

2020

TREND SURVEY ON **TOBACCO**



Annual Trend Survey on
Tobacco and Smoking in Sri Lanka

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**Annual Trend Survey on Tobacco Consumption in Sri Lanka
2020**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1998 the Alcohol and Drug Information Centre (ADIC Sri Lanka) conducts trend surveys annually for Alcohol and Tobacco. The trend survey analysis (also known as the SPOT Survey) is conducted under the main aim of mapping and tracing current trends of Alcohol and Tobacco consumption across Sri Lanka. This report will present the findings of the trend survey for the year 2020 which was aimed at determining trends of Tobacco consumption across the country, thereby assisting policymakers in formulating effective 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.

Data analysis and results were formulated based on a total of 2963 responses who fit the inclusion criterion. 23% (n=795) were current consumers of Tobacco. This was a 5.2% decrease compared to the previous year. The sample was divided into three age groups for analysis namely, 15-24, 25-39 and 40 and above. Although a decrease in overall Tobacco consumption was observed, only the 40 and above groups showed an increment. Out of the current consumers, half staged that smoking on a daily basis (51%) which is shown is a decline with the previous year daily smokers (2019, daily smokers 62.3%). The decline of the frequency of smoking was observed in all three groups. This is evidence that the frequency of smoking has declined over the years. Still the highest consumption rate was reported from the above 40 age category, which too was consistent with previous trend surveys.

Tobacco smokers may use multiple tobacco products. Nevertheless, the results have shown that cigarettes was the key tobacco product (75%) in consistency to previous years. Keeping a huge difference beedi has been the second type of tobacco product (19%).

48% of the current smokers have shown that they have initiated tobacco smoking by the age of 19 years. 84.3% of current smokers has started their smoking by age 24 and by age 29 almost everyone has started smoking tobacco (95.8%). The overall median age for the initiation was 19 years. The prominent occasion at the initiation was "with friends" while cigarettes was the prominent type of tobacco for any age group.

Among the current smokers the minimal number of smokers had quit smoking tobacco (28%) which was reported at the average age as 20. However, COVID 19/ Curfew has been a significant reason for reducing the consumption of tobacco. No pleasure was the major reason for the 25-39 groups while financial concerns and health concerns come as major reasons equally for the 40 and above groups. According to the finding, still there is a 14% of current smokers among the minors which mainly use cigarettes (68.6%).

According to the statistical data from the previous surveys there is a declining trend on smoking tobacco among the male population in Sri Lanka. Despite the growth of youth population in Sri Lanka a remarkable decline of tobacco among the youth population is visible. This may be the effort of the holistic approach on tobacco prevention that took place over the decades. However, tobacco control must be further strengthened by adopting effective policies while enforcing the prevailing policies.

INTRODUCTION

The objectives of the “Trend Survey on Tobacco” for the year 2020 are as follows.

- Determine different trends of smoking across the country in terms of different products, age groups and districts.
- Analyse and compare the trends of smoking from surveys conducted in previous years.
- Identifying the underlying attitudes and reasons for smoking among different age groups, and districts.
- Determining the age of initiating tobacco smoking.
- Examine the COVID-19 outbreak affect on tobacco consumption.

METHODOLOGY

The trend survey continues to use the similar methodology to keep the consistency of the results. However, 2020 was a challenging year for the entire globe due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection for the trend survey from the field has been revised according to the guidance given by the health authorities.

Study Design

Like the previous years multi-stage sample design was used to comprise a representative Sri Lankan male population of above 15 years.

Inclusion Criteria

Males above 15 years of age who were currently residing in Sri Lanka were included for the study.

Exclusion Criteria

Females were not included in the study as the consumption rates of males is relatively less in Sri Lanka. Males who were under 15 years and any Individuals who were currently residing in the selected districts were excluded from the survey.

Sample Size

Similar to previous trend surveys, 275 participants (with a 10% standard error) from each district were determined. In total, a sample size of 3025 was drawn to be collected from 11 districts for the survey.

Sampling Method

Firstly, a randomized batch selection process was followed to select one district each from the nine administrative provinces, in order to determine a representative sample of Sri Lanka. This procedure was repeated three times to create three batches of districts, out of which two were used previously for the years 2018 and 2019. The third batch was used in this current survey for the year 2020. Colombo and Jaffna districts were included automatically as important districts. With this inclusion, there were 11 districts in total. In the next stage of sampling, age was divided into three sub-groups as 15-24 years, 25-39 years and above 40 years to get a representative sample of males above 15 years. Since prior surveys indicate that the first two age groups have lower usage, it was purposively oversampled. Therefore, the planned allocation for the chosen age groups were 35%, 45% and 20% respectively. This was determined based on population figures from the census and statistics.

Table 1: Planned allocation of survey participants

Age group	Sample allocation	Per district	Per age group
15 – 24 Years	35%	96	1056
24 – 39 Years	45%	124	1364
40 Years and above	20%	55	605
Total	100%	275	3025

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out using an interviewer-administered questionnaire containing 53 questions in total (See Appendix). The first six questions consisted of gathering demographic information. Few questions were reserved for the contemporary issues directly affecting the alcohol and tobacco use. The rest of the questions were composite for both alcohol and tobacco consumptions. The questionnaire was initially prepared in Sinhala and translated into Tamil and conducted in a language that suited the respondent.

Data collection was carried out by trained data collectors from ADIC. The survey was conducted within the month of July 2019.

Conventional data collection has been revised during this survey. Mobile devices (Phone and Tablets) were used to fill the electronic questionnaire in order to reduce the waste and easy use during this COVID -19 pandemic period. This method will be considered since it reduces the consumption of paper and avoids the time for data entry.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS while tables and figures that represent trends were compiled using Microsoft Excel.

RESULTS

A total of 2963 valid responses were received from males above 15 years with a response rate of 97.95%. However, the response rate for each question may vary from the overall sample. A summary of the status of responses from all the 11 districts are stated below in Table 1

Table 2: Survey responses based on district

District	Province	Age Group			Total response and rate
		15-24 Years n(%)	25-39 Years n(%)	>=40 Years n(%)	
Ampara	Eastern	87 34.3%	124 48.8%	43 16.9%	254 100.0%
Vavuniya	Northern	93 33.9%	131 47.8%	50 18.2%	274 100.0%
Puttalam	North Western	103 37.2%	122 44.0%	52 18.8%	277 100.0%
Kalutara	Western	91 33.8%	124 46.1%	54 20.1%	269 100.0%
Colombo	Western	87 31.3%	136 48.9%	55 19.8%	278 100.0%
Galle	Southern	99 34.6%	133 46.5%	54 18.9%	286 100.0%
Kandy	Central	93 33.5%	123 44.2%	62 22.3%	278 100.0%
Ratnapura	Sabaragamuwa	82 32.5%	126 50.0%	44 17.5%	252 100.0%
Polonnaruwa	North Central	101 39.6%	107 42.0%	47 18.4%	255 100.0%
Monaragala	Uva	105 36.2%	130 44.8%	55 19.0%	290 100.0%
Jaffna	Northern	82 32.8%	118 47.2%	50 20.0%	250 100.0%
Total		1023 34.5%	1374 46.4%	566 19.1%	2963 100.0%

1 Demographic Information

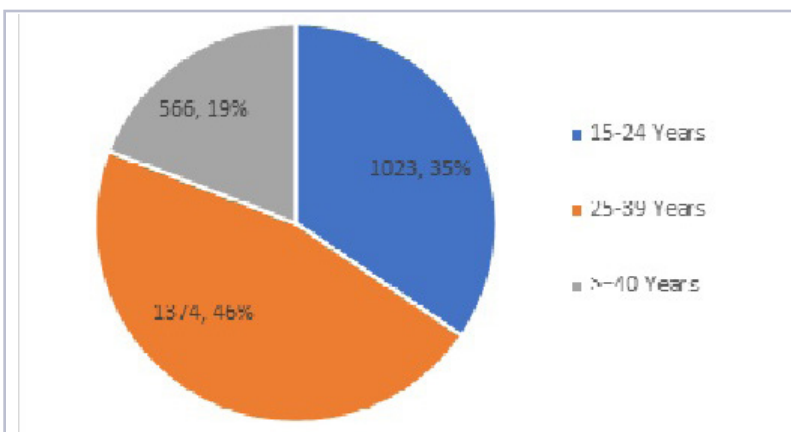


Figure 1: Survey responses based on age

This section will present the demographic information of the survey respondents. Mainly it has analysed how the respondents has been distributed within age categories, level of education and occupational sector.

According to the Figure 1, the response sample size for each age group were almost the same. The Youth group has shown the same, while other groups has shown slight variations (compare with Table 1)

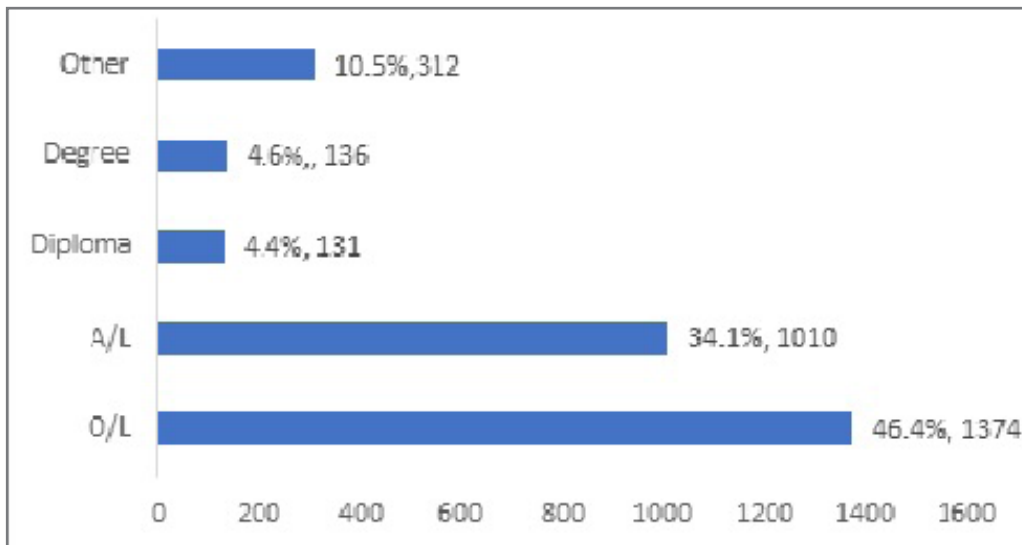


Figure 2: Education level of respondents

The survey sample reflected various education levels. Approximately half of the respondents had completed their Ordinary Level (O/L) while one-third had completed their Advance Level (A/L). Additionally, the sample consisted with Diplomas and Degree holders (See Figure 2 / Response rate 100%).

