

Smokeless Tobacco Use in Sri Lanka (An sociological Analysis)

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Abstract

Smokeless tobacco use is one of the leading social health problems in Sri Lanka. The trend of using and addiction to smokeless tobacco has gone up and created new social-cultural issues and health challenges. The research problem was how does smokeless tobacco use affect socio-cultural, health and political conditions? The main objective of this study was to analyze the socio-cultural, health and political factors that influence smokeless tobacco use in Sri Lanka. The qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews and quantitative data was collected through the questioners. Secondary tools were used by collecting information. Responders were selected using the purposive sampling method and snowball sampling method. In this research, a sample of 50 was selected for data collection. These case studies were taken from selected unique people, who are consuming smokeless tobacco. This study qualitative data was analyzed by thematic analysis method. Quantitative data were analyzed by the SPSS method. This study reveals that smokeless tobacco has been well-integrated into Sri Lankan culture and smokeless tobacco is being positively socialized through the religiously organized social institutes. Smokeless tobacco locally known as school and malware are more popular and spread all over the country. The youth sub-culture in association with sports and fashion lay the foundation for smokeless tobacco. Therefore, it has developed as a silent subculture among the livelihood groups such as transport workers, fishermen factory workers and construction workers and plantation community. The family background, social neighborhood, youth fashion or deviant behaviour, the nature of livelihood and psychological conditions are the major determiners that influence the practice of using smokeless tobacco. According to the field data, adolescents are more prone to lip and oral cancers and heart disease because of the smokeless commercial tobacco products. But the study shows that very few people are referred for treatment. The percentage of people who received treatment was 18% and those who did not receive treatment were 82%. This study revealed; there is a strong tendency for smokeless tobacco use to spread in society as a silent sub-culture. There is an urgent need to develop a strong prevention mechanism for this problem. It helps to protect the social status and develop human well-being.

Keywords: *Smokeless tobacco, thool, sub-culture*

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