

Spot Survey – December 2012
Trends in Alcohol Consumption

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Spot Survey on Alcohol trends has been conducted biannually since 1998. This survey helps to monitor and identify the prevailing trends and patterns related to alcohol use. It also identifies the prevailing attitudes with regard to alcohol. This survey contributes to the literature, as there is no such study conducted in Sri Lanka to determine the trends in alcohol consumption.

The survey was focused on the following districts; Colombo, Gampaha, Galle, Kegalle, Anuradhapura, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Kandy, Rathnapura and Vavunia. In this report, we concentrate on the results of the survey conducted in December 2012. In addition, a comparative analysis of results obtained this year with results obtained in December 2012 is also included.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the spot survey are as follows:

1. Primary Objectives:

- To determine the prevailing trends in alcohol consumption
- To compare the alcohol consumption trends with the previous years

2. Secondary Objectives:

- To determine the prevailing alcohol trends according to age groups, districts etc.
- To identify the prevailing attitudes and reasons for alcohol use
- To determine the initiation age and causes for initiation of alcohol use

1.3 LIMITATIONS

Some respondents did not have time to respond to all the questions, or they vaguely answered.

However, the reader of this report should not generalize the prevalence rates given in this report to national level without conducting a validation study.

2. METHODOLOGY

Interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect the information. The questions asked were straightforward and easy to comprehend.

In order to carry out the survey, the Research and Evaluation Programme trained field investigators, with appropriate research techniques. SPSS software was used for analyzing the data.

The survey was conducted over a period of one month and covered a total number of 2,349 respondents who were males of the age fifteen and above.

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Age Group by District											
Age Category	District										Total
	Colombo	Gampaha	Galle	Kegalle	Anuradhapura	Kandy	Batticaloa	Jaffna	Rathnapura	Vavuniya	
15-24	105	117	88	87	98	92	90	82	104	88	951
	42.2%	47.4%	38.6%	42.6%	37.7%	36.8%	39.0%	38.7%	41.6%	40.4%	40.5%
25-39	85	78	87	70	100	88	89	74	93	78	842
	34.1%	31.6%	38.2%	34.3%	38.5%	35.2%	38.5%	38.5%	37.2%	35.8%	35.8%
>=40	59	52	53	47	62	70	52	52	53	52	556
	23.7%	21.1%	23.2%	23.0%	23.8%	28.0%	22.5%	22.5%	21.2%	23.9%	23.7%
Total	249	247	228	204	260	250	231	231	250	218	2349
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 1: Sample of the survey – by district and age

The age distribution of the sample population is shown in Table 1. 40.5% of the sample population comprised of the age range 15-24 years, 35.8% of the sample population comprised of the age range 25-39 years and 23.7% in the age range of 40 and above years. The age of the sample population ranged from 15 years to 80 years and mean age was 31.53years.

The level of education is shown in Table 2. The majority of the respondents have reached education beyond GCE O/L (76.8%).

	Frequency	%
No education	36	1.6
1-5 grade	108	4.7
6-10 grade	348	15.2
O/L	815	35.5
A/L	760	33.1
Graduate	106	4.6
Diploma	94	4.1
Professional Training	25	1.1
Postgraduate	3	.1
Total	2295	100

Table 2: Sample of the survey – by highest level of education

The occupation classification is shown in Table 3.

Occupation	Frequency	(%)
Legislators	49	2.2%
Professionals	64	2.9%
Technical associate professionals	163	7.5%
Clerks	57	2.6%
Service worker and market service workers	518	23.7%
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	50	2.3%
Craft and related workers	105	4.8%
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	263	12.0%
Elementary occupations	301	13.8%
Forces / Police	101	4.6%
Students	372	17.0%
Retired	32	1.5%
Foreign employed	6	0.3%
Unemployed	104	4.8%
Total	2185	100.0%

Table 3: Sample of the survey – by occupation

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

3.1 ALCOHOL USAGE

Alcohol use of the sample respondents was assessed according to the characteristics of the sample population. These responses were analyzed according to (1) Current Users (respondents who consumed alcohol within the previous month), (2) Ever Users (respondents who have at any rate initiated alcohol use in their lifetime) and (3) Never Users (respondents who have never used any alcohol product).

3.2 CURRENT USERS

Current Users were identified based on their alcohol use within the previous month. According to the responses, it was found that 35.6% used alcohol within last month while 64.4% did not use alcohol. This is shown in Figure 1. (N=2,349)

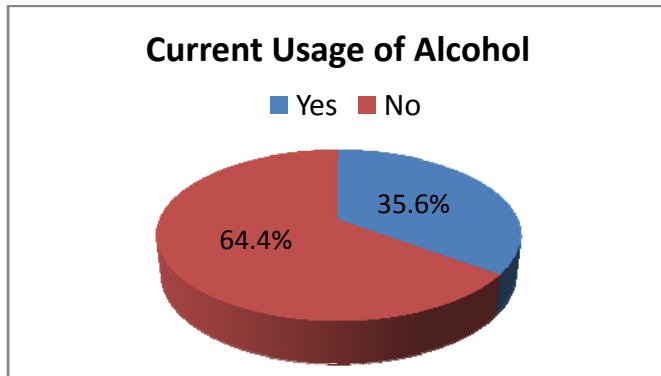


Figure 1: Alcohol prevalence

3.2.1 CURRENT ALCOHOL USAGE BY-AGE

The current alcohol use was further analyzed according to the age distribution. According to the responses, the highest response on current alcohol use was from the age category of 40 years and above (45.0%). The lowest current usage is recorded from the age category of 15-24 years (23.6%). This is shown in Figure 2.

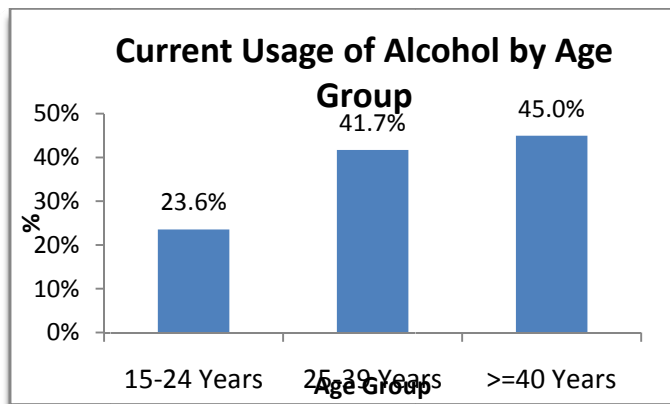


Figure 2: Alcohol prevalence by age group

3.2.2 CURRENT ALCOHOL USAGE-DISTRICT BASIS

The current alcohol use was further analyzed based on district. The highest percentage of current alcohol use was recorded from Galle (45.6%) while the lowest percentage was from Jaffna (17.9%). This is shown in Figure 3.