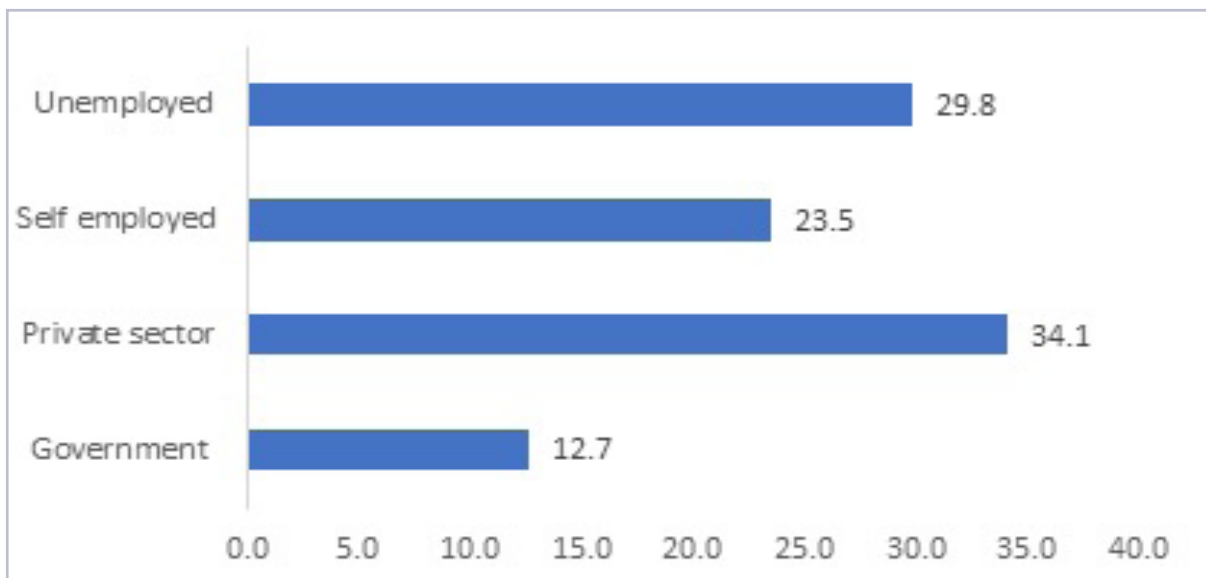


Figure 3: Occupation of respondents

Figure 3 illustrates the type of occupational sector of the respondents. According to figure 3, the highest represent Private (Cooperate) sector (34.1%) while the least represent the Government sector. The second highest category is listed as unemployed since youth who represent the age 15-24 years falls under this classification.

2 Status of Tobacco Smoking among Males

The key analysis of this report is based on the response of “Current Smokers” . The term Current smokers refers to those who have smoked during the past 30 days (irrelevant of number of times or sticks smoked) when the survey was conducted. Respondents who have never smoked in their lifetime when the survey was conducted was considered as “Lifetime abstainers”. Respondents who have smoked in their lifetime but have abstained during the past 30 days when the survey was conducted were considered as the last 30 days abstainers.

¹Apart from the initiation and cessation, the rest of the analysis is based on the respondents who is under the category of current users.

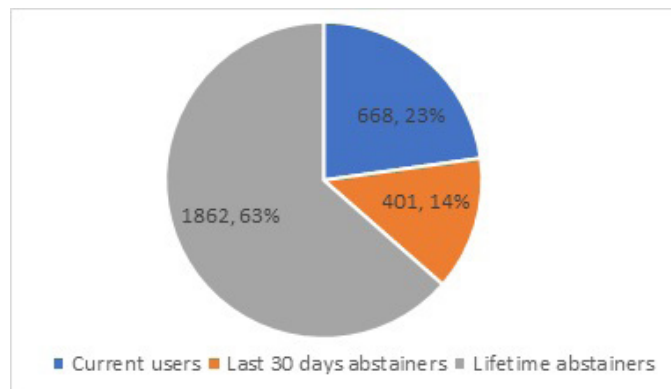


Figure 4: Tobacco consumption

According to the survey’s findings nearly two-thirds of the sample was lifetime abstainers (63%). Only 23% was current users while 14% had not consumed tobacco during the last 30 days when the survey was conducted.

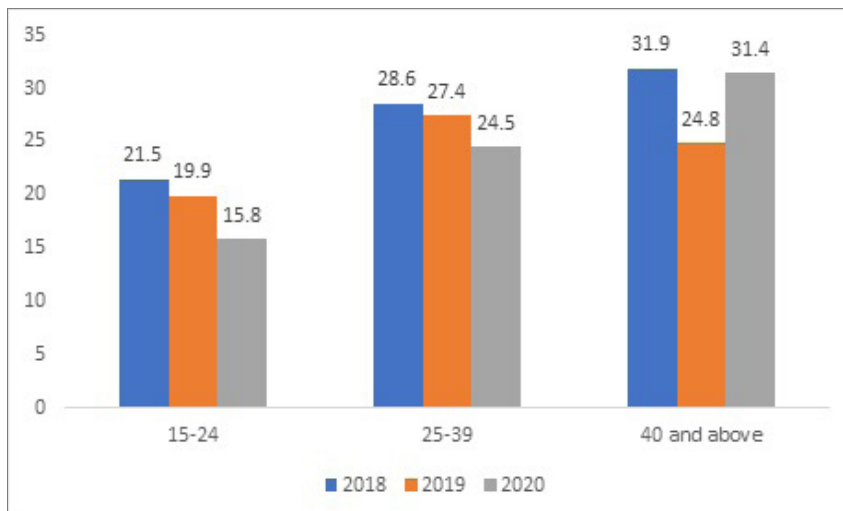


Figure 5: Comparison of Tobacco consumption with previous two years

Figure 5 shows a significant decline of current tobacco consumption in both 15-24 and 25-29 age groups over the last 3 years. The least current tobacco consumption was reported from the youth group (15-24 years) while the highest tobacco consumption was reported from the 40 and above age group.

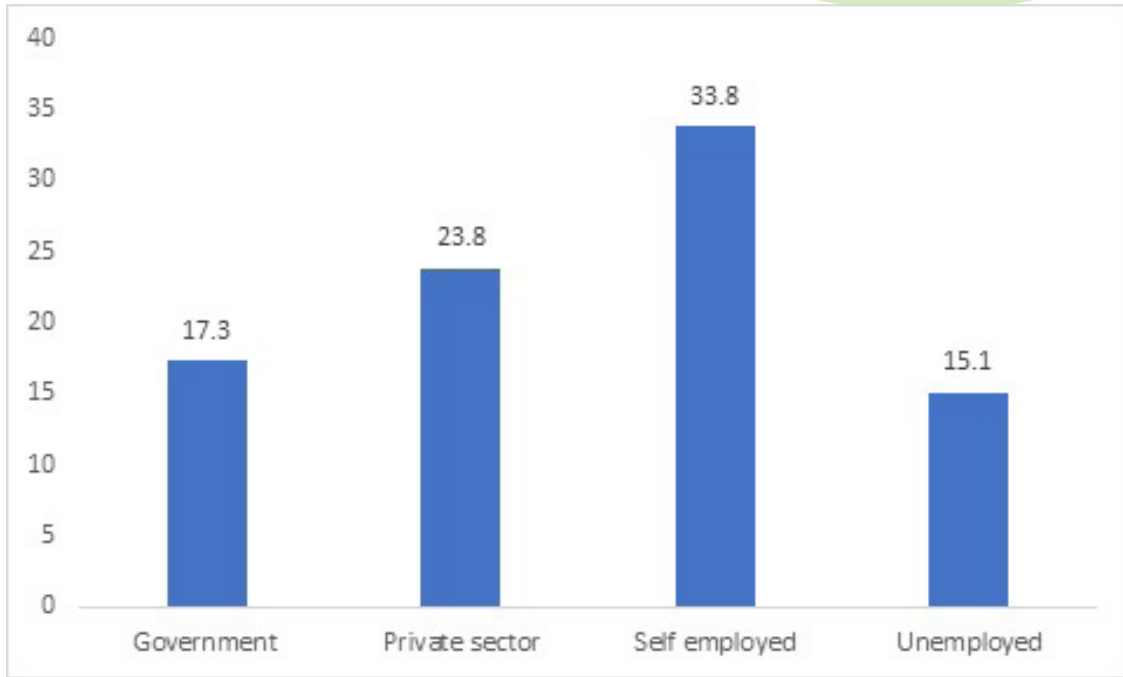


Figure 6: Tobacco consumption by Occupational sector

Figure 6 shows how current tobacco consumers are represented by their occupational (major sector)². Self-employed groups reported the highest current tobacco consumption (33.8%) while unemployed groups report the lowest rate (15.2%).

²The survey data cannot be taken as representation of the major sector, hence data may not be generalized for sectors.

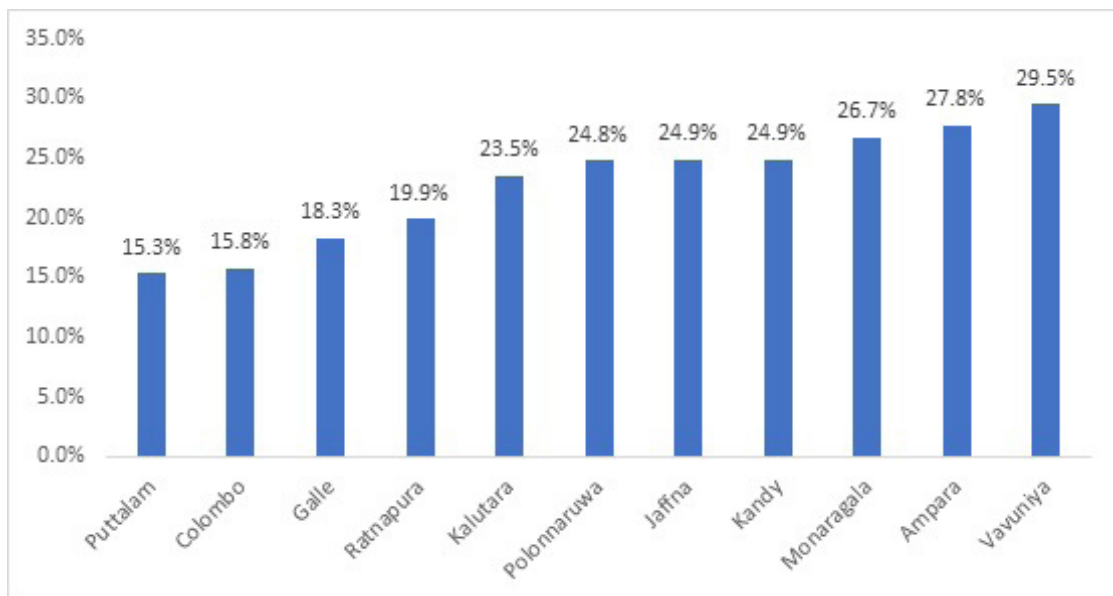


Figure 7: Status of Tobacco consumption by district

The highest number of current consumers were observed from the Vavuniya district (29.5%) while the second highest was observed from the Ampara district (27.8%). The lowest number of current consumers were observed from the Puttalam district (15.3%) while the second lowest was observed from the Colombo district (15.8%). Kalutara, Polonnaruwa, Jaffna and Kandy districts were shown nearly to the total average percentage of current consumers (23.0%). However, Monaragala, Ampara and Vavuniya showed above average figures.

