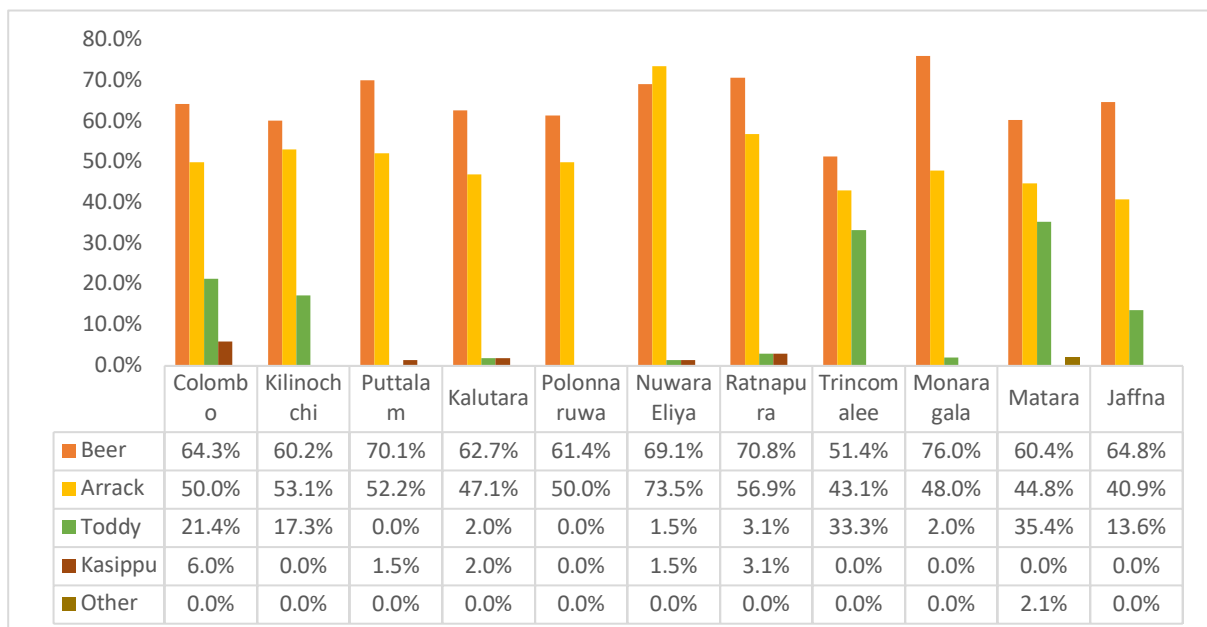


Figure 12: Alcohol products used by current consumers at district level

The three main types of alcohol products identified in all districts are again Beer, Arrack, and Toddy. From the study locations, Toddy consumption is highest only in Matara district. All other districts showed a high consumption rate of Beer and Arrack with only slight variations. Beer consumption was highest in Monaragala and Rathnapura districts.

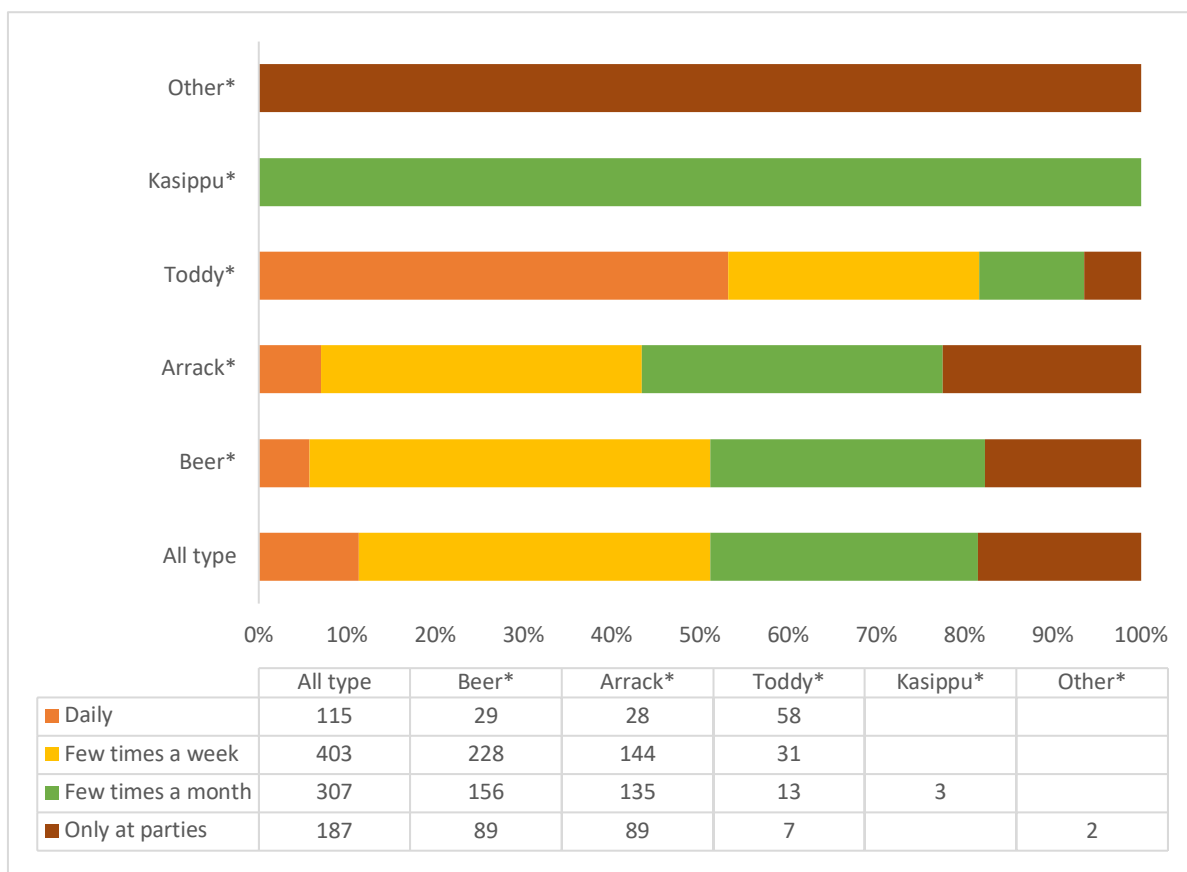


Figure 13: Frequencies of consuming different alcohol products

The above figure is an indication of how often different alcohol products are consumed among the respondents. Kasippu was mostly reported to be consumed monthly, while other alcohol products seem to be mostly consumed only at parties. Toddy showed the highest daily consumption rate, while beer was reported to have the lowest daily consumption rate.