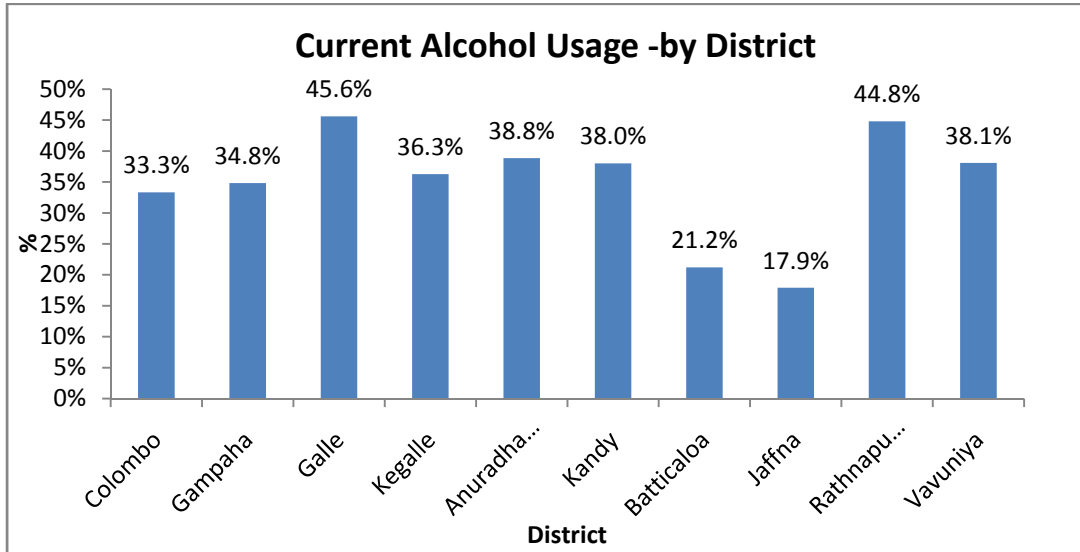


Figure 3: Alcohol prevalence by districts

3.2.3 FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL USE

The current alcohol users were analyzed based on the frequency of usage; daily, monthly and special occasion basis. The highest percentage of alcohol users were consuming in few times a month (50.0%) while the lowest percentage was in daily (17.9%). This is shown in Figure 4.

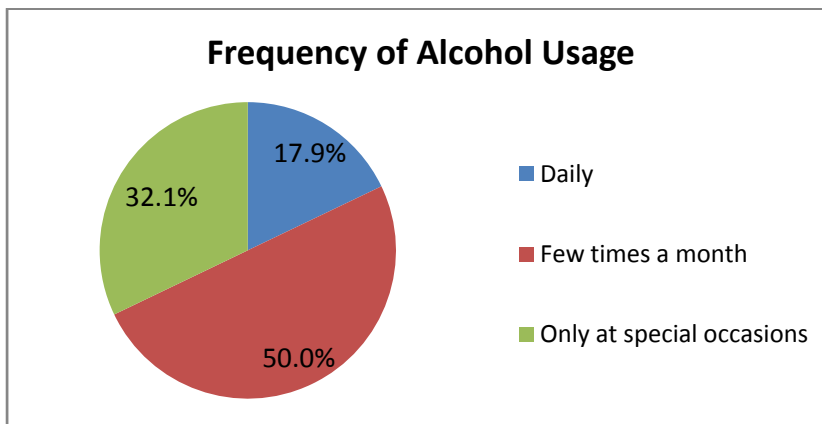


Figure 4: Frequency of alcohol use

3.2.4 FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL USE - AGE DISTRIBUTION

The frequency of alcohol use was analyzed further according to age group. It was identified that individuals in the age range of 40 and above, used alcohol highly on daily basis (24.6%) while the age range of 15-24 use alcohol lightly on daily basis (10.2%). The percentage of monthly alcohol users was the 52.6% in the age range of 15-24. The lowest percentage of monthly users was in the age range of 40 and above (48.8%). On special occasions, the age range of 15-24 alcohol highly (37.2%) than the other age ranges. This is shown in Figure 5.

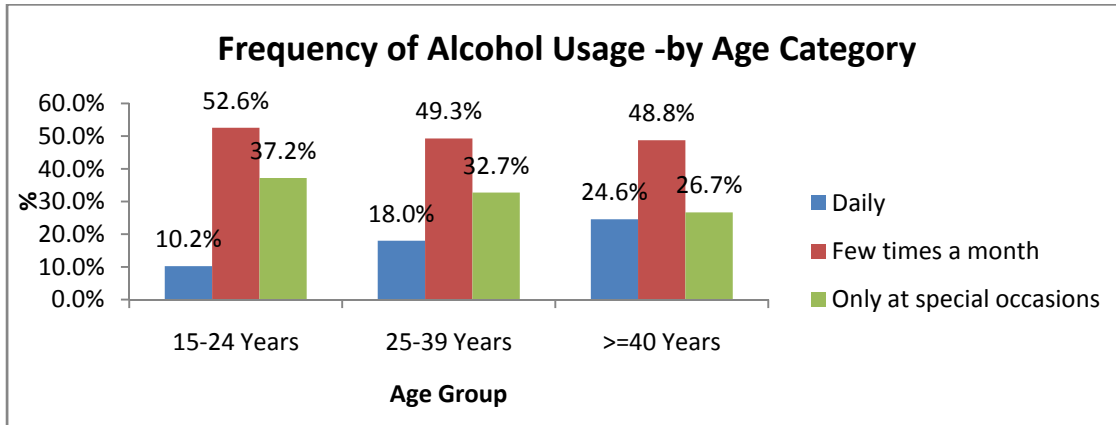


Figure 5: frequency of alcohol use by age group

3.2.5 FREQUENCY OF ALCOHOL USE DISTRICT BASIS

The frequency of alcohol use was analyzed according to districts. The highest percentage of daily alcohol users was from Jaffna district (50.0%) while the lowest percentage of daily alcohol users was from Rathnapura (9.3%). The highest percentage of alcohol users at the special occasions was from Kegalle (45.7%) while lowest was reported in Vavuniya (9.9%). This is shown in Figure 6.

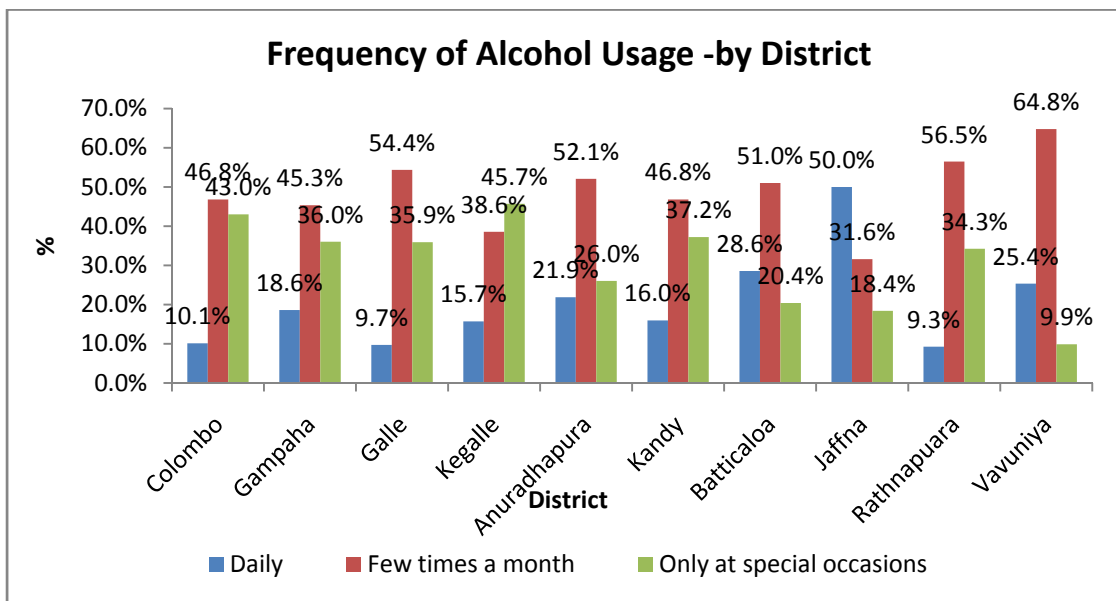


Figure 6: Frequency of alcohol use by district

3.2.6 REASONS FOR ALCOHOL USE

The survey also emphasized on the reasons for alcohol use. Among the reasons for using alcohol, majority (34.0%) mentioned that they use alcohol for enjoyment followed by second highest reason being to socialize with friends (28.3%).