3 Smoking Frequencies among Males

The respondent who is under the current smoker has been further analysed by how frequently they consumed. Those who consumed on a daily basis, few times a week; who consumed on a weekly basis, few times a month; who consumed on a monthly basis and occasional; who consumed only on occasional basis

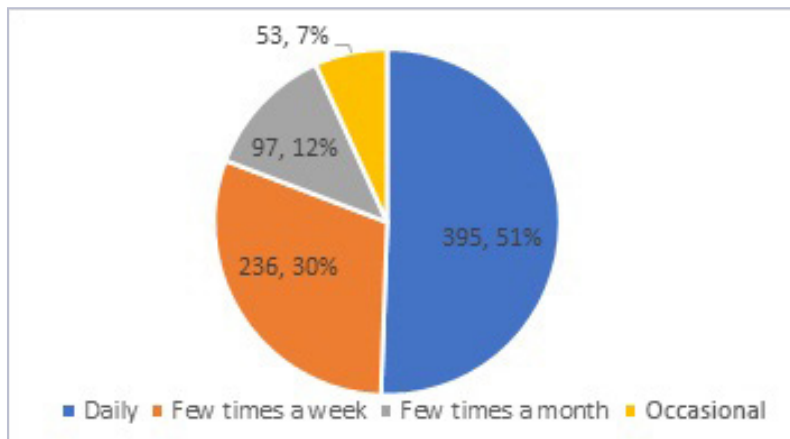


Figure 8: Frequency of all types of tobacco consumption

Figure 8 shows the frequency of all types of current tobacco consumption (One consumer may have used more than one type). It was observed that the majority of current tobacco consumers and half of the respondents were daily users, while the least frequently was observed as occasional. Further analysis has been prepared to understand the frequencies in different types of tobacco smoking

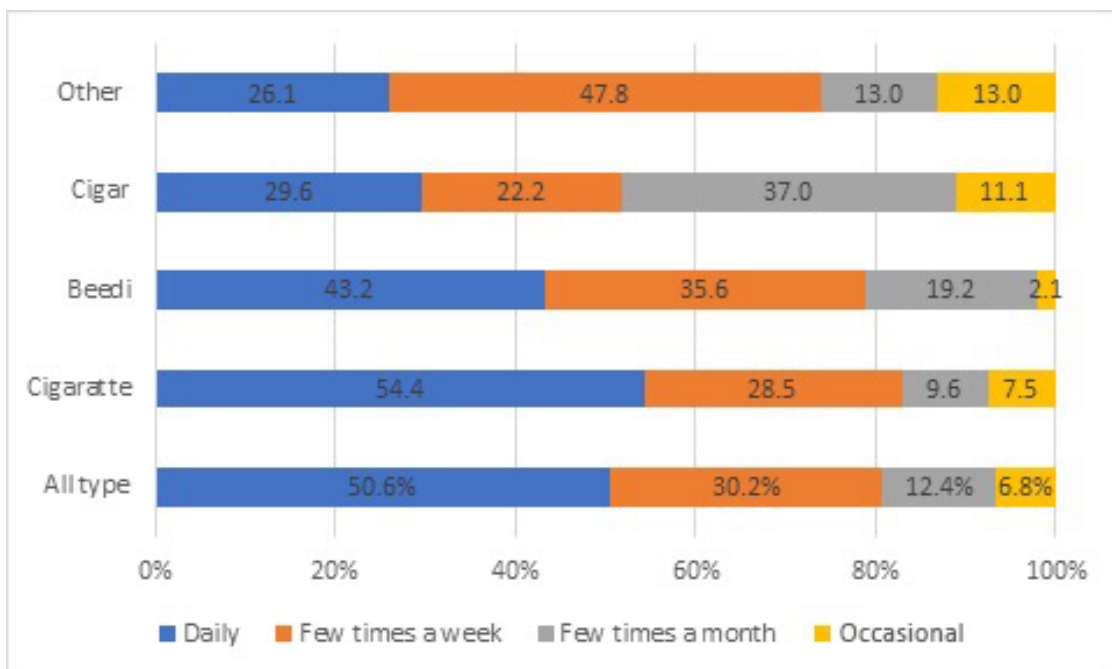


Figure 8.1: Frequency tobacco consumption by type

Figure 8.1 shows that among the different types of tobacco consumers, cigarette consumers recorded the highest daily consumption. In the other way half of the cigarette users are daily basis consumers.

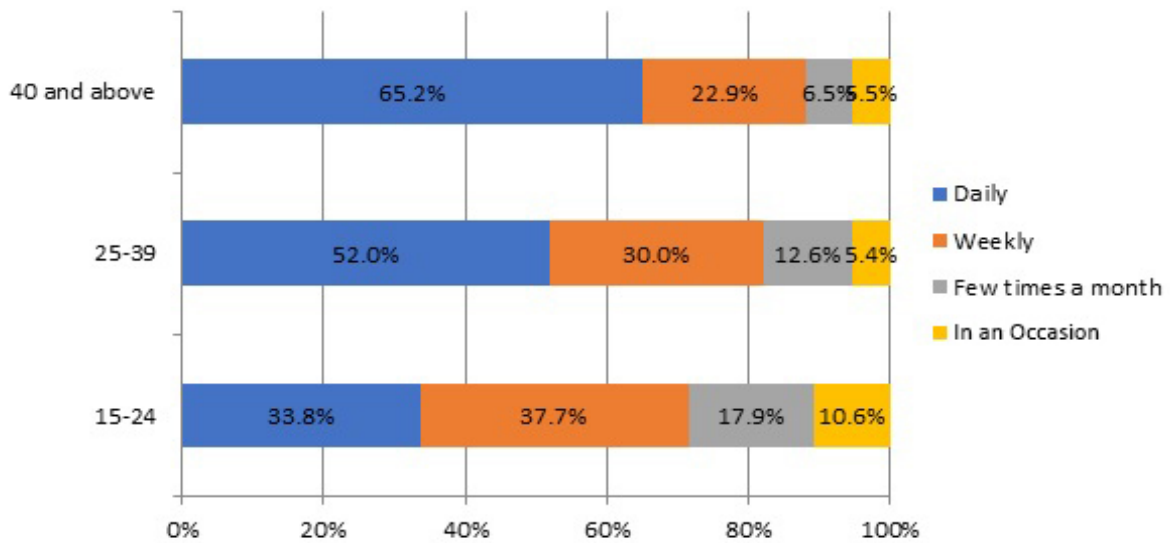


Figure 9: Frequency of Tobacco Consumption by Age groups

Figure 9 shows a pattern, frequency of tobacco consumption among the age groups. The frequency of tobacco consumption has increased from the lowest age groups to the highest age groups. Daily users reported high in the 40 and above age groups while lowest reported in 15-24 age groups while all the other frequency figures are reversed.

4 Tobacco type of products

There are various forms of tobacco products in Sri Lanka. However, this survey focusses only on smoking tobacco products, since it is the major tobacco product in Sri Lanka. This section will analyse how smoking tobacco products are distributed among current tobacco smokers.

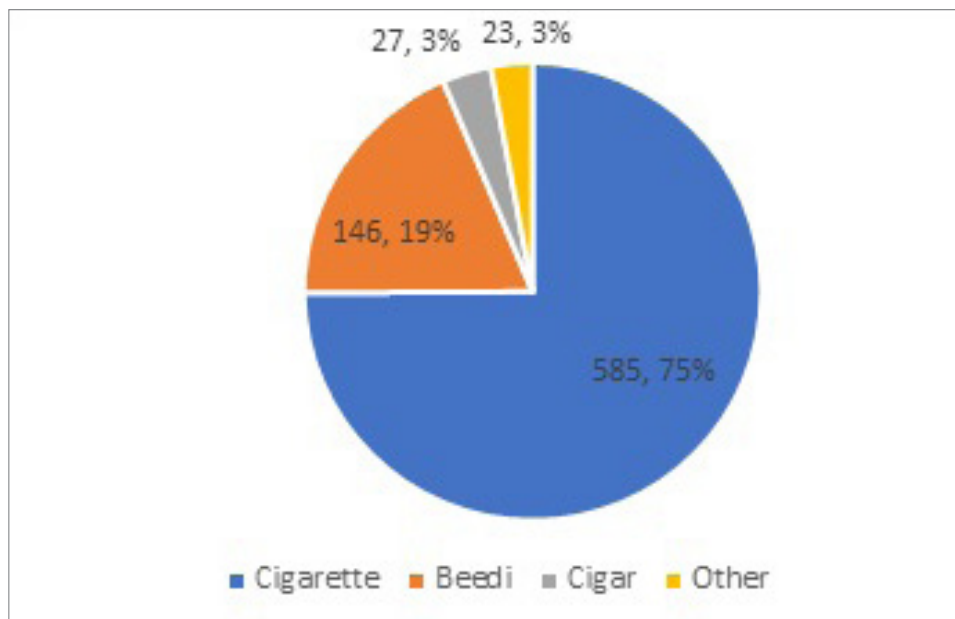


Figure 10: Tobacco Consumption by Type

Tobacco consumers may use multiple types of tobacco. However, figure 10 shows that among tobacco smokers the most common smoking tobacco type is cigarettes.