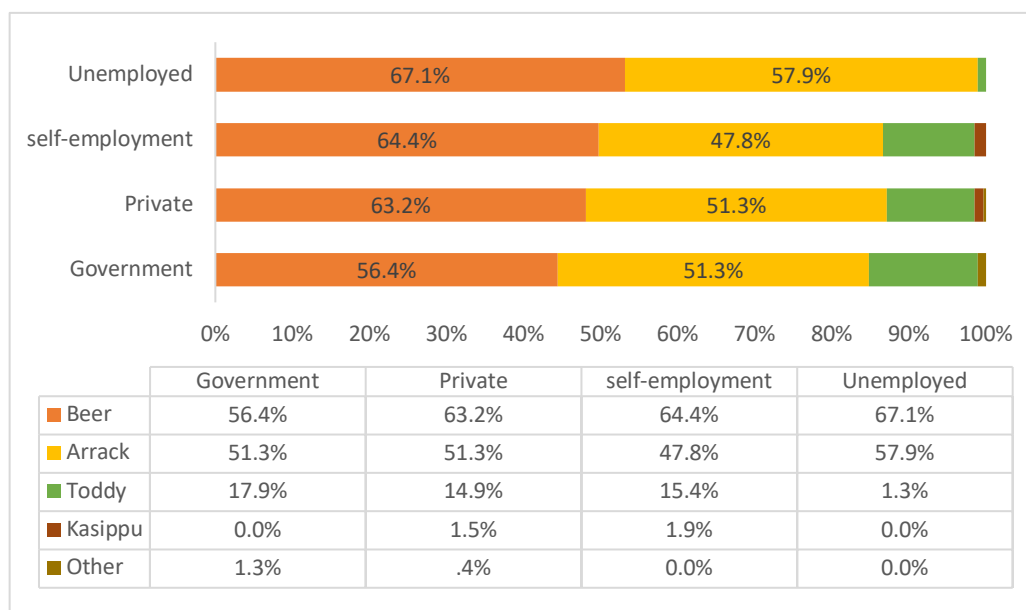


Figure 14: Consumption of alcohol products by occupational sector

Beer and arrack remain as the most prominently consumed alcoholic beverages among individuals in all occupational sectors. Out of these two products, Beer was identified as the most used alcohol product among all sectors, while arrack was the second most used alcohol product. Highest beer consumption rate was reported from the unemployed group (67.1%), while the highest arrack consumption rate was also observed in the unemployed group (57.9%).

3.3.4 Alcohol initiation

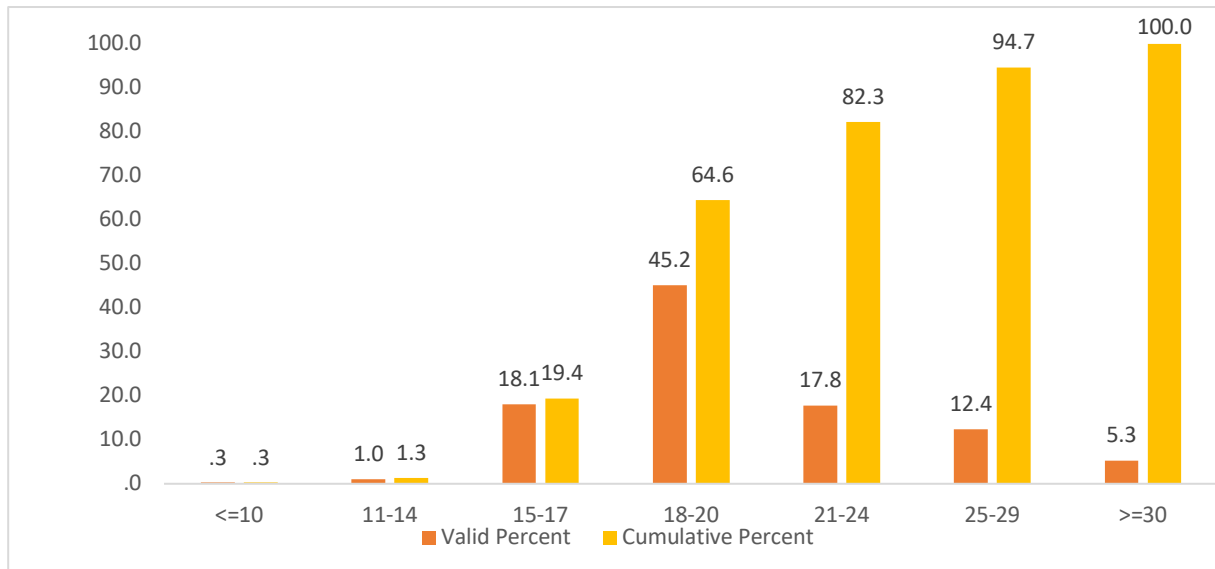


Figure 15: Alcohol initiation age

The highest percentage of initiations (45.2%) was reported at the age range of 18-20 years.