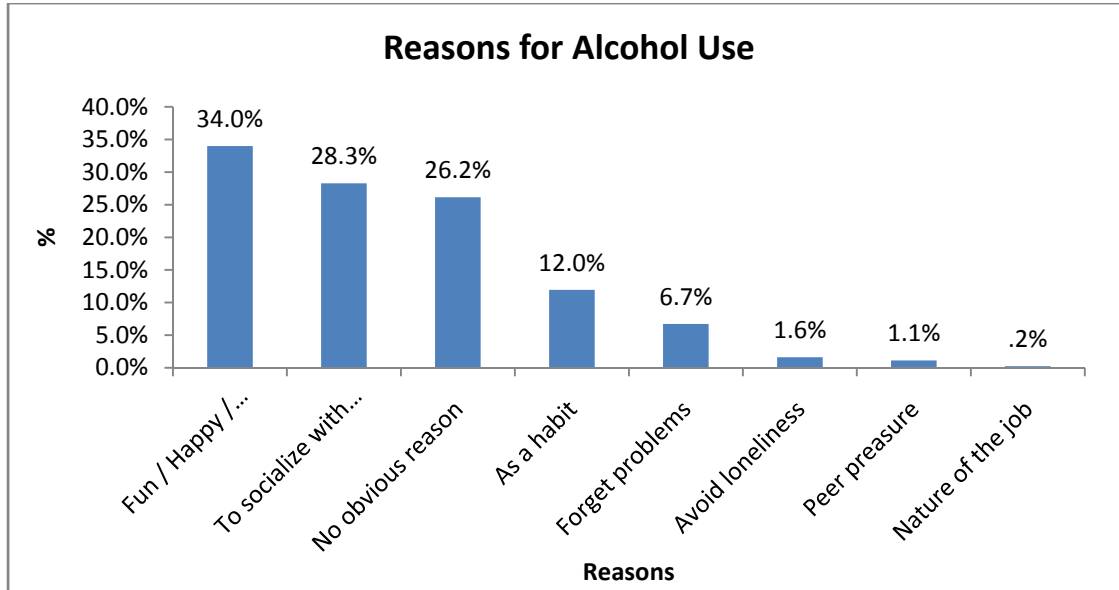


Figure 7: Reasons for alcohol use

The reasons for alcohol use by age groups are shown in Figure 8. In all age categories the main reason for alcohol use was for fun/enjoyment.

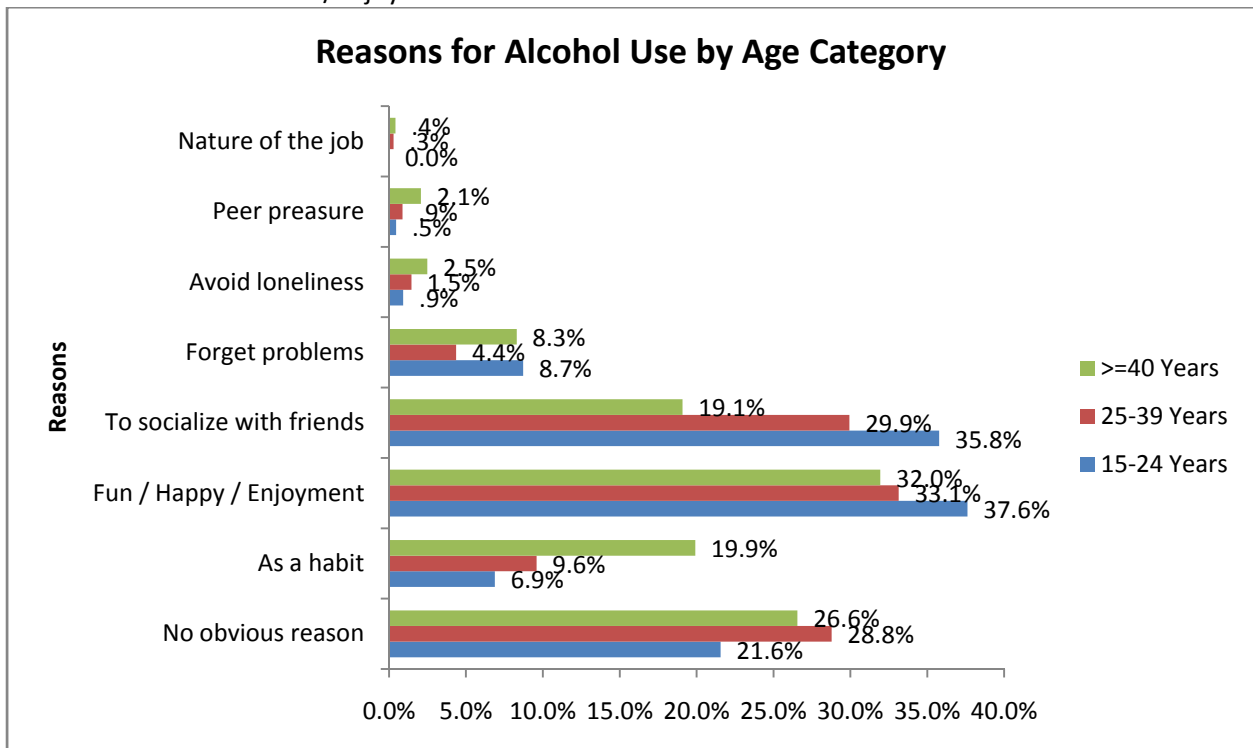


Figure 8: Reasons for alcohol use by age group

3.2.7 TYPE OF ALCOHOL USED

Questions were asked on the specific alcohol type used by the user. The responses were as follows: The most common type of alcohol used was Arrack (74.3%), while the lowest usage was illicit alcohol. Other alcohol such as toddy, whisky, brandy use was recorded at a minimum (1.6%).

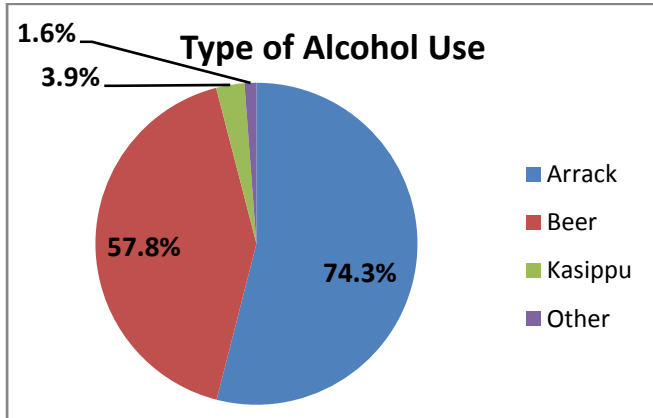


Figure 9: Type of alcohol use

The type of alcohol consumed was further analyzed with respect to age (Figure 10). Majority of the adults age ranged 40 and above use 'Arrack' (81.7%) while 'Beer' was used mainly by youth aged 15 to 24 (74.0%).