RESULTS

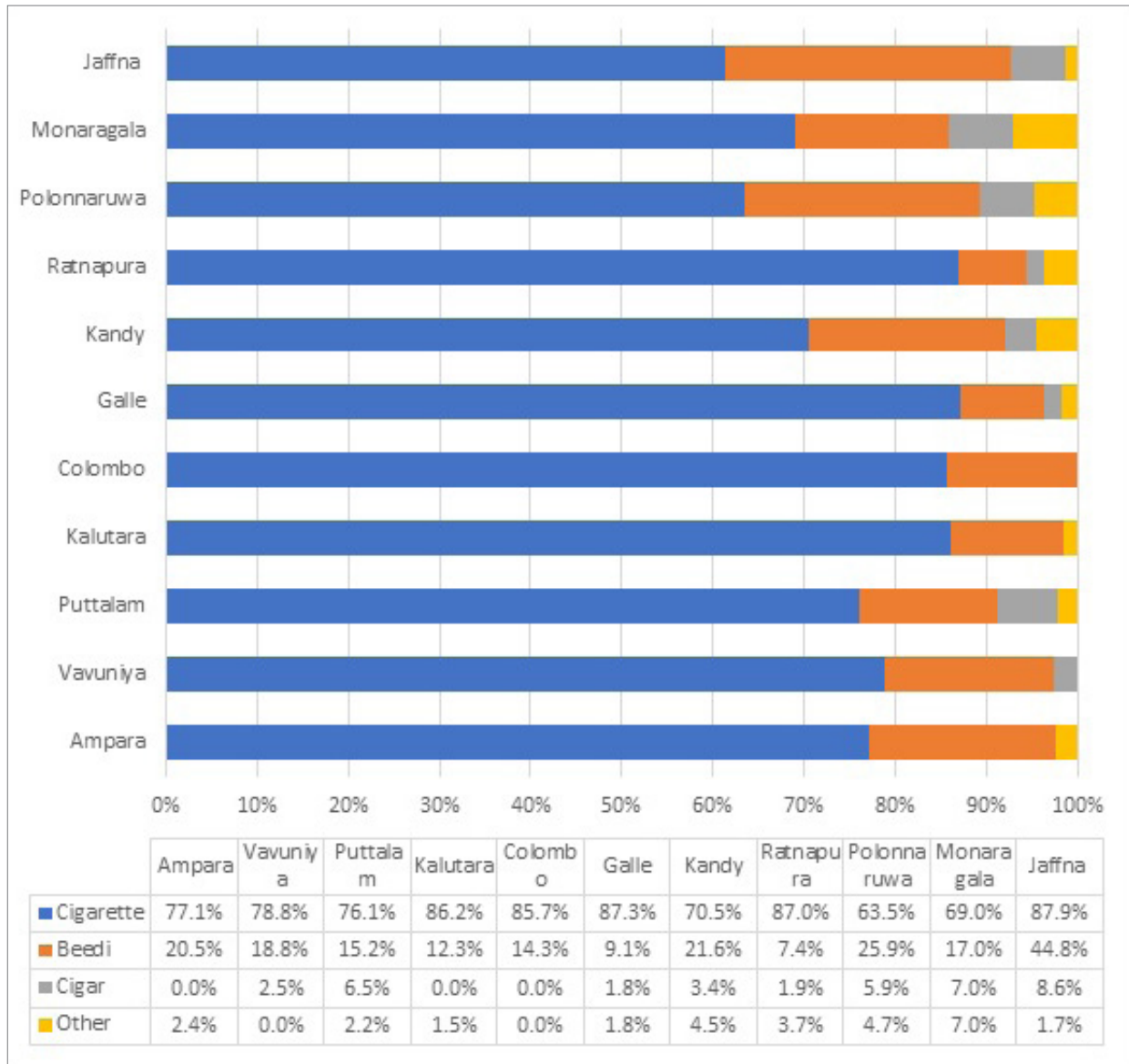


Figure 11: Types of Tobacco Products used by Districts

Figure 11 shows that cigarettes has been the most common tobacco product among current smokers in all districts. Highest beedi consumption is from Jaffna.

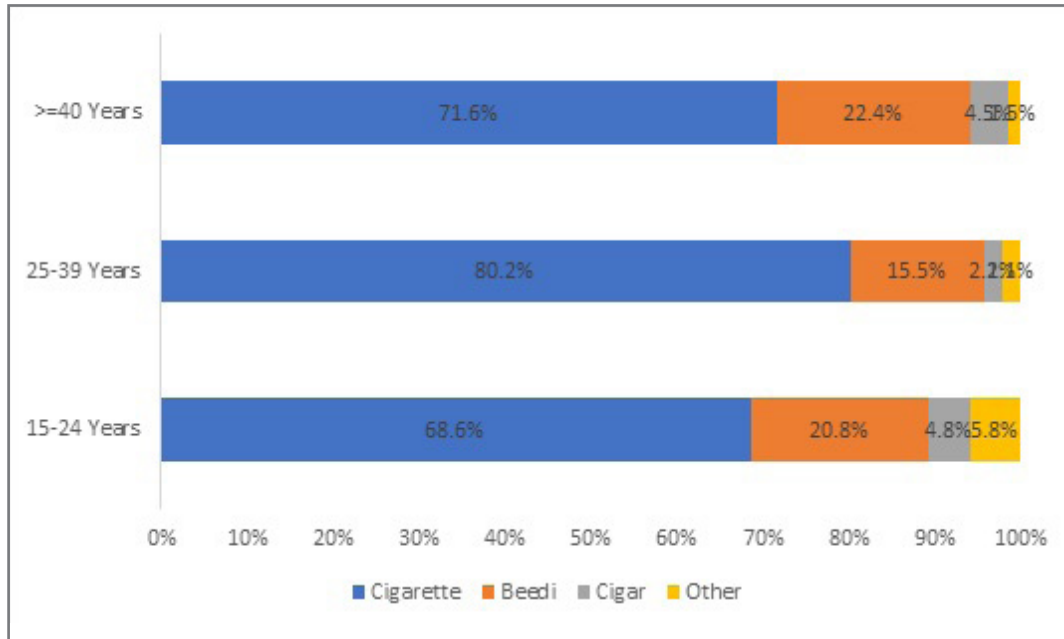


Figure 12: Types of Tobacco Products Consumed by Different Age Groups

According to figure 12, cigarettes were consumed by a majority across all age groups. Even though the beedi consumption is lower among all age groups the 25-39 age group shows the lowest comparatively to the other two groups.

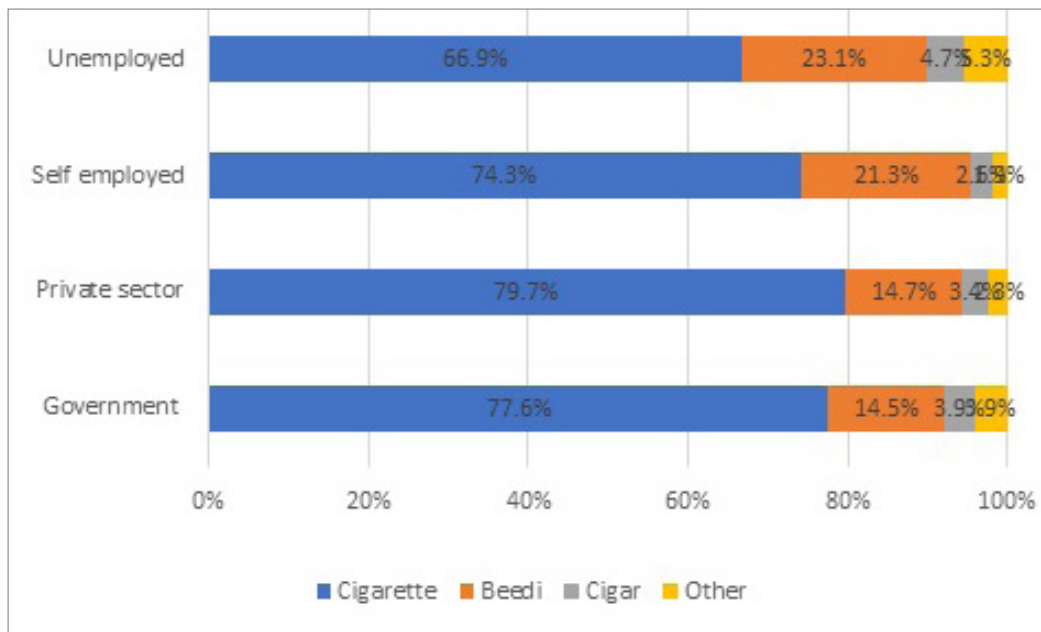


Figure 13: Types of Tobacco Products Consumed by the Occupational sector

Figure 13 illustrates the types of tobacco products consumed among the occupational sectors. Cigarette was exclusively the highest tobacco product used in all sectors.

5 Tobacco Initiation

This section will give the analysis of tobacco initiation graphically and statistically. This further helps to understand where and what type of tobacco products were contributed for the initiation. This data may be helpful for those who are concerned on tobacco prevention.

Figure 14: Tobacco Initiation Age

Ever use of tobacco consumers had inquired their age at the first consumption of tobacco. According to Figure 14 data shows that the highest number of initiations (45.2%) was reported at 15-19 years. It further shows that at the age of 24 the majority of smokers has initiated their tobacco consumption (84.3%).

Table 3 gives the statistical data of the initiation age for tobacco smoking. It further supports the illustration of data in Figure 14. The median age for tobacco initiation is 20 or below in all age groups.