Table 3: Initiation age by age group

Age group	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Skewness	F value
15-24	245	18.04	18.00	1.941	.156	.098	5.218
25-39	574	20.52	20.00	3.561	.102	.574	.000
40 and above	279	22.92	21.00	5.971	.146	1.466	
All	1101	20.58	20.00	4.400	.133	1.738	

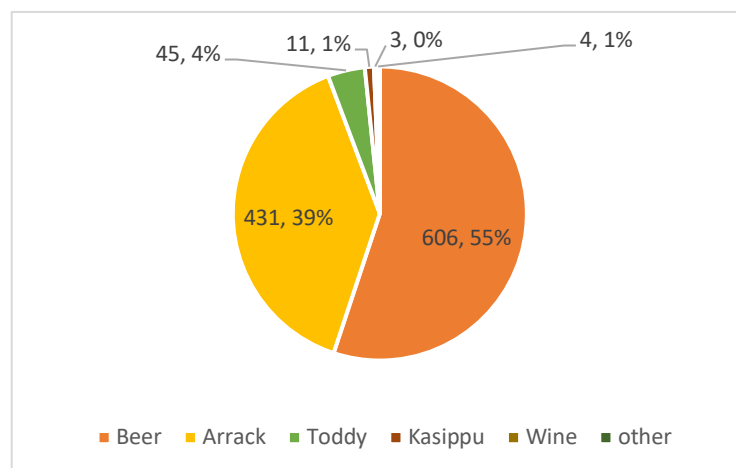


Figure 16: Type of alcohol product consumed at initiation

At the time of initiation, the highest percentage of users (55%) had used beer, while the second highest percentage of users (39%) had used arrack. Consumption of toddy, Kasippu and other alcohol products is very low.

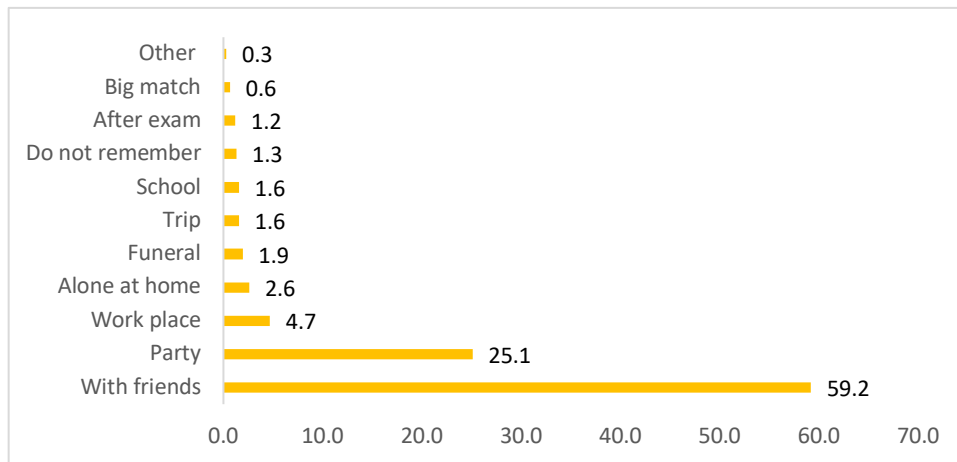


Figure 17: Alcohol initiation occasion

The highest percentage of respondents (59.2%) has reported that initiation of alcohol use occurred with their friends, while several other reasons were given by other users. Parties was another common occasion (25.1%) which caused onset of alcohol use among the respondents.

3.3.5 Cessation of alcohol use

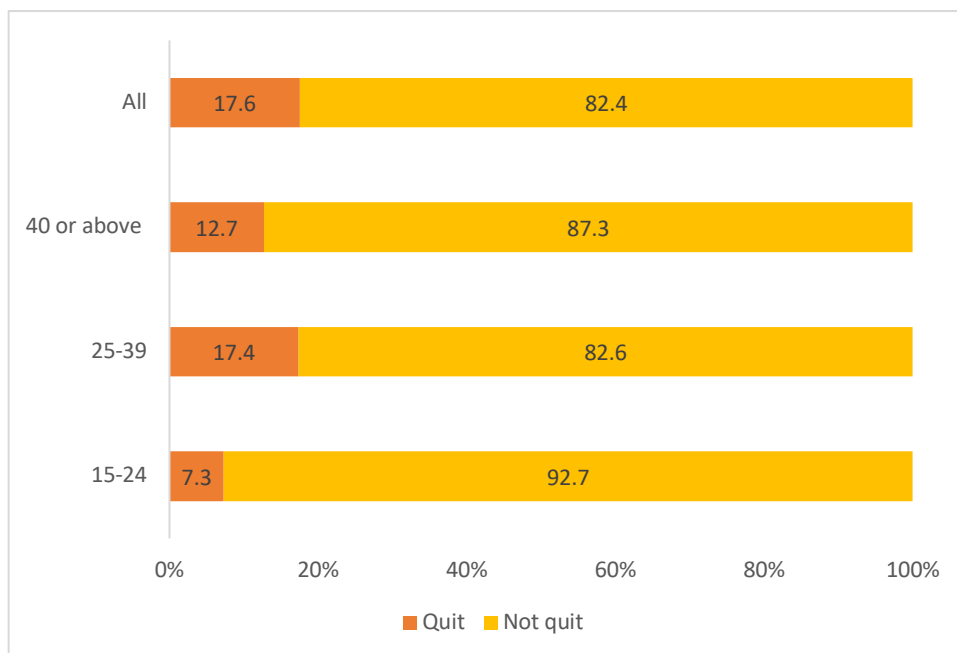


Figure 18: Quitting alcohol consumption

From the respondents, the majority was unable to quit the habit (82.4%), while only 17.6% of the current consumers have quit alcohol use at the time of the survey. In all three age groups, the percentage who were unable to quit the habit of drinking is quite high, compared to the percentage who have ceased alcohol use.

Table 4: Cessation of alcohol use by age group

	No. of respondents	Mean quit age	Std. Deviation	Min-Max
Overall	101	31.06	11.935	15-82
15-24	22	19.09	2.543	15-23
25-39	46	27.65	4.542	17-36
40 or above	33	43.79	11.385	28-82

Table 04 presents the statistical data of the quitting age of alcohol consumption. According to the statistical analysis, the mean age for alcohol cessation is 33 years.