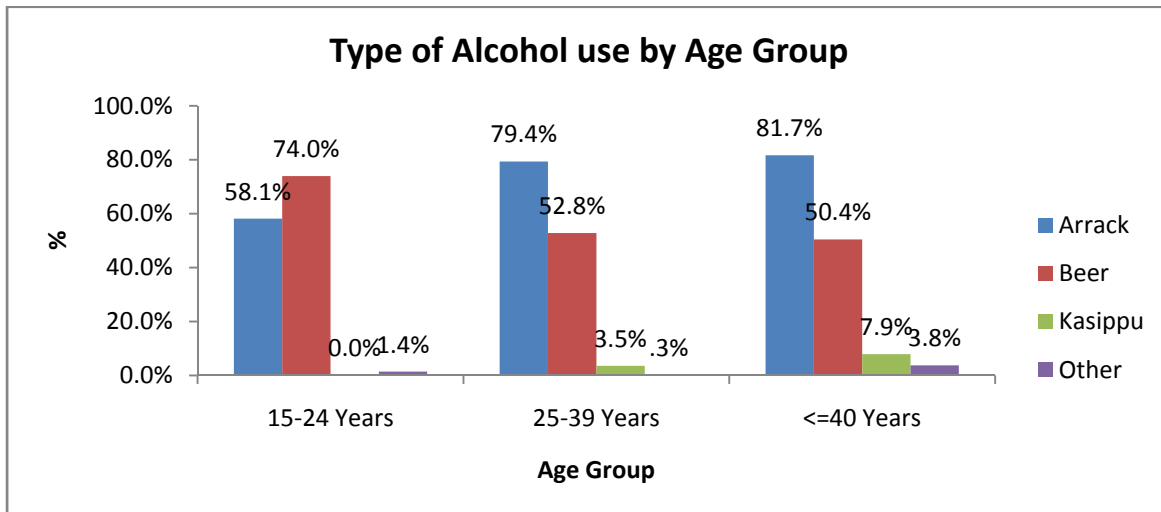


Figure 10: Type of alcohol use by age group

The type of alcohol used was analyzed according to the districts. This is shown in Figure 11. Colombo, Gampaha, Kegalle, Jaffna and Rathnapura have relatively high usage of Arrack whereas Vavuniya district has relatively high usage of Beer.

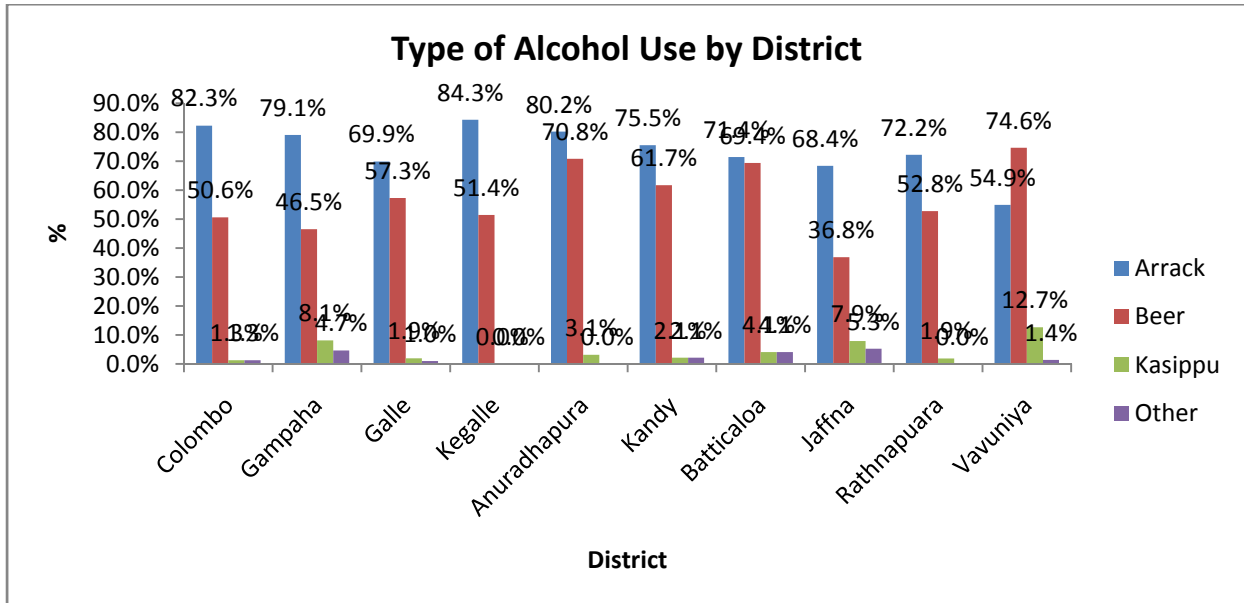


Figure 119: Type of alcohol use by district

3.2.8 REASONS OF ALCOHOL USE BY TYPE OF ALCOHOL

The data was also analyzed on the reasons of alcohol use by type of alcohol. Among the reasons given for use of alcohol, happiness and forget problems were the major reasons for all the type of alcohol. Beer has been consumed more due to peer pressure. This is shown in Figure 12.

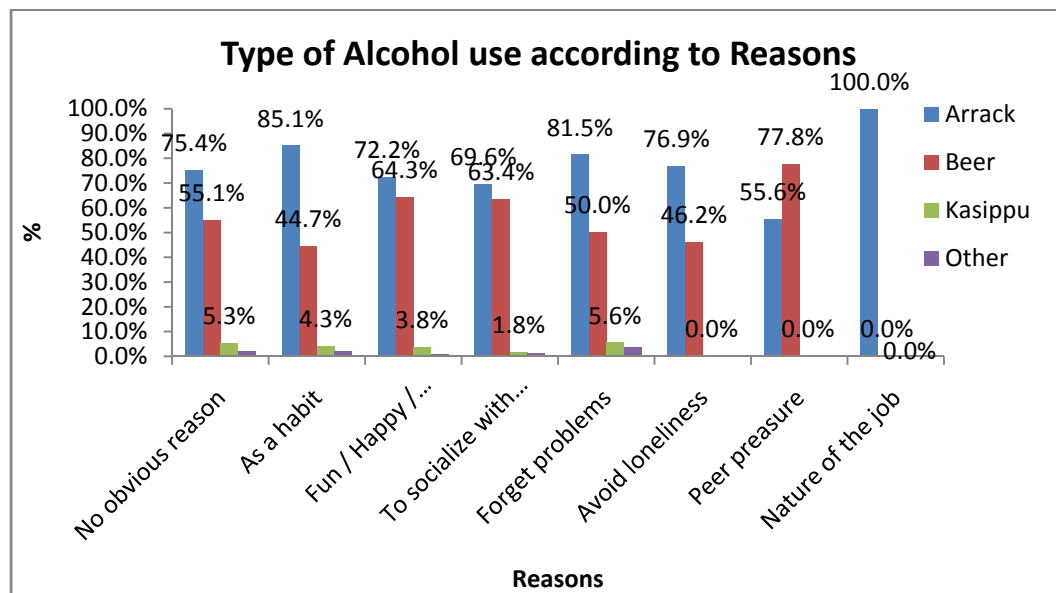


Figure 1210: Reasons for alcohol use by type of alcohol

3.2.9 ATTEMPT TO QUIT ALCOHOL USE

In depth questions were asked of respondents who currently consume alcohol, whether they have attempted to quit the use of alcohol.

This is shown in figure 13.