Table 3: Initiation Age by Age Group

Age group	N	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Skewness	F value
overall (weighted)	1057	19.28	19	4.220	.130	1.256	
15-24	261	16.92	17	2.225	.151	-.652	68.378
25-39	488	19.65	19	3.641	.111	.913	.000
40 and above	306	20.73	20	5.397	.139	.967	

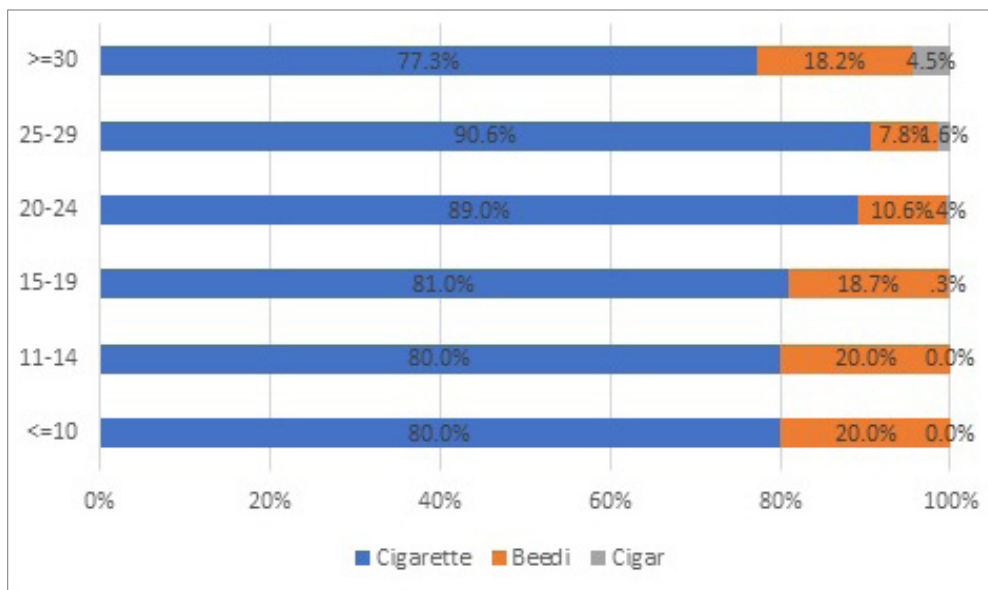


Figure 15: Type of Tobacco Products Consumed at Initiation by age group

Figure 15 indicates the type of tobacco products used during the initiation by age categories. Cigarettes is the major tobacco type consumed at the initiation among ever smokers in all age categories. Comparative to the cigarette the beedi indication is minor, while the cigar is negligible at the initiation of tobacco consumption.

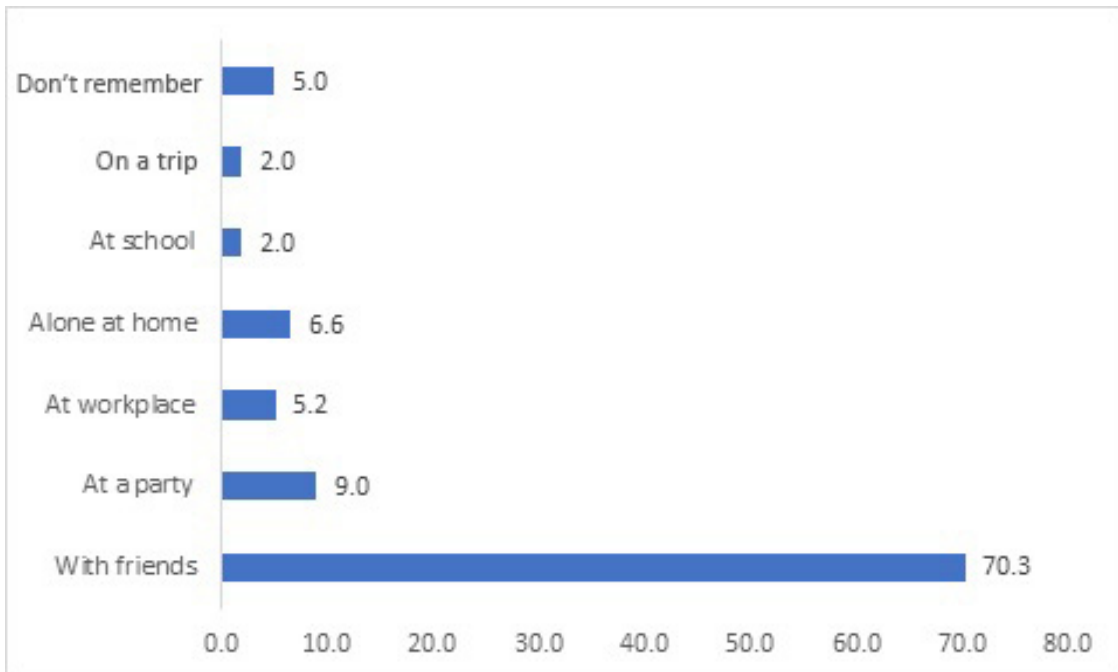


Figure 16: Type of Alcohol Products Consumed at Initiation

According to figure 16, Tobacco had been initiated mostly with friends. The second most common initiation occasion were parties. Apart from the Alone at home (6.6%) and who did not remember the occasion at the initiation (5%) which is account for minimum fraction, the rest of the occasions are social instances.

6 Cessation of Tobacco Use

It is obvious that all the consumers who ever tried tobacco smoking are continuing their tobacco smoking until they die. This section will give an analysis of why ever smokers are not continuing their tobacco consumption and when they quit.

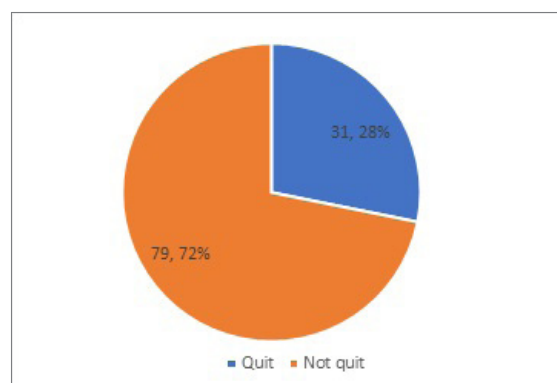


Figure 17: Quitting Tobacco Consumption

RESULTS

This question was asked from those who have smoked in their lifetime (n=1094) and only 10% (110) have responded to the question. As shown in Figure 17, 28% of lifetime smokers have quit their smoking at the time of the survey. According to the data a large proportion of the ever smokers who responded to the question was still consuming Tobacco.

	No. of respondents	Mean quit age	Std. Deviation	Minimum - Maximum age
overall (weighted)	1094	20.00	13.043	16-65
15-24	271	31.00	2.182	16-24
25-39	502	27.23	4.317	25-39
40 or above	321	52.00	7.698	40-65

Table 4: Quitting age from tobacco smoking

Above Table 4 gives the statistical data of the quitting age for tobacco smoking. Mean age for the tobacco cessation is 20 years. However, this figure varies in three different age groups.

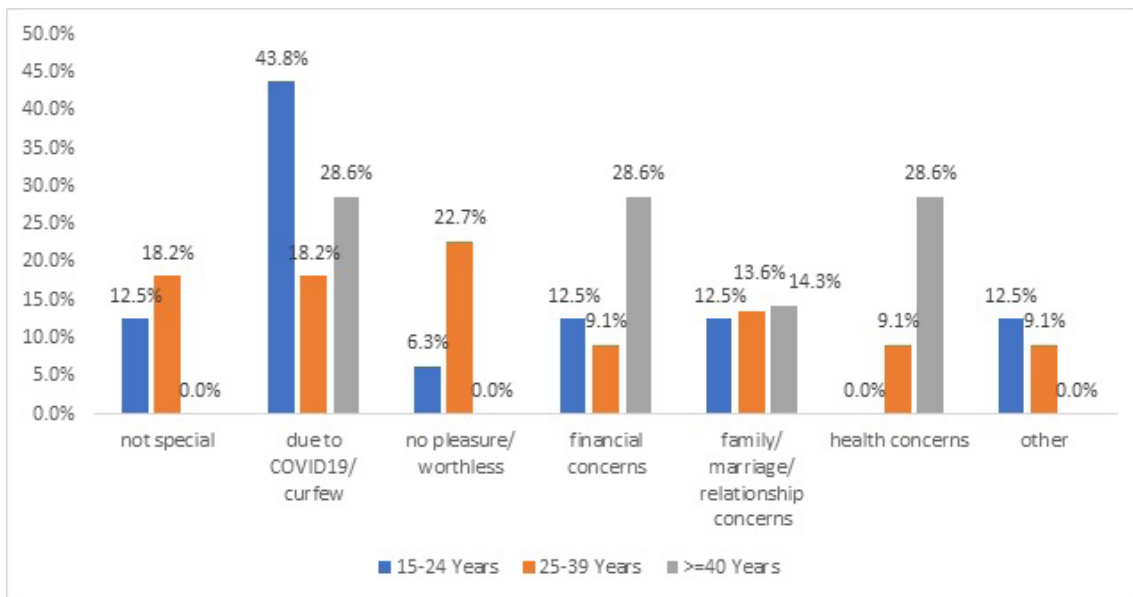


Figure 18: Reasons for reducing consumption of tobacco

The survey questioned the ever users on whether they changed their smoking habits during the previous 6 months when the survey was conducted. The above figure 20 has taken an analysis of the reasons from the respondents who reduced or quit their tobacco smoking. Even though the response rate is low for this question the reasons are interesting among the age groups. The obvious reason in all age groups is due to the COVID 19/ curfew situation in the country, and this is the major reason for the youth age group (15-24). However the major reason for the middle age groups is they did not get any pleasure/ worthless of tobacco smoking, while health concerns is among the age groups of 40 and above. It is interesting that no one in the younger groups were concerned on health.

7 Expenditure on tobacco

Tobacco smoking burns a significant amount of money daily, monthly and annually in the country and globally. This survey has questioned the monthly expenditure on tobacco smoking and presented the statistics below.

Table 5: Monthly Expenditure on Tobacco for Different Age Groups

	NO. of respondents	Median (in rupees)	Interquartile Range (in rupees)	Min -Max (in rupees)
Age group (all type current smokers)				
15-24	149	1500.00	2950	00-30000
25-39	314	3000.00	4888	00-40000
40 and above	159	3500.00	7400	00-30000
Age group (daily cigarette smokers)				
15-24	50	3900.00	7750	65-30000
25-39	169	5000.00	4900	325-40000
40 and above	97	5850.00	6750	300-30000
Smoking Frequency (cigarette smokers)				
Daily	316	5850	6750	65-40000
Weekly	165	800	1500	65-16000
Few times a month	56	325	1800	0-8400
Only at functions	36	500	900	0-2000
Overall (Weighted)	622	2500	4950	0-40000

Note: Further analysis on age groups and frequencies was done only for cigarettes

Table 5 shows the monthly expenditure on all products among smokers and cigarette smoking in different age groups and different frequencies. The median value of the monthly expenditure is highest among the 40 and above age group in all types of tobacco use among current users (Rs.3,500.00). However the maximum expenditure on tobacco use is visible in the 25-39 age groups which is a considerably higher amount of money (Rs. 40,000.00). The monthly expenditure on cigarette smoking is higher among the 40 and above age groups and expenditure is negatively invers by the age.

Expenditure on tobacco smoking in the last month for all current smokers and “daily” cigarette smokers in each district is shown in Figures 19 and 20 respectively. Among the groups of daily smokers, the lowest expenditure was observed from the Districts of Ampara while the highest was reported from Monaragala. Trends on the expenditure of daily smokers and all current smokers seem to be similar. However, daily smokers tend to spend much higher amounts compared to all current smokers.