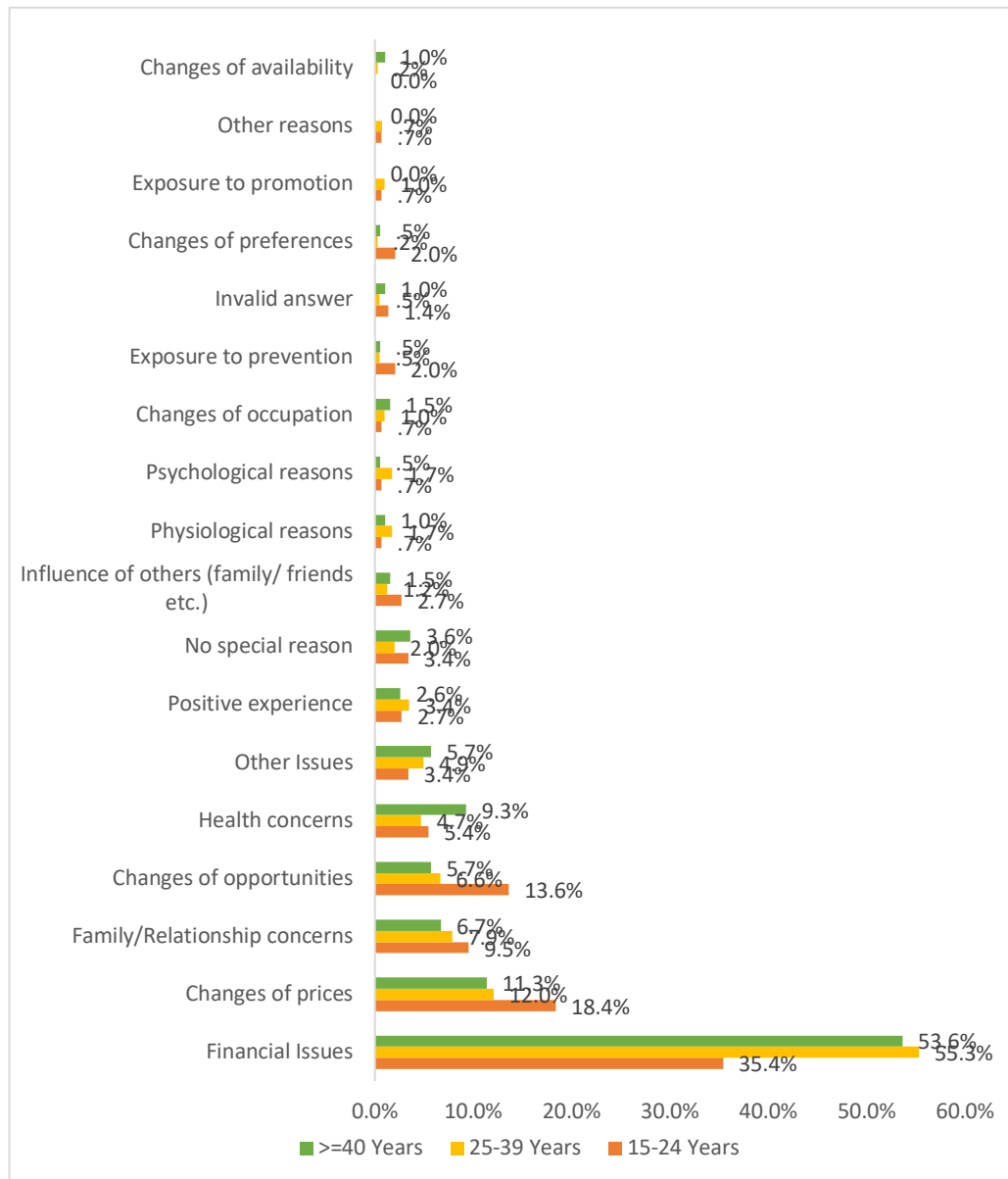


Figure 19: Reasons for quitting alcohol use

During the survey, the users in all three age groups were asked about the reasons which caused them to change their alcohol consumption pattern in the six months prior to the survey. Financial issues were mentioned by majority of the respondents in all three age groups. According to the responses of the study participants, changes in prices was also reported as an important reason for reducing alcohol use.

3.3.6 Expenditure on alcohol

Table 5: Monthly expenditure on alcohol among different age groups

	Number of respondents	Median (in rupees)	Interquartile Range (in rupees)	Min - Max (in rupees)
Age group				
All current users				
15-24	144	3840.00	7335	1160-56000
25-39	379	3840.00	4705	360-28800
40 and above	170	4000.00	6640	240-15600

Table 5 represents data on monthly expenditure among current alcohol consumers based on the age category. Median value of the monthly expenditure is highest among the age group 40 years and above (Rs. 4,000.00).