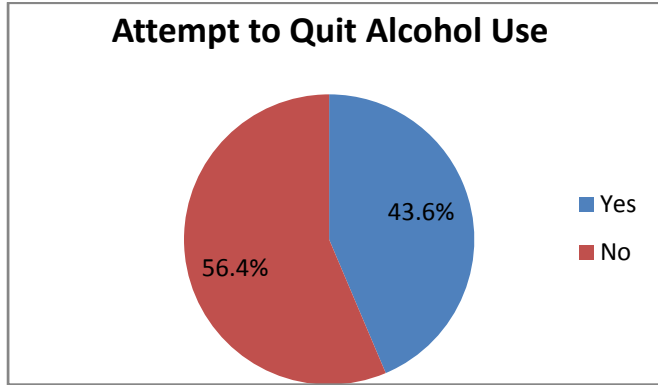


Figure 13: Attempt to quit alcohol use

Out of the current alcohol users 43.6% have tried quitting alcohol use.

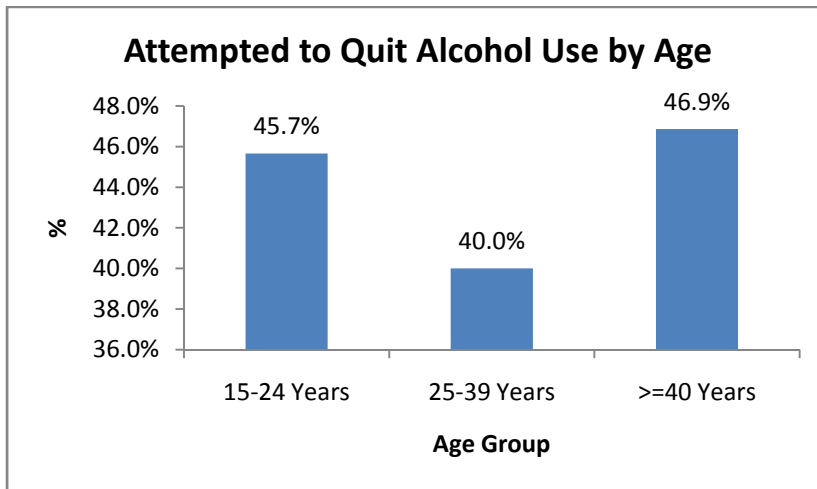


Figure 14: Attempted to quit alcohol use by age

Youth and adults have attempted to quit the alcohol use compared to middle aged.

3.2.9.1 REASONS FOR ATTEMPTING TO QUIT ALCOHOL

Further questions were asked about the reasons for attempting to quit. 23.6% of the people have quitted alcohol use because of financial problems and price of alcohol and 22.4% of them have attempted to quit because of health hazards.

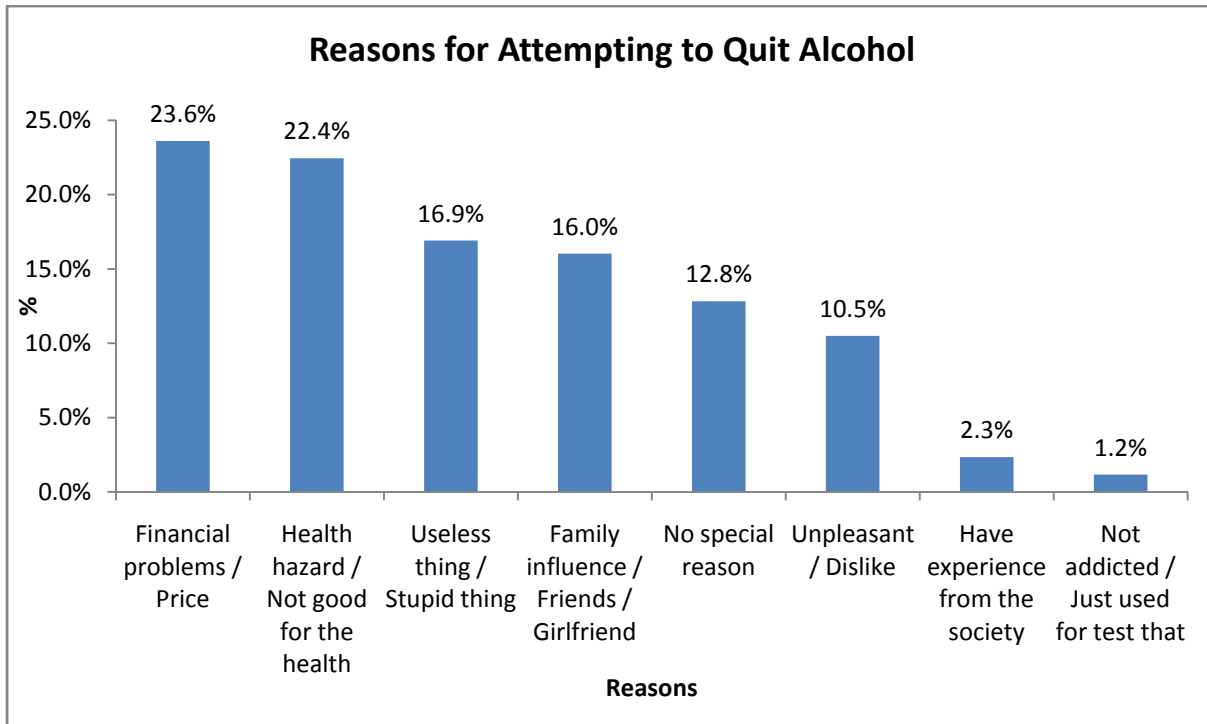


Figure 15: Reasons for attempting to quit alcohol

3.2.9.2 REASONS FOR NOT ATTEMPTING TO QUIT ALCOHOL

Further questions were asked about the reasons for not attempting to quit alcohol use. 43.5% of the people have not attempted to quit alcohol use because they thought they were not addicted and 22.8% of them think alcohol will help to associate with friends and lead to happiness.

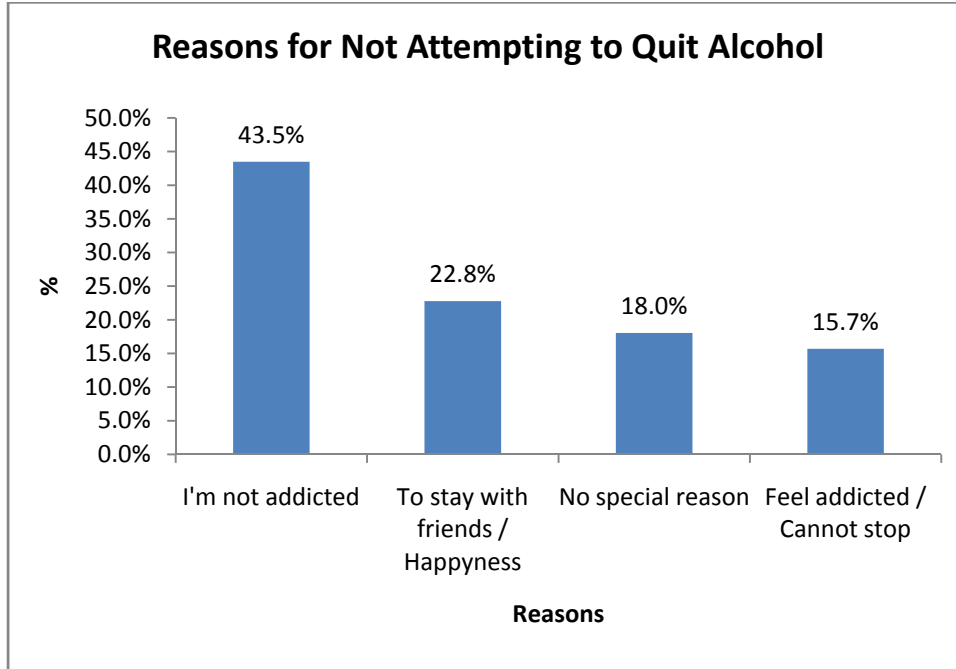


Figure 16: Reasons for not attempting to quit alcohol

3.3 EVER USERS

Questions were asked on whether the respondents have ever used alcohol in their life until now. According to the respondents, 57.6% have ever used alcohol while 42.4% did not. This is shown in Figure 19.

