

ALCOHOLISM IN SRI LANKA; SOME DISTURBING TRENDS

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Alcoholism is already a major social problem in Sri Lanka. While there has been a significant increase in the availability and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the country, there has been a corresponding rise in the alcohol related problem such as alcohol-related illness, drunken driving, and excise crime.

A striking feature of the local alcohol economy has been the expansion of the informal sector activities. This leads to specific problems such as alcohol poisoning, crime and corruption.

The available data also indicates that there is a tendency on the part of consumers to move away from fermented alcoholic beverages towards distilled beverages. This is very much in contrast to the recent trends in the developed West where consumption of spirits has declined substantially over the years.

The analysis is based on both the first hand data gathered by the author through key informant interviews and field observations and the secondary data extracted from published reports such as annual administration reports of the Excise Department, Police Department, Department of Health Service Medical Statistician, Customs Department, etc.,

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