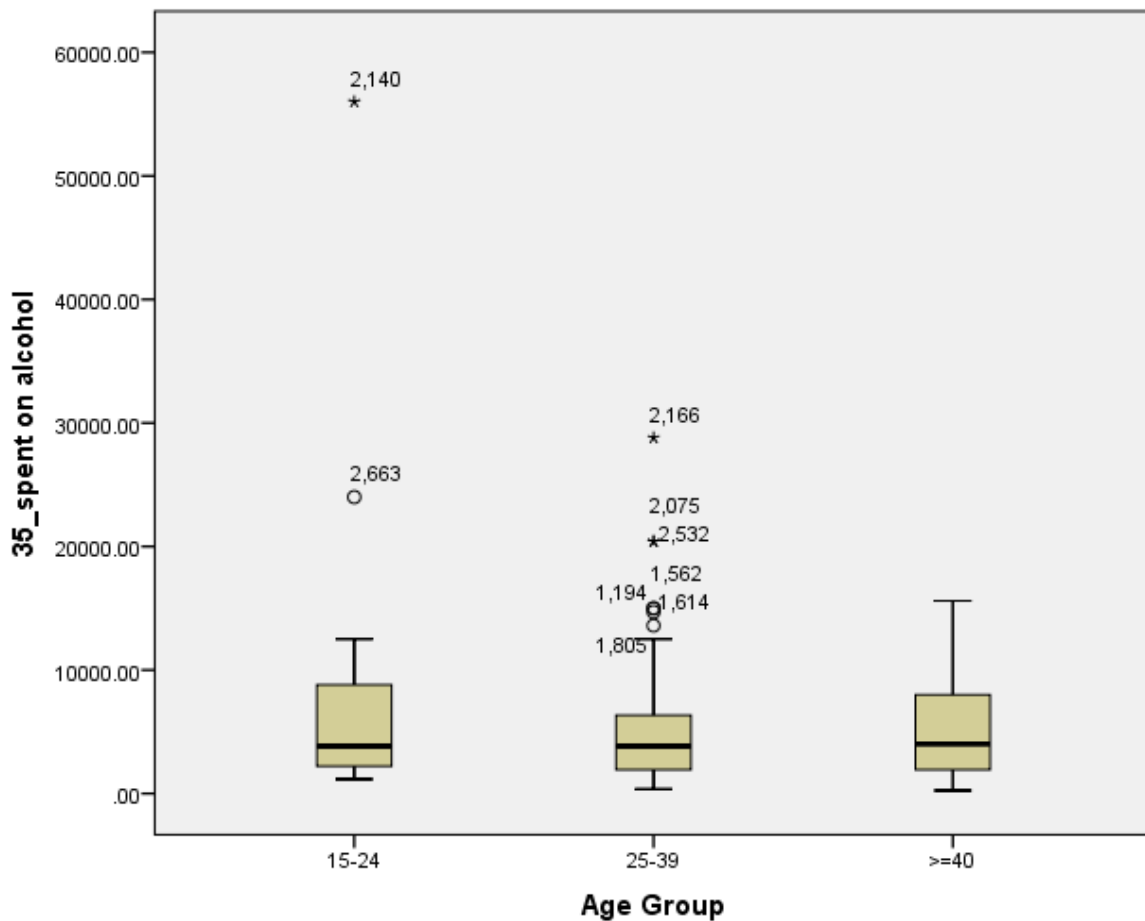


Figure 20: Monthly expenditure on alcohol by age group

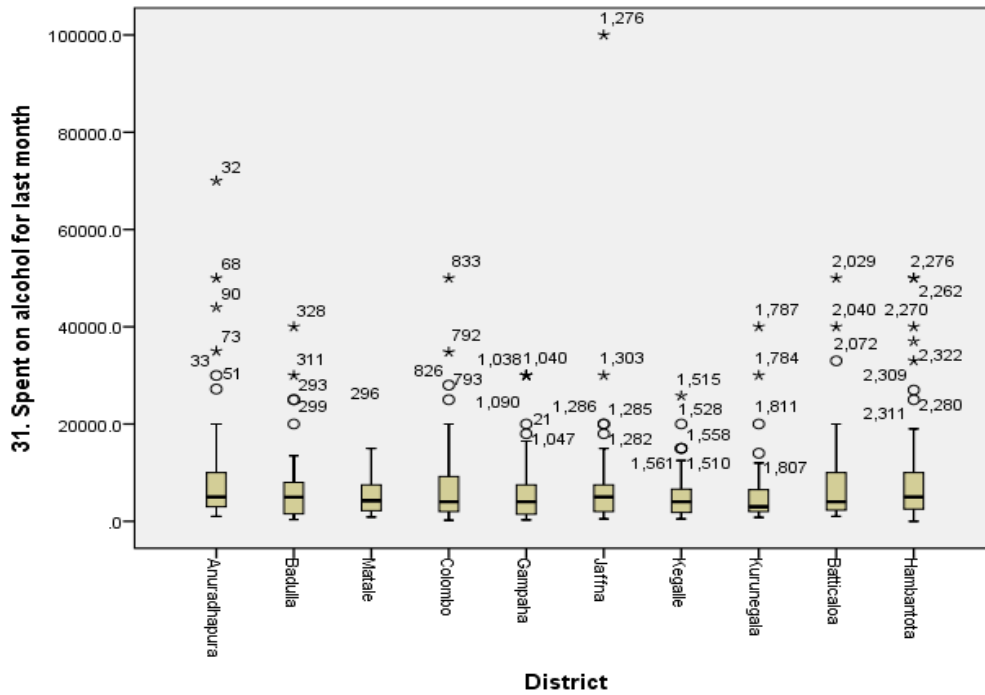


Figure 21: Monthly expenditure on alcohol by district

3.3.7 Miscellaneous results

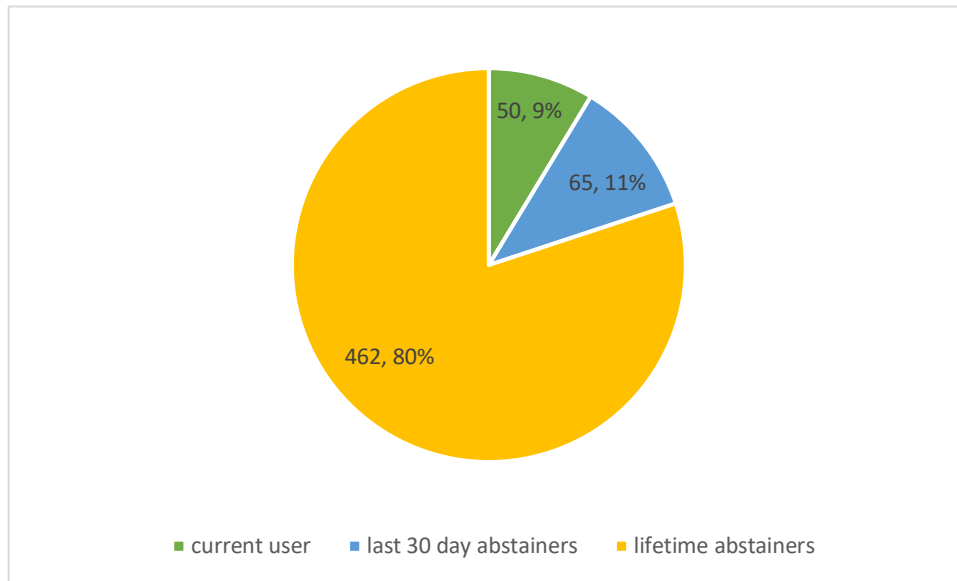


Figure 22: Status of alcohol consumption below 21 years

In Sri Lanka, the legal age for consuming alcohol products is 21 years. However, through the results obtained from the survey, it was identified that there is still a percentage of 9% (n=50) under the age of 21 years who are current users of alcohol, even though the majority (80%) of this age group are lifetime abstainers.