RESULTS

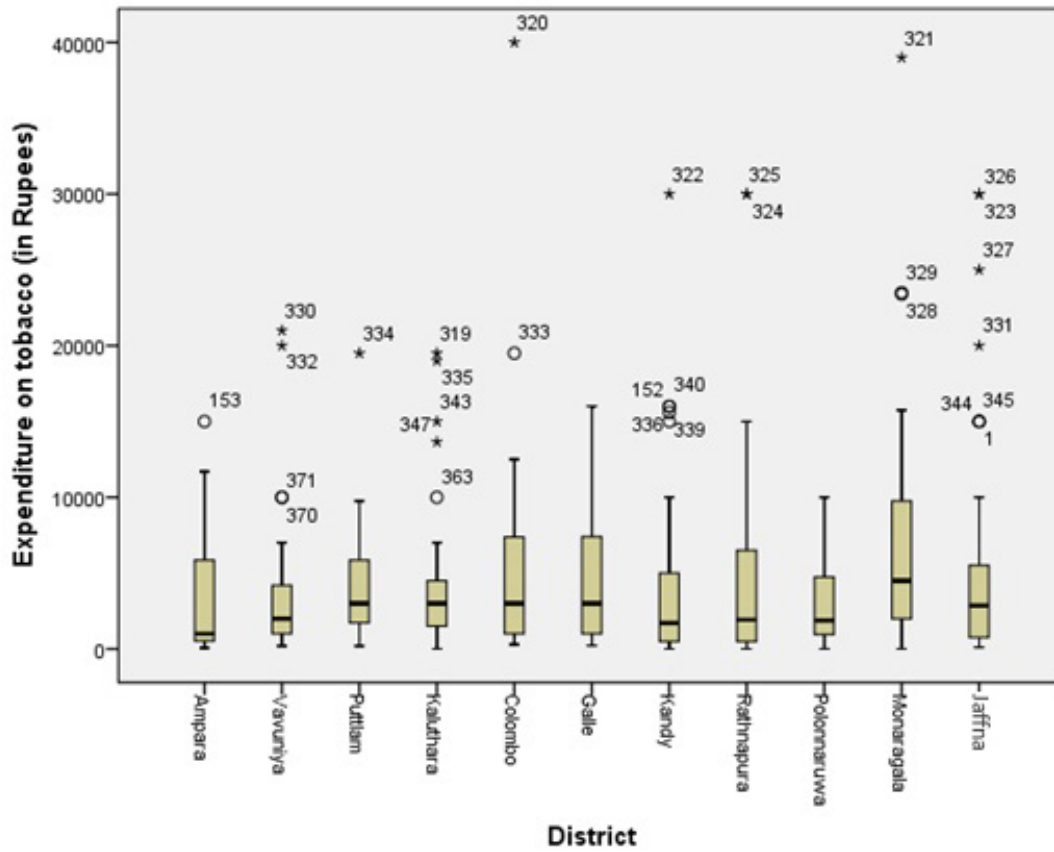


Figure 19: Monthly expenditure on tobacco smoking for a single smoker

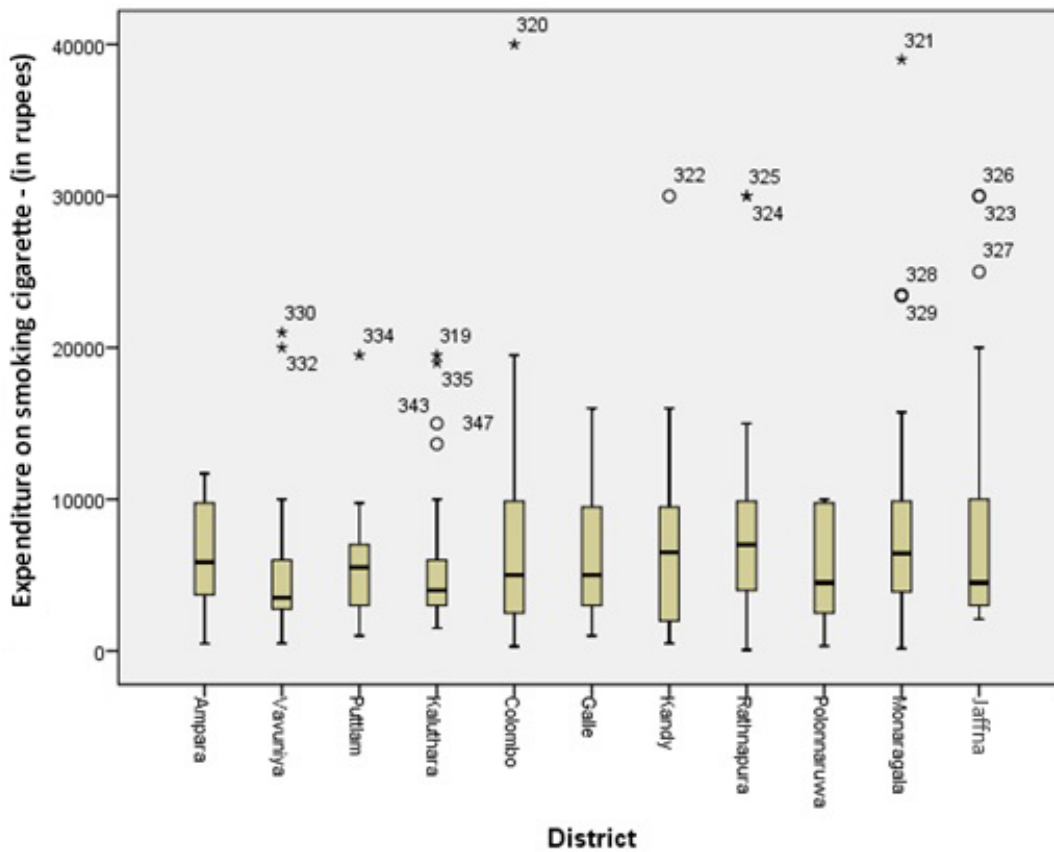


Figure 20: Monthly expenditure on cigarette smoking per smoker (daily)

6 Miscellaneous

Alcohol consumption below 21 years

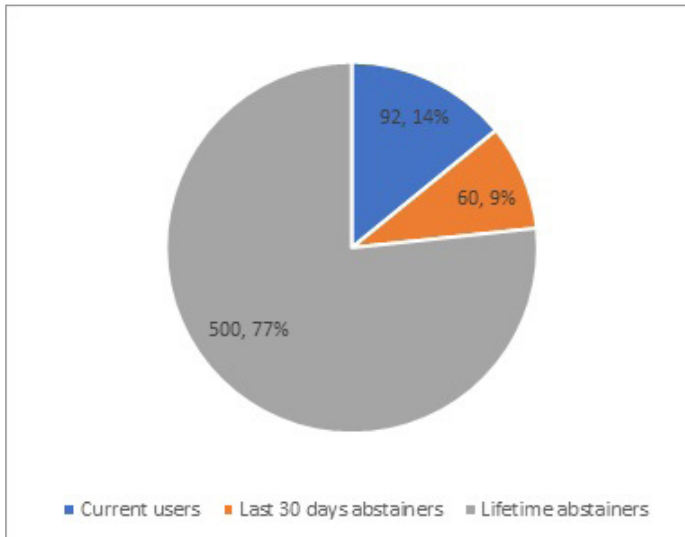


Figure 21: Status of smoking below 21 years

The National Authority on Tobacco and Alcohol Act No. 27 enacted in 2006 impose the legal boundaries on selling tobacco is prohibited under the age of 21 years. However, figure 21 shows that, those below 21 years are less on tobacco consumption. According to the respondent still there were 14% (n=92) of current smokers among the under 21 years age. Simultaneously lifetime abstainers are the majority (77%, n=500) among the under 21 years age.

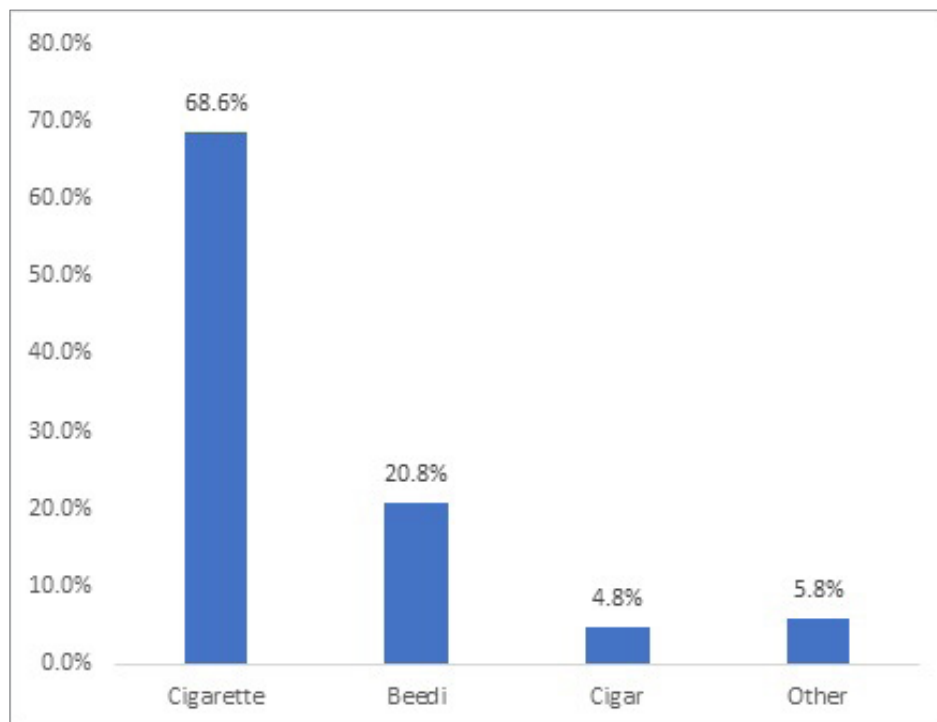
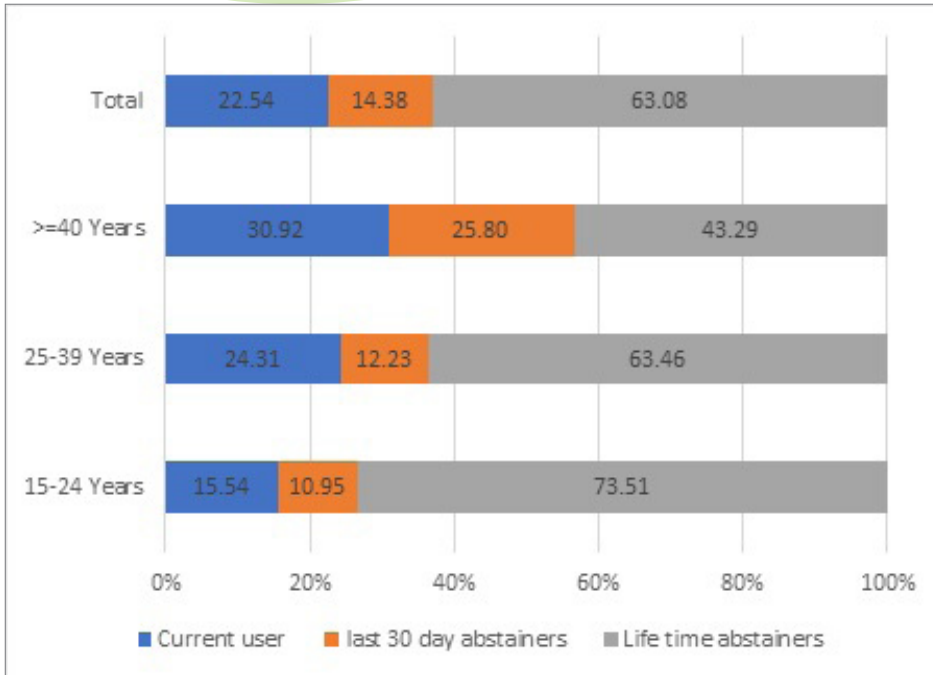


