

ABSTRACT

An analysis of family expenses on alcohol and tobacco and its impact on farmer family income: A Case Study of Badalkumbura Division in the Moneragala District.

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Background

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), alcohol- related death and disability accounted for 4.0% of the global burden of disease, ranking as the fifth most detrimental risk factor of the twenty risk factors examined. Despite the fact that tobacco consumption kills more than 5 million people across the world annually, this number is projected to increase to 8 million by 2030. More than 80% of those deaths would be in low- and middle-income countries. In South Asia alone, approximately 1.2 million people die every year from tobacco use. Though cigarettes cause approximately 20,000 deaths annually, more than 25,000 children are introduced to cigarette use each year and it is estimated that about 70-80 children initiate smoking on a daily basis. As a result of the alcohol and tobacco related deaths that occur on a daily basis about 50 women are widowed, hundreds of children are left fatherless and a large number of families are left helpless and in a state of poverty.

Research problem

'Why people spent more money on alcohol and tobacco?' is the main research question explored in this study. The study will focus on whether this statement is true or false in relation to farming families and bring forth common problems and suggestions regarding the situation. This research focused mainly on expounding and calculating the expenditure of alcohol and tobacco on the income of farming families in selected villages in the Moneragala District. In the research, alcohol is defined as all the beverages that include alcoholic chemicals such as Arrack, Beer and Kasippu. The author also considers tobacco products such as cigarette and Bidi (local cigarette) to be under the tobacco category.

Objectives

The overall objective of the study is to examine the impact of alcohol and tobacco use on an average income of a farmer family. The study will further focus on specific objectives such as to examine the present pattern of farmer family consuming behaviour, to estimate the expenditure on account of alcohol and tobacco, to analyse factors contributing to expense on account of alcohol and tobacco and to ascertain the impact of the expense of alcohol and tobacco on family basic needs.

Research Methodology

The target population of the study was 100 families from each of the 5 villages in the Badalkumbura division in the Moneragala District. Volunteers were selected as field investigators and given training on the relevant research techniques and proceeded to interview a member of each selected family and provide them with a questionnaire. The tool used to collect data consisted of direct, easily comprehensible questions presented in the Sinhalese language. The completed questionnaires were coded and filed into a Microsoft Excel database then utilized to analyse the data. The direction of reviewing the findings will be conducted as a quantitative study. The data collected in the methodology will be statistically analysed.

Key Findings

The highest percentage of the respondents belongs to the agricultural sector (67%), while up to 33% were engaged in agricultural sector along with occupations in other sectors. In regard to the sample tested, 32% were tobacco users, 24% were alcohol users and 24% were alcohol and tobacco users. Moreover, further research indicated that the monthly income among all respondents was Rs. 23,092. The findings indicate that the largest percentage of an income by the lowest income group is spent largely on food and one fourth of their income on tobacco. In all groups, it was observed that the lowest amount of the income allocated for family needs was spent on the payment of household bills.

Among the reasons given by the respondents, 36% of the sample stated that they use tobacco as a habit or because they are addicted to it and have difficulty in overcoming their addiction while 18% stated that they smoke 'for the fun' as they believed that tobacco increased their feelings of happiness and enjoyment. Further, 16% stated they consumed tobacco due to peer expectations and 42% of the sample mentioned that they continued using alcohol due to being unable to overcome their addiction. 30% stated that they consume alcohol because they believed it increased happiness while 20% agreed that it causes relaxation.

Majority, 56%, of all alcohol and tobacco users in the study mentioned that they were aware of the high financial cost of their using. One third of respondents were well aware of the alcohol and tobacco harms such as health effects, effect on their children, socially unacceptable and unfair to family members and look older than his age.

Conclusion

The category lowest income earners spent largely on sustenance and tobacco, whereas those in the category of highest income spent money on alcohol. Low income farmers spent less on saving and educating their children. It is asserted that despite this, people are aware of spending on alcohol and tobacco more than health and education resulting in poverty. To overcome this issue it necessary for them to reduce tobacco and alcohol expenditures. Therefore, author recommends that the prevention programme should be more focused on these issues, without solely focusing on health effects and violence against women as usual. The result of this research indicates the real issue is economic harm. Policymakers and programmes advisors would need to refocus their work to formulating programmes for poverty alleviation.

References

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