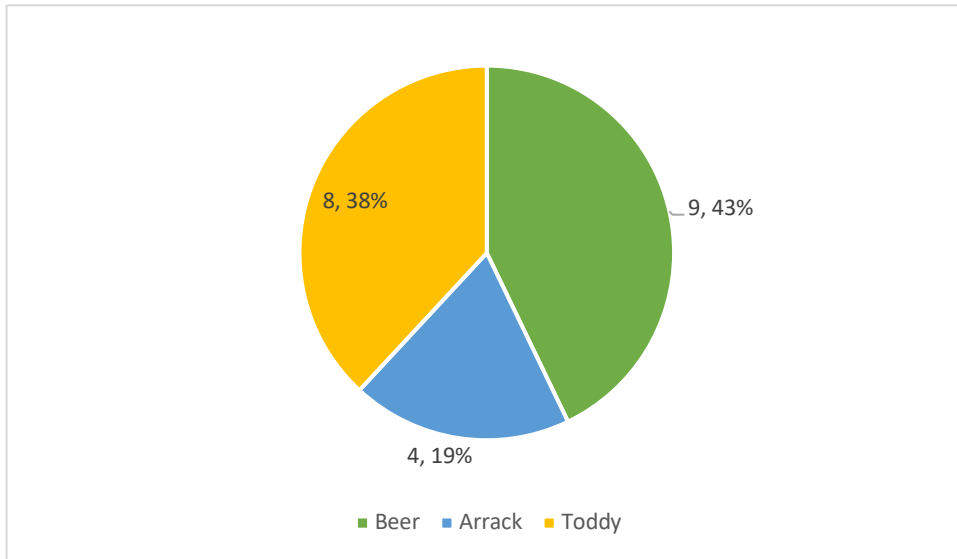


Figure 23: Type of alcohol products used by consumers below 21 years

The majority (43%) of the current alcohol consumers below the age of 21 years have reported that they consume beer while the second most popular product (38%) was reported as toddy. Consumption of arrack is fairly low among this age group (19%).

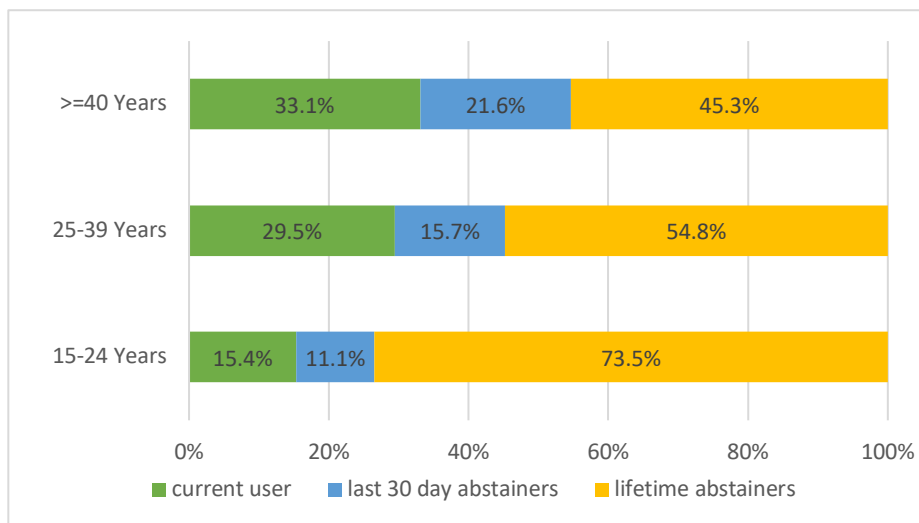


Figure 24: Usage of alcohol within the three age groups

In all three age categories, lifetime abstainers were prominent. From the three age groups, the highest percentage of lifetime abstainers was present in the age group 15-24 years (73.5%). Current users were highest in the age group 40 ears and above (33.1%).