Figure 22: Types of smoking products used by current smokers below the age of 21

As shown in Figure 22, a majority of the current smokers below the age of 21 were smoking cigarettes. More than a two thirds of the current smoking product is the cigarette among the age below 21.

RESULTS



According to Figure 23 the highest proportion of lifetime abstainers were observed from the 15-24 age groups while the lowest was from the 40 and above age groups. The last 30 days abstainers from the ages of 25-39 were almost equal to the 15-24 age groups. However, lifetime abstainers are less than a half of ever smokers among the 40 and above age groups.

Figure 23: Type of alcohol products used below 21 years

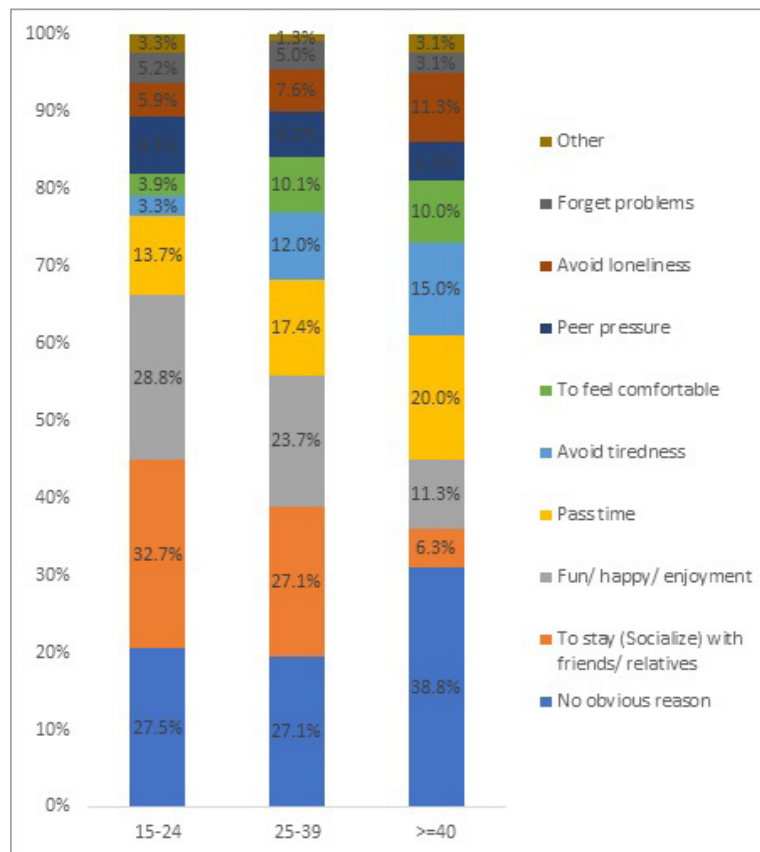


Figure 24: Reasons for smoking by current smokers

Figure 24 shows the reasons for the current smokers by age groups. The major reasons for smoking is to socialize with friends and relatives among the 15-24 age groups, while the same reason is noticeable among the 25-39 age groups. Respondents who say they have no obvious reason is almost equal among both the 15-24 and 25-39 age groups, while it is the major reason among the 40 and above age groups. The reason fun/ happy / enjoyment came as the second major reason among the 14-24 age groups but this rate becomes negatively inverse with age.

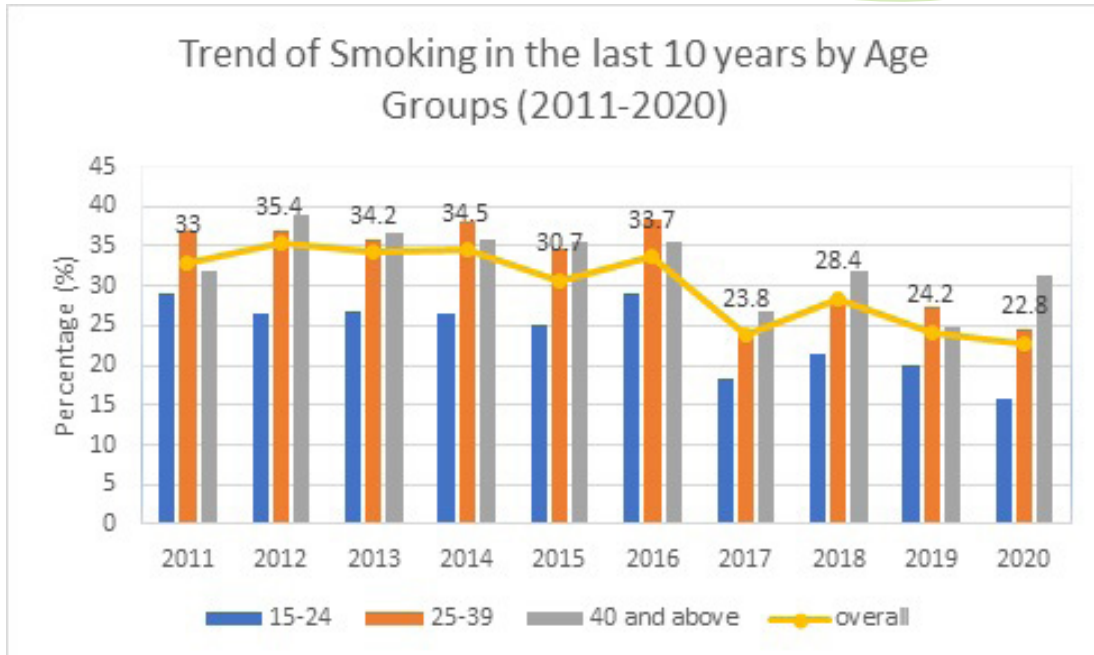


Figure 25: Tobacco smoking trend within the last 10 years

Figure 25 illustrates the tobacco smoking trend for the last decade. According to the data the overall tobacco smoking trend shows a decline across the past 10 years. A similar trend can be observed among all the age groups. However, a decline over the 15-24 and 25-35 groups are noticeable.

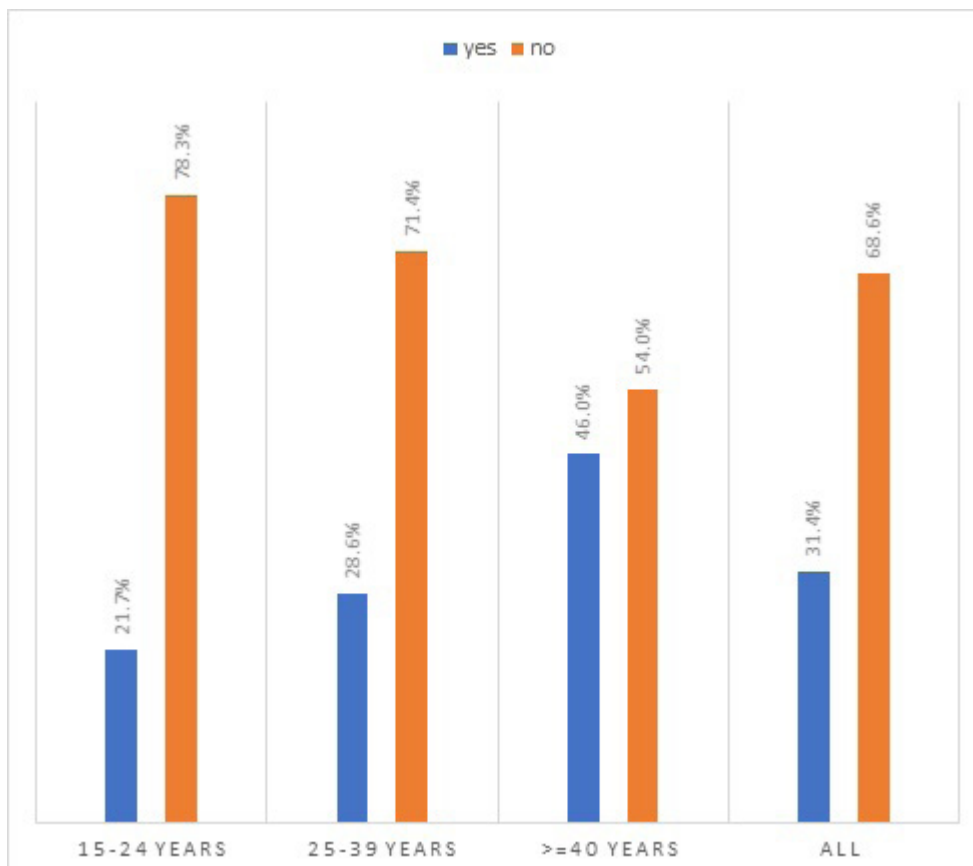


Figure 26: Tobacco smoking next to others

This survey has examined smoking next to others from the current smokers, in order to understand the harmfulness of passive smoking. The figure 26 shows that less current users (31.4%) smoke next to others. However, this behaviour is lower among the 15-24 age groups while the response rate negatively inverses with age.