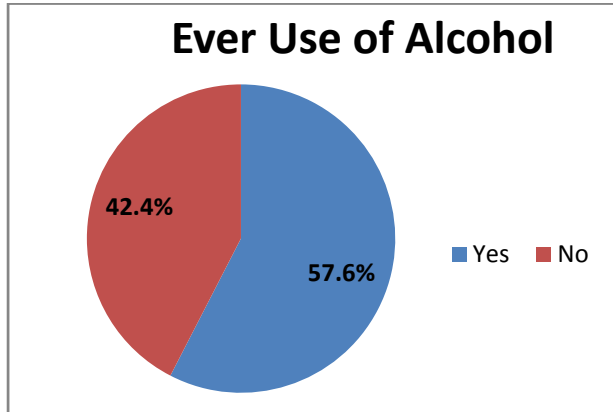


Figure 19: Ever use of alcohol

On further studying the prevalence of ever users of alcohol according to the age distribution, it was found that the highest percentage of respondents having used alcohol at any point in their lifetime was found to be among those belonging to the age group 40 and above (70.2%). This is shown in Figure 20.

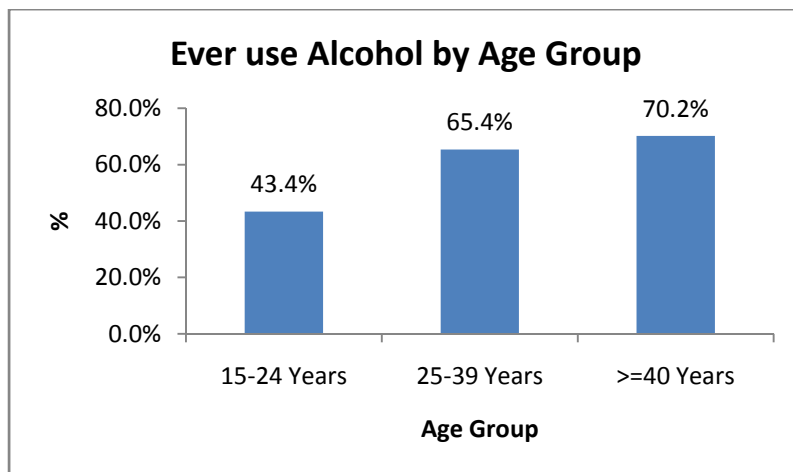


Figure 20: Ever use alcohol by age group

3.3.1 INITIATION OF ALCOHOL USE

Initiation is a main concern of the survey. With the ever users of alcohol, the question which needs to be addressed next is the age of initiation.

3.3.2 AGE OF INITIATION OF ALCOHOL USE

Among the respondents, the highest percentage of respondents has initiated alcohol in the age range of 16-20 years (54.6%). The average age of initiation is 20 years (Standard deviation of 5.3) while mode of the initiation age mentioned by the respondents was 18 years.

This is shown in Figure 21.

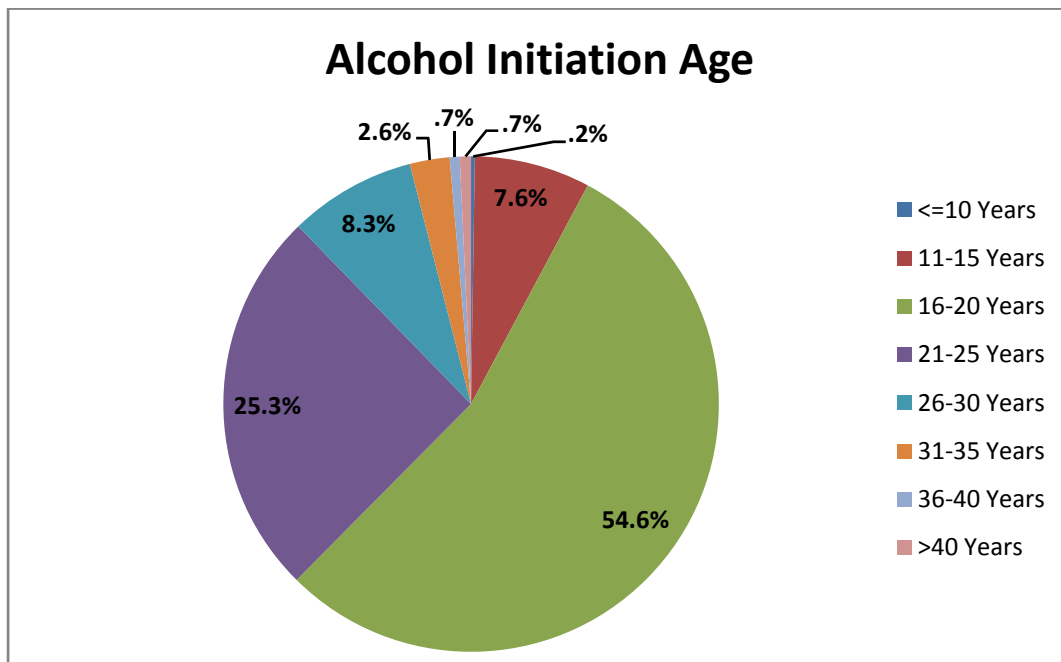


Figure 21: Initiation of alcohol use

3.3.3 OCCASION OF ALCOHOL INITIATION

Apart from the age of initiation, questions were asked on the occasion in which alcohol use was initiated. The majority of the respondents stated that they initiated alcohol at parties (42.6%).

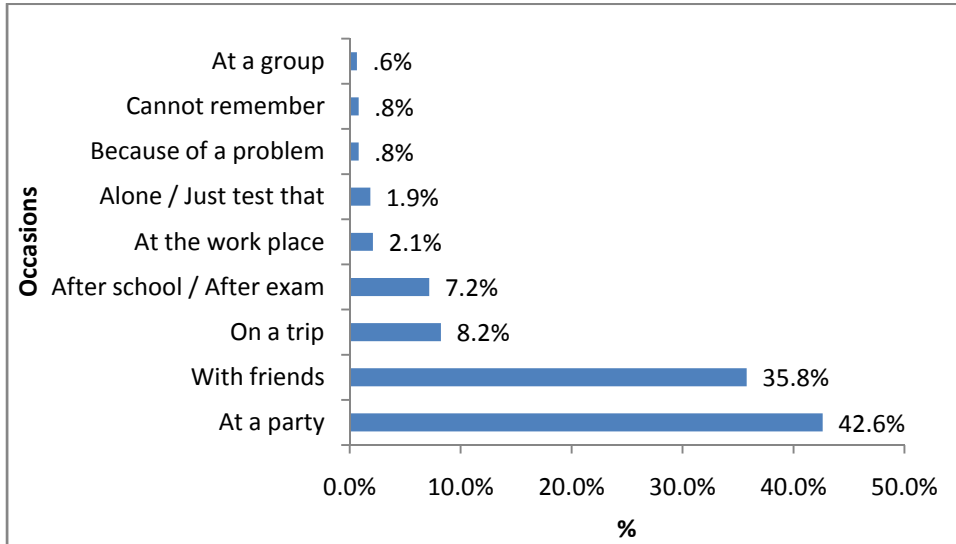


Figure 22: Occasions in which initiation of alcohol use

3.3.4 TYPE OF ALCOHOL AT INITIATION

Questions were further asked regarding the specific alcohol type used at initiation of alcohol use. The responses were as follows: The most common type of alcohol at initiation was Beer (53.0%), while the lowest type of alcohol used was Kasippu (2.4%).