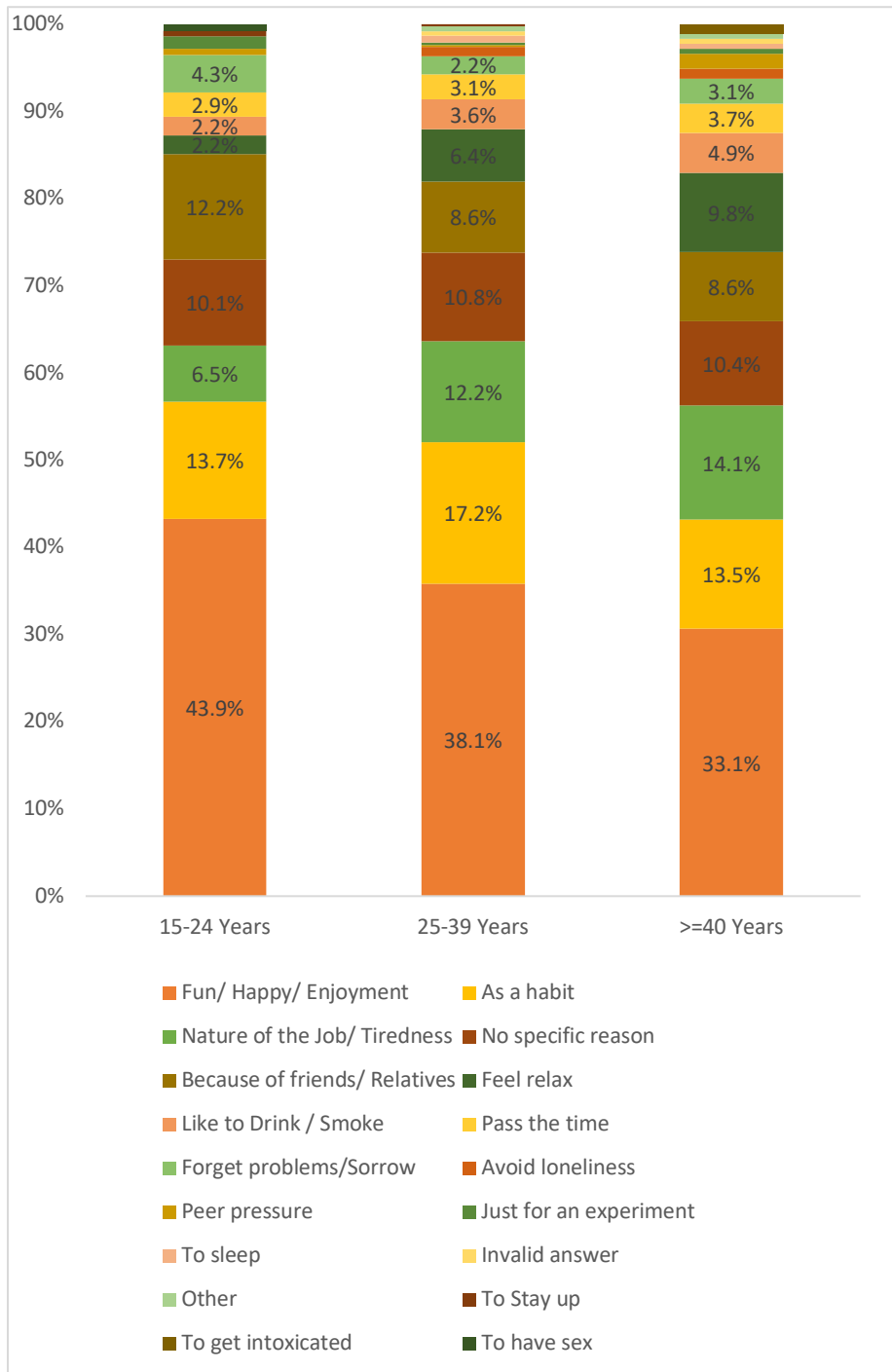


Figure 25: Reasons for alcohol consumption

The graph shows that a high percentage in all three age groups have stated that they consume alcohol just for fun/ to enjoy themselves. A considerable percentage also consume alcohol as a habit. The reasons given by the respondents seem to be different from one another, making them controversial.

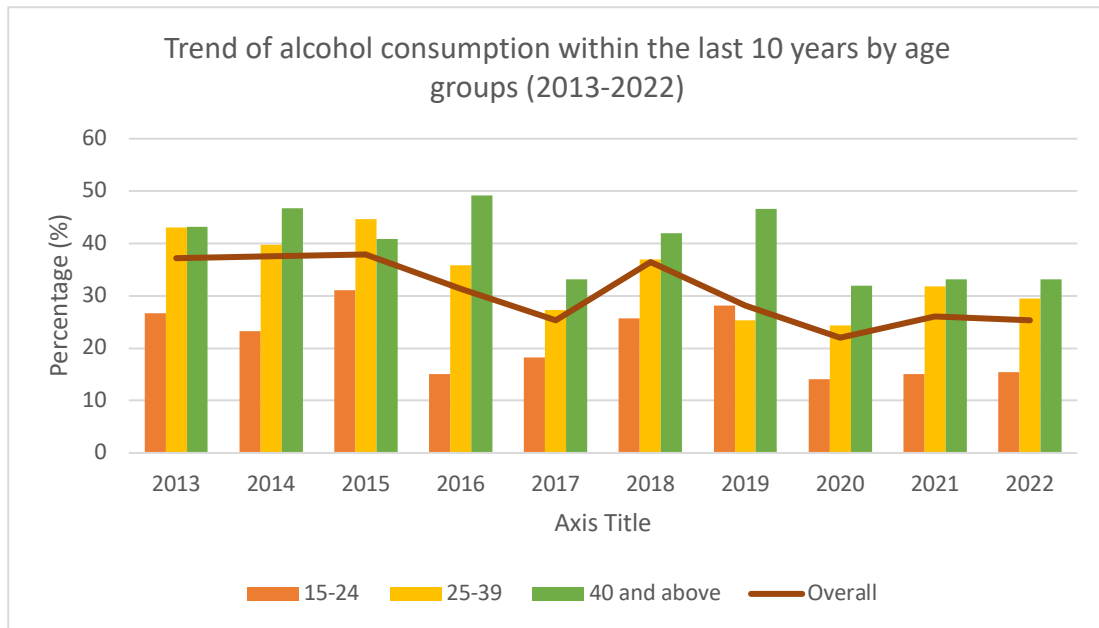


Figure 26: Trend of alcohol consumption within the last 10 years

An overall decreasing trend in alcohol use can be observed during the last ten years.