RESULTS

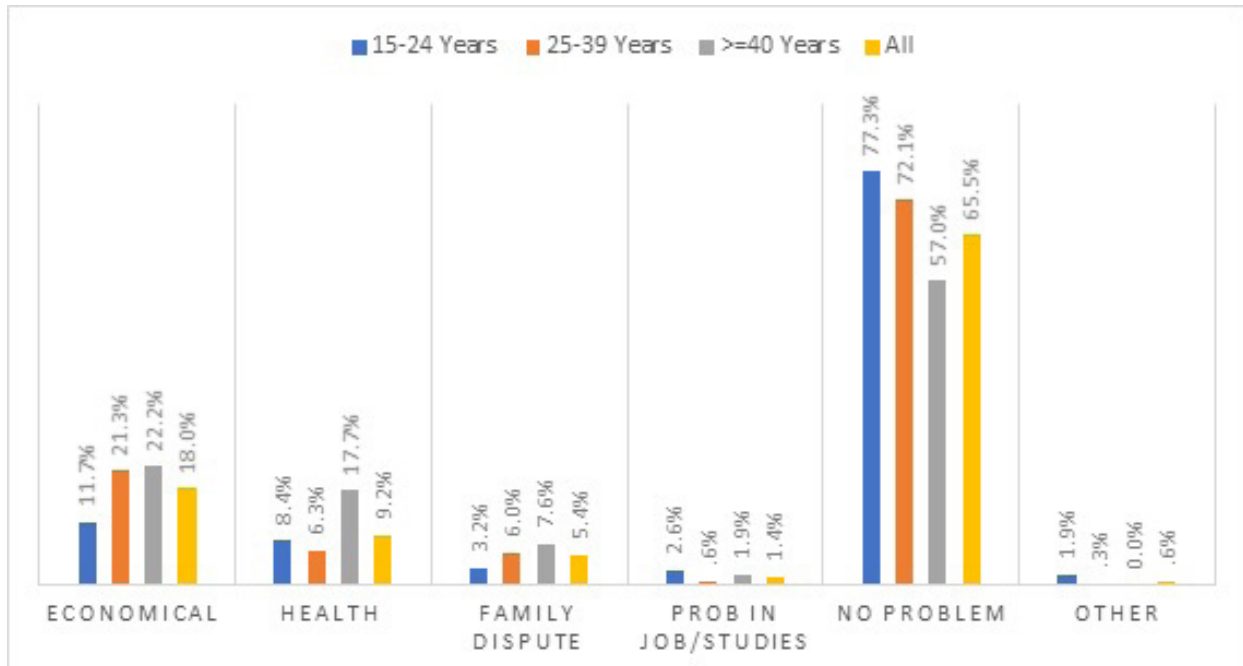


Figure 27: Problems faced by tobacco smokers

Figure 27 shows the problems faced by the current tobacco smokers. According to the response the majority has faced no problem with their smoking behaviour. However, as a problem the economic problem comes as prominent, followed by health and family issues by all the age groups.

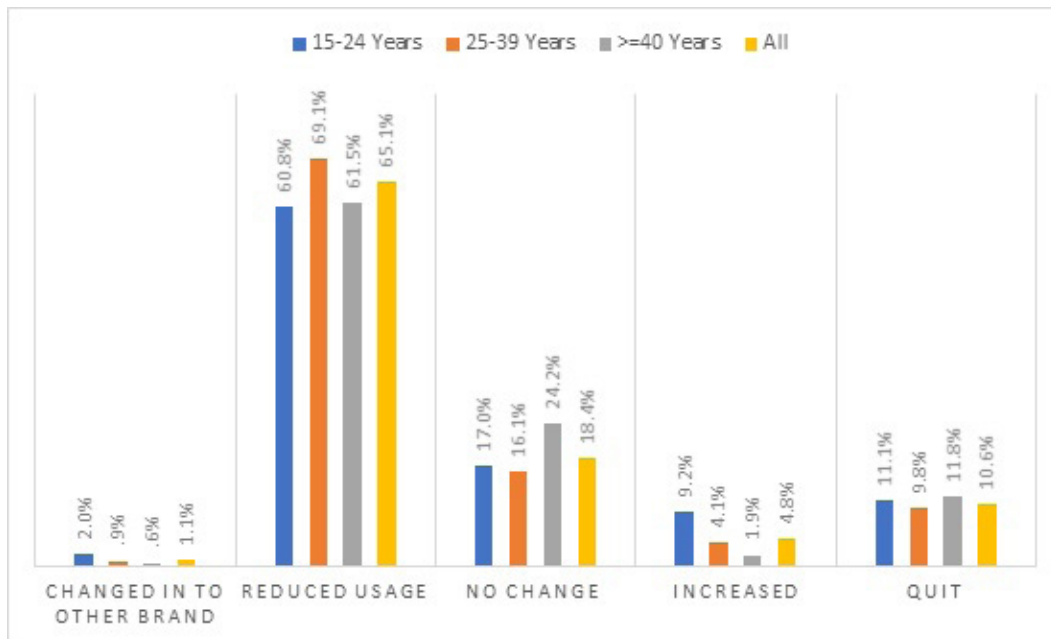


Figure 28: COVID 19 outbreak effect on tobacco smoke

The survey has been carried out during the global pandemic of COVID 19 and interval periods during the first wave and second wave in Sri Lanka. Hence how COVID-19 has affected the current tobacco smoking was asked from the current smokers. According to figure 28 COVID-19 clearly has reduced the tobacco consumption among all the age groups (Among all 65.1%).

DISCUSSION

2020 has been a challenging year due to COVID-19. It has affected the tobacco consumption in multiple ways. The survey conducted in the month of July which is right after a long period of curfew imposition by the authorities to control the outbreak (March 2020 – May 2020). However, the survey indicates a significant decline of tobacco consumption over the country among the male population. According to figure 5, two age groups namely 15-24 and 25-39 categories showed that they have decreased their tobacco consumption while a surprising increment is showed in the 40 and above group.

Tobacco smoking has been a well-known risk factor for many diseases. The survey has revealed that the use of tobacco among tobacco smokers, has reduced during the COVID 19 pandemic, due to fear of contracting the virus and due to fear of complications if infected by the virus. Awareness by the mass media and continuous discouragement from the authorities on tobacco use has caused a decline altogether on the supply and usage. Apart from those two factors the curfew situation and health measures made everyone stay away from gatherings which were mostly affected factors on those who are still smoking tobacco. This survey specifically addresses the relationship between smoking and COVID-19 (Figure 18 & Figure 28). Major reasons to reduce tobacco consumption during the past 6 months was the COVID-19/ Curfew situation which reduced the supply and effect on tobacco consumption within a short period of time. Which means policy implementation can be used for reducing tobacco consumption significantly in a shorter period.

According to the findings of the survey Cigarettes clearly showed as the prominent tobacco smoking product which accounts for 75% all type of tobacco products (See Figure 10: Tobacco Consumption by Type). This is also prominent among any occupational sector (See Figure 13: Types of Tobacco Products Consumed by the Occupational sector) age group (Figure 12: Types of Tobacco Products Consumed by Different Age Groups in any district (See Figure 11: Types of Tobacco Products used by District). Even the cigarette is clearly evident as the major tobacco product, while beedi is minimal. It is surprising to see the Ceylon Tobacco Company (CTC) continuously claiming Beedi as their second risk factor (CTC, 2018 & CTC, 2019). However, further analysis is evident that half of the tobacco smokers (51%) are daily basis consumers (See Figure 8: Frequency of all types of tobacco consumption) which is the highest monthly expenditure account for cigarette consumption (Median=5850, Range Rs. 65-40,000).

The Tobacco initiation section gives interesting statistics (section 5. Tobacco Initiation). Tobacco initiation may start at any age. Even though there are negligible numbers reported around 10 years, data evidence shows that most of the tobacco smokers-initiated at the age of 19 (See Table 3, Overall mean=19.28 & median=19). Further almost half (48%) has initiated by the age of 19 and 84.3% of ever smokers initiated by the age of 24 (See Figure 14: Tobacco initiation Age). This is clearly indicated that the youth group is the one most at risk on tobacco initiation. Most at risk for tobacco initiation are age groups of 15-19 and these are the secondary school children and school leavers for higher education, vocational trainings, or job seekers. This is why policies has been inferenced to prohibit tobacco for any person under the age of 21 years. The NATIONAL AUTHORITY ON TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL ACT, No. 27 OF 2006 clearly mentioned that “A person shall not sell, offer for sale, or permit or promote the sale of any tobacco product or alcohol product to any person under twenty-one years of age”. However, the survey indicates that there are loopholes in the enforcement of

policies (see Figure 21: Status of smoking below 21 years). Shockingly the survey revealed that 14% of the under 21 age are current smokers while the majority (68.6%) of them have smoked Cigarettes (See Figure 22: Types of smoking products used by current smokers below the age of 21). However, CTC claim that they are not deviating from the NATA act and other applicable regulations (CTC, 2019).

Initiation and prolong smoking mainly social (See Figure 16: Tobacco Initiation Occasion & Figure 24: Reasons for smoking by current smokers). According to Figure 16, the majority initiate tobacco with their peer groups (70%), at a party (9%) and at a trip (2%) all are social incidents. However, reasons for prolonging smoking (Figure 24) are interesting. When it questioned the reasons for smoking from the current users, the obvious answer is they have no proper reason. This reason is the highest reason from all and among the 40 and above group. However the highest reason has been to socialize among the youth group and this reason is least among the elder age groups. This is similar to the reason of Fun/happy/enjoyment which is high among the younger and getting lower when it comes to elder age groups. These reasons have to be critically analysed since most reasons are adopted by the society. For instance see the pattern of reasons such as avoid loneliness, forget problems, feel comfortable and avoid tiredness over the age group which are adopted with the higher age group. The world tobacco smoking trend has a clear declining over the past decades (WHO, 2019). This survey findings showed that similar declining trends on smoking tobacco among the male populations in Sri Lanka (see Figure 25: Tobacco smoking trends within the last 10 years). Despite the growth of youth population in Sri Lanka a remarkable decline of tobacco among youth population is visible. This may be the effort of the holistic approach on tobacco prevention that took place over the decades.

However still tobacco causes 10% of all death in Sri Lanka (WHO, 2018). Further the WHO estimated the cost to the Sri Lanka economy due to the premature deaths and disabilities by tobacco smoking, which is much higher than the tax revenue from tobacco. Those facts are still evident that tobacco is hampering the health and economy in various ways. Hence tobacco control must be further prioritized and policies need to be reinforced extremely.

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ANNEXURE

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