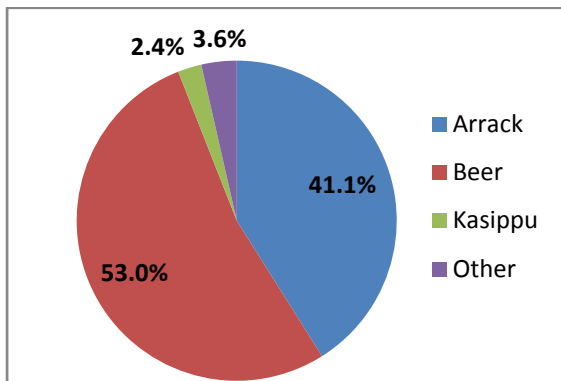


Figure 23: Type of alcohol use

The responses were also analyzed according to the age range with the type of alcohol. This is shown in Figures 26. Beer was the most common type of alcohol used at initiation in age groups 15-24 and 25-39. Arrack was the common type used at initiation in the age range of 40.

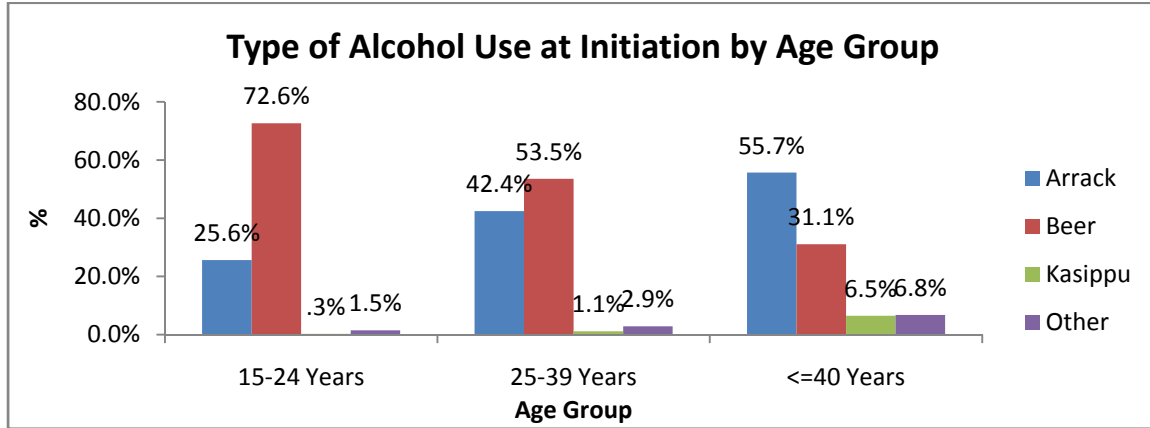


Figure 23: Type of alcohol use by age group

3.4 NEVER USERS

In depth, questions were asked of respondents who had never used alcohol (42.4% of respondent in Figure19) regarding the reasons for not taking up this habit. The most frequent reason for never using alcohol was due to dislike (26.3%) and due to fear of potential health hazards (17.5%). This is shown in Figure 27.