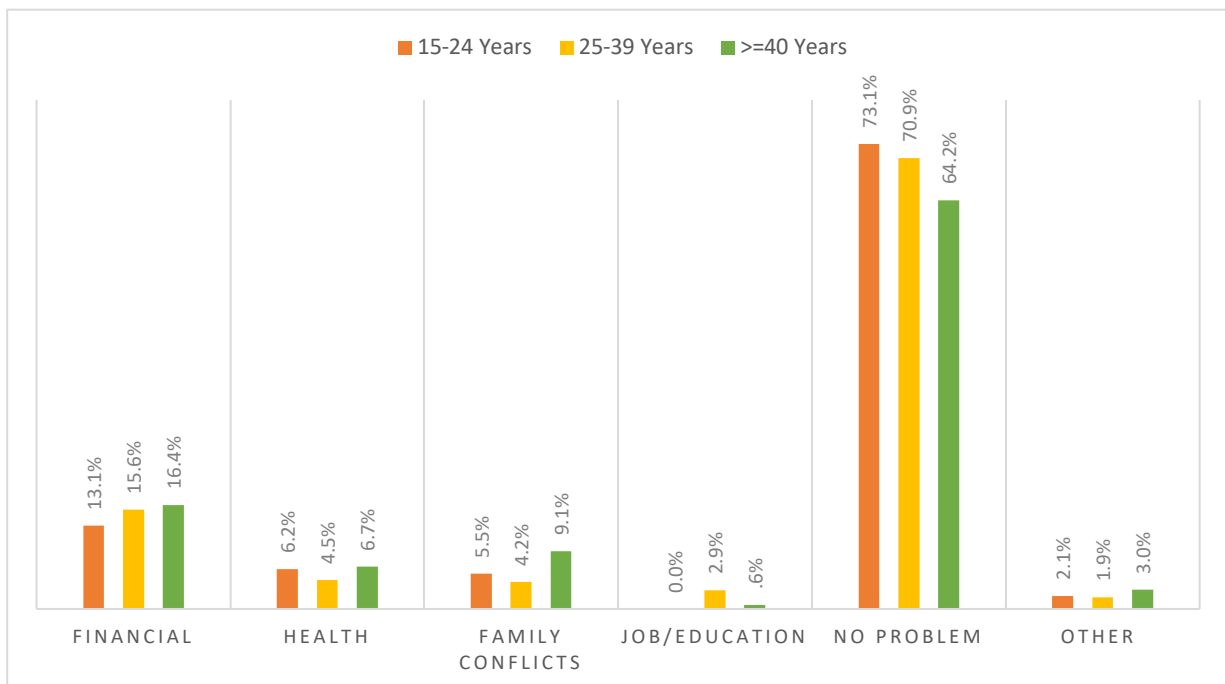


Figure 27: Problems faced by alcohol consumers

Financial problems, family dispute and health issues have been stated as significant problems faced by the alcohol users due to their alcohol consumption. The majority of the users have stated that they do not face any issues due to alcohol use. This might be an indication of the low level of knowledge regarding the harm of alcohol use among the majority of the users.

4. Discussion

In Sri Lanka, alcohol consumption occurs in differing levels within different cultural, demographic and socio-economic groups. Alcohol consumption at any volume or any frequency leads to a significant range of harmful effects among users. Alcohol has been identified as a main causal factor in 7 out of 10 deaths occurring in Sri Lanka. Therefore, alcohol has been recognized as a significant risk factor behind mortality and burden of health expenditure of the country, and prevailing economic issues within communities.

ADIC has been conducting trend surveys on alcohol consumption within Sri Lanka for many years, to identify the status of alcohol use within the country, and to use the data obtained through the surveys for effective implementation of alcohol control policies and community interventions for alcohol prevention. The year 2022 had been a challenging year due to the severe economic and political crisis faced by the country at the beginning of 2022, which led to drastic changes in the country's economic situation. Amidst various difficulties which occurred due to issues such as fuel shortages and substantial increases in all costs, the trend survey was successfully conducted, revealing several important facts on alcohol consumption trends within the country. The present alcohol trend survey provides a detailed overview of alcohol consumption patterns in 2022 and the change in consumption compared to previous years.

During this period, the prices of alcohol products were increased as a result of the rising inflation in the country. Many alcohol consumers have reduced the frequency of consumption due to high prices and reduced level of income. The response of alcohol users to price changes and low living standard created declining accessibility to alcohol. Findings on frequency of alcohol consumption in 2022 demonstrate that daily consumption reports the lowest percentage for all age groups. Moreover, the findings show a slight but noticeable reduction of the maximum spending on alcohol by age groups in 2022. These findings together suggest the influence of the economic issues on restricting the use of alcohol.

When considering the district-wise comparison, the highest alcohol usage was reported in Colombo district, while the lowest usage was reported in Jaffna and Puttalam district. Regardless of the type of product, age category and the occupation, the majority of the current users were weekly users, while a considerably high percentage also stated that they consumed alcohol daily. As the users are spending a considerable sum of their hard-earned money on alcohol, it has a direct impact on the economy and development within their families and the society as a whole. This indicates the significant need of alcohol control policies such as a scientific taxation system to bring revenue to the government and to reduce alcohol usage, as the country is at a difficult economic juncture.

Beer and arrack are the most popular products among all types of users according to the study findings. Contrary to 2021, beer has become most popular alcohol drink surpassing Arrack in 2022. Even at initiation of alcohol use, beer was reported to be the most prominently used product. Arrack and Beer are commercially produced and advertised through media, which might be the cause of them being perceived as the most popular alcohol products among a majority of users. Most of the study participants had initiated alcohol use between the ages 18-20 years, either with friends or at social gatherings (e.g.: parties). These results are mostly consistent with the previous findings. Various reasons had been stated by the study participants for alcohol use, which are different from one another and quite controversial (e.g.: some use alcohol to stay up while some have mentioned it helps them to sleep). When considering the knowledge of the respondents about the issues which occur due to their alcohol use, a high percentage of current alcohol users in all 3 age groups have reported no issues have

been faced due to alcohol use. This is a clear indication that the majority of users are not aware of the extent of harm alcohol causes to their lives.

When considering the responses obtained from the study participants regarding cessation of alcohol use, the majority (82.4%) has been unable to quit the habit. A small, yet considerable percentage (17.6%) has completely stopped alcohol use at the time of the study. The most common reasons for quitting were given as financial issues and change in prices, while several other reasons were also mentioned by some respondents. This implies that the economic crisis has caused a reduction in alcohol use among individuals due to economic hardships and increased focus on daily struggles.

The study findings further challenge the already established alcohol policies within Sri Lanka. National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol Act No. 27 enacted in 2006 imposes the legal boundaries on selling alcohol and it is prohibited to sell alcohol products for individuals under the age 21 years. However, the study reveals that a percentage of 9% under the age of 21 years is current alcohol users, which is the same as the previous year. This proves the direct violation of the NATA Act that was already established for alcohol control. Alcohol sales is carried out even for underage groups, neglecting the rules established by the relevant authorities.

However, the overall trend of alcohol use within the last decade depicts a decline in the consumption of alcohol. The alcohol control measures, and the community interventions established by interested parties have been largely effective in reducing alcohol use within the country. The findings of the survey demonstrate the latest situation of alcohol consumption in Sri Lanka. The information will provide guidance to all interested organizations and individuals to choose appropriate approaches to enforce evidence-based alcohol control policies and develop prevention interventions targeting user specific consumption patterns in the country.

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