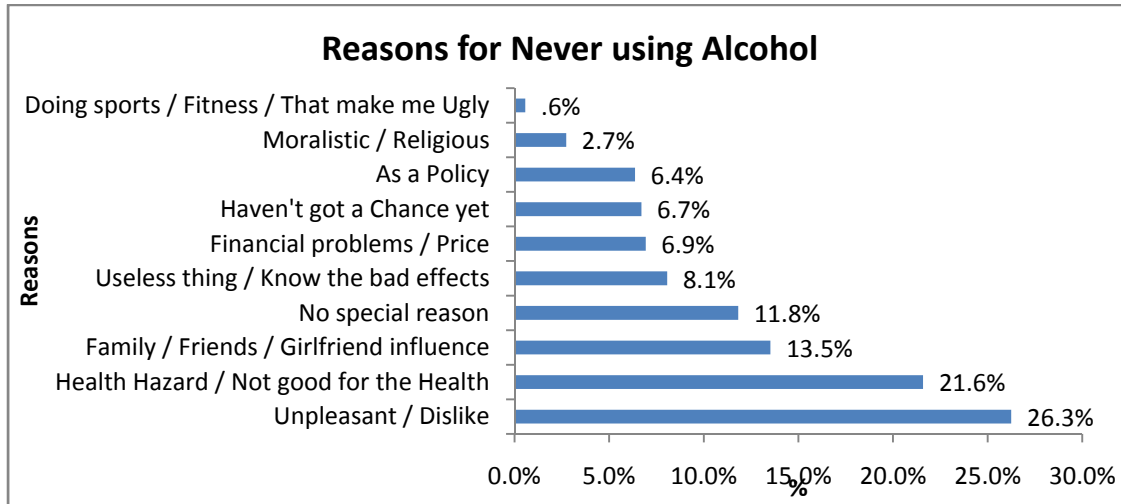


Figure 24: Reasons for never use of alcohol

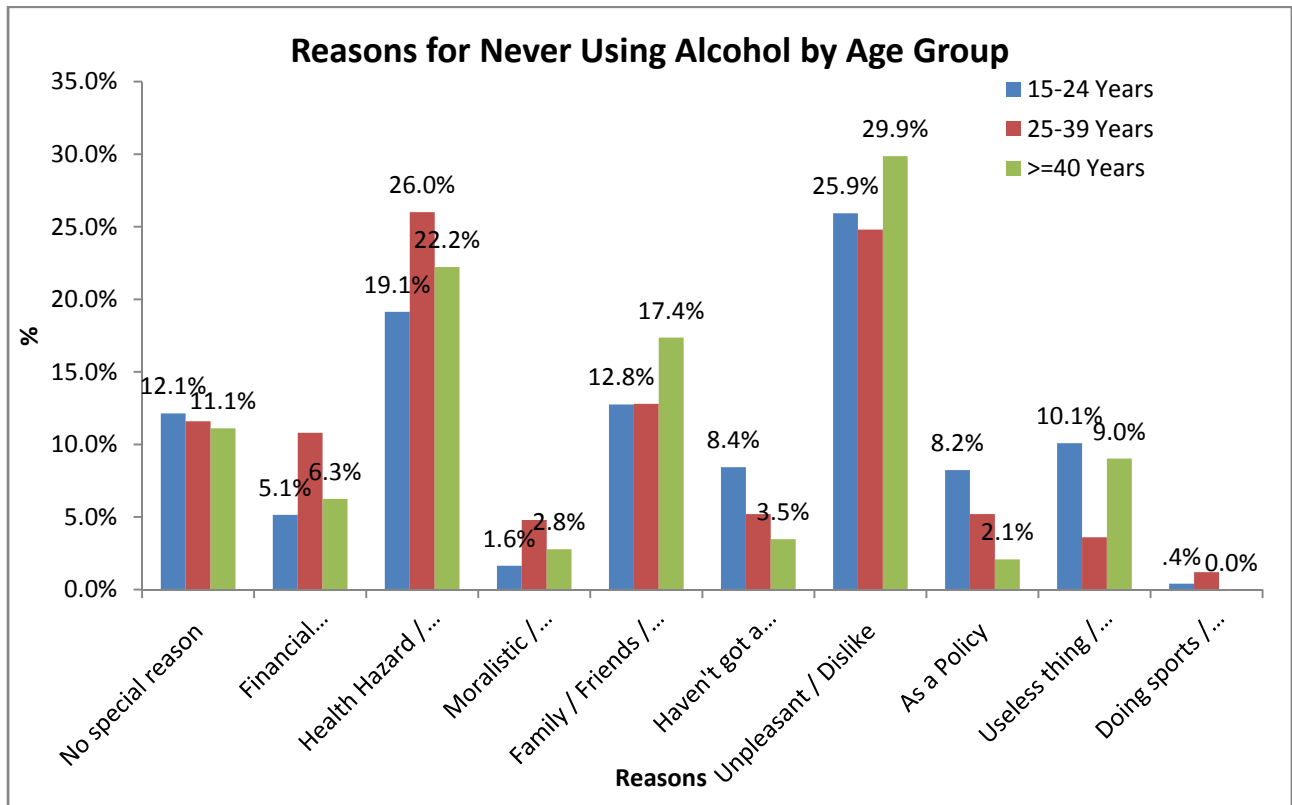


Figure 25: Reasons for never use of alcohol by age group

4. COMPARISONS OF RESULTS WITH THE 2011 SPOT SURVEY

In comparison with the results of the December 2011 and December 2012 spot survey, the alcohol use has a decreased by 2.2% in comparison to the previous year. This is shown in Figure 28.

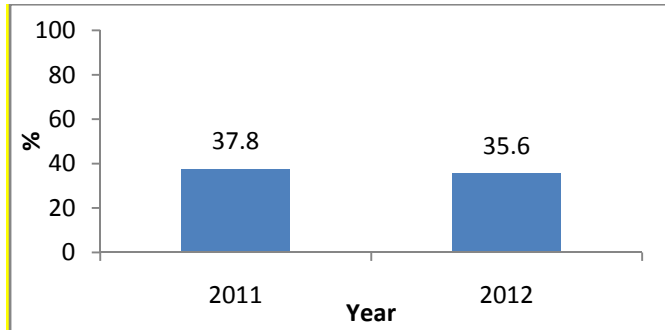


Figure 26: Comparison of alcohol use

5.0 THE TREND OF ALCOHOL USE 2000-2012

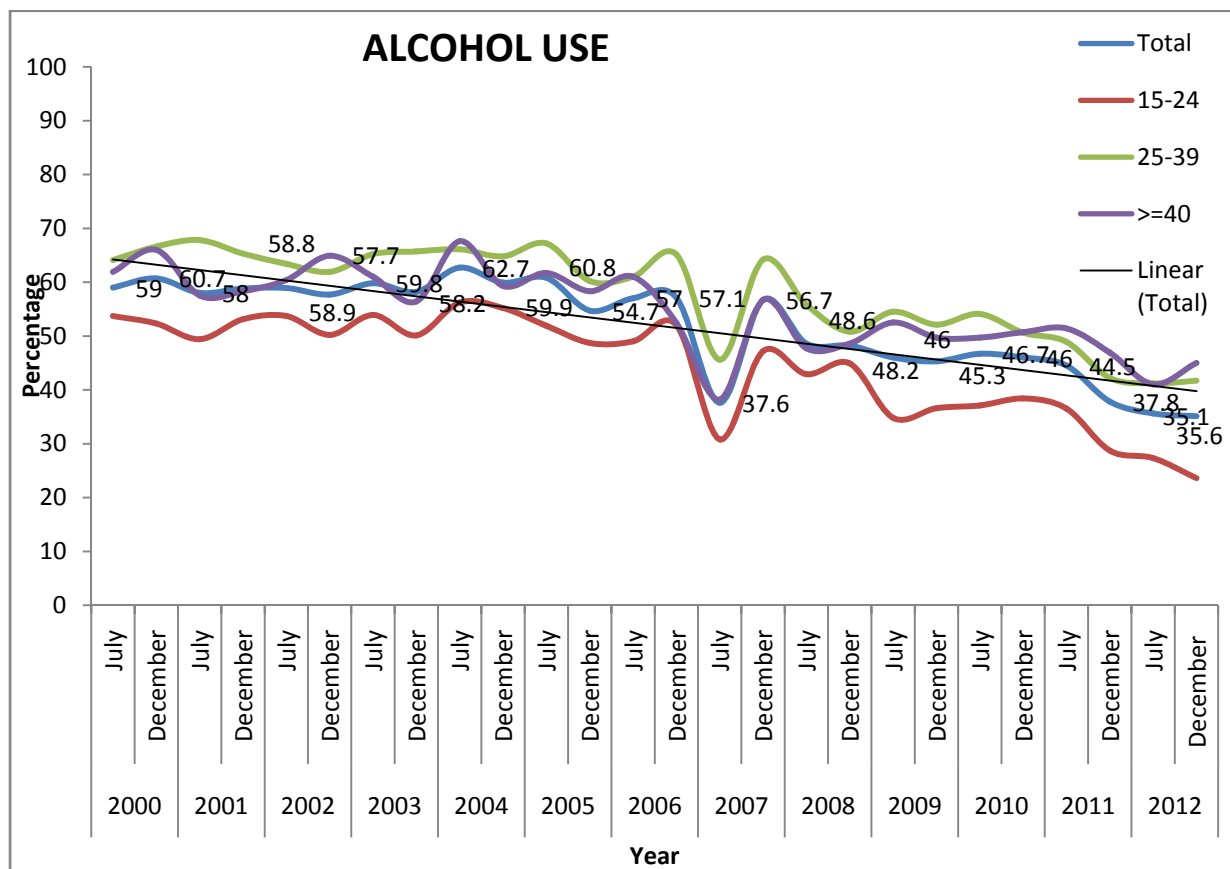


Figure 27: The trend of alcohol use

The percentage of alcohol users from year 2000 to July 2012 obtained from bi-annual spot surveys is shown in Figure 27. An overall decreasing trend in alcohol use can be observed.

6. SUMMARY

1. 35.6% of the sample population are alcohol current users. The highest percentage was recorded from the district of Galle (45.6%) and lowest from the district of Jaffna (17.9%).
2. The highest percentage of alcohol users were found to be among those belonging to the age group of above 40 years (45.0%).
3. On average, use of alcohol is initiated at age of 20 years.
4. The highest percentage of alcohol users use daily (17.9%). The highest percentage of responses on daily use was from the district of Vavuniya (64.8%).
5. The majority (34.0%) have mentioned that they use alcohol for fun or to be happy.
6. Out of the current alcohol users 43.6% have tried quitting alcohol use. 31.6% of the people have quitted alcohol use because they realized that alcohol will lead to financial hardships in the end.
7. Among the current users 43.5% have not quitted tobacco use because they think they were not addicted for alcohol.
8. Among the respondents, 42.4% never used alcohol while 57.6% did. The highest percentage of ever users was among the age group of above 40years (70.2%).
9. 26.3% of never users of alcohol mentioned that never used alcohol because they dislike the product and due to unpleasant attitude towards alcohol.
10. In comparison with the results of the December 2011 Spot Survey and December 2012 Spot Survey, the alcohol use has decreased by 2.2 percent.
11. An overall decreasing trend is observed from 2000 to to-date with regards to alcohol use.