



An empirical study on the socioeconomic factors affecting for increasing consumption of *Cannabis* in rural Sri Lanka (Special Reference to Thanamalwila police division in Monaragala district)

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Abstract

Cannabis is known for being the most widely cultivated and traded psychoactive drug in the world. In Sri Lanka, the Thanamalwila area is well known for the consumption of *Cannabis*. The main objective of this research is to answer the research question “what are the socioeconomic factors affecting for increasing consumption of *Cannabis* in Thanamalwila” and make recommendations to reduce the consumption of *Cannabis*. In order to answer the above research question, quantitative research approaches were employed. The research area was Thanamalwila Divisional Secretariat, and data was collected in Parakramapura, Vijithapura, Kahakurullan Palassa, Hambegamuwa, Siththarama, Kithulkote, Kudaoya Grama Niladari Divisions. The research sample was 389 and simple random sampling was used to collect data. The dependent variable of the study were factors affecting for increasing *Cannabis* consumption in Thanamalwila and the independent variables are income, occupation, education and life pattern. The results of the questionnaire present factors affecting for increasing consumption of *Cannabis* in Thanamalwila and what are the policies have been taken to eradicate this situation. When it comes to the age of participants, the majority of 77 respondents are in 42 –50 age group and minimum age group was 12-28. When considering the education qualification, the majority of respondents live in this area only studied up to grade 11 while 5 people had a degree. 30% respondents in sample consume *Cannabis*. Moreover, 189 people said that main reason for the plantation of *Cannabis* in this area was economic difficulties.

Keywords: *Cannabis*, education, income, life pattern, occupation

Introduction

Cannabis is a drug which comes from Indian hemp plants as in *Cannabis sativa* and *Cannabis indica*. *Cannabis* contains the chemical compound THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol) is known as the most active chemical. *Cannabis* also can be call as grass, pot, hash, weed, reefer, dope, herb, mull, ganja, joint, stick, buckets, cones, skunk, hydro, yarndi, smoke and hooch (Australian Drug Foundation, 2012) ^[1] *Cannabis* is known as the most widely cultivated, traded drug in the worldwide. Around the world, about 147 million people, 2.5% of the population, consume *Cannabis* annually compared with 0.2% consuming cocaine and 0.2% consuming opiates. Currently, abuse of *Cannabis* has risen more rapidly than cocaine and opiate abuse. Rapid growth in *Cannabis* abuse can be seen in developed countries like North America, Western Europe, and Australia. Moreover, use of *Cannabis* has become more closely among youth. (WHO, 2017) ^[5] The effects of *Cannabis* are detected suddenly, and it may longer for two or three hours. THC is highly lipid soluble and can be stored in fat cells possibly for months. The stored THC is unconfined very gradually, and randomly, back into the circulation. There are chronic health effects of *Cannabis* use including a transformed state of consciousness. After consuming *Cannabis*, the consumer may feel cheerful, excited, tranquil, sociable and uninhibited. The consumer may

feel more sensitive to things around them, and may also experience a more vivid sense of taste, sight, smell, and hearing. After consuming *Cannabis* it increases pulse and heart rate, bloodshot eyes, and increases appetite. It is making activities such as driving a car or operating machinery difficult and risky. Anxiety, panic attacks, self-consciousness and paranoid thoughts also can be occurring after consuming *Cannabis*. (L. Anderson, 2000) According to Police reports *Cannabis* consumption in Sri Lanka is rapidly increasing. *Cannabis* is the most abused illicit drugs in Sri Lanka. Moreover, *Cannabis* is the only drug that grows in Sri Lanka. It grows in dry zones of the country in the Eastern and Southern provinces. In Sri Lanka, a large number of people consume *Cannabis* on a day to day basis in rural and urban areas (National Council For Mental Health, 2017) ^[4] In Sri Lanka Thanamalwila is well-known for *Cannabis*. In conversational reference people who consume *Cannabis* say “mal” to the stuff where the name derives from where it is largely grown- Thanamalwila, an area in the Monaragala District. (Fernando, 2014) ^[3]. This research narrowed only to explain how socioeconomic factors affecting to determine the factors affecting increasing *Cannabis* usage in Thanamalwila and make recommendations. Socioeconomic conditions have long been known to affect human health. For the majority of the world's population, health status is resolute primarily by

their level of socioeconomic development, for example per capita GNP, education, nutrition, employment, housing, the political system of the country, etc. (Park, 1994). Income, Education, Occupation and life pattern are the variables of this research.

Significances of the Study

This study will helpful for the future researchers to collect accurate data for their analyses and also to understand how factors are affecting for the increase of *Cannabis* usage in Thanamaliwila, this will further help to make people aware of increase of *Cannabis* usage in Thanamaliwila and through this research government can identify problems which are confronted by people in Thanamalwila due to usage of *Cannabis* in area and can give solutions for those social issues. And also people can recognize what policies are taken by the government to eradicate this situation.

Research Problem

The risen of consumption of *Cannabis* in Sri Lanka is a burden to Sri Lankan society in many ways. Even though researchers have concerned about *Cannabis*, only few researchers contributed to the socioeconomic factors that are affecting for increasing consumption of *Cannabis* in Thanamalwila. Therefore the research problem was “what are

the socioeconomic factors affecting for increasing consumption of *Cannabis* in Thanamalwila?” The above problem is addressed in this article.

Objectives

Main objective

To determine the factors affecting increasing *Cannabis* usage in Thanamalwila and make recommendations

Specific objectives

To investigate if there is a problem with increasing the usage of *Cannabis* in Thanamalwila

To identify the social background of Thanamalwila

To find out solutions to control the increase of *Cannabis*

Research Methodology

The available literature indicates various factors affecting the consumption of *Cannabis* issue in Sri Lanka. Among such factors, the researcher selected education, life pattern, income and occupation as independent variables and the dependent variable is factors which affect the increase in *Cannabis* usage in Thanamalwila. The research sample consists of 389 including population which means 15% of the population. The simple random sampling method used to select the sample where each individual is chosen randomly.

Quantitative Approach

- a. Questionnaire
- b. Interviews

Table 1: Tools of data collecting

Tool	Focused individuals/group	Type of the data expected to collect
Questioner	People in Thanamallvila	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Occupation ▪ Income ▪ Education ▪ Life pattern

Results and Discussion

Table 2

01	Age group	Number = 389	Percentage
	18 - 28	33	(8)
	24 -29	61	(16)
	30 - 35	71	(18)
	36 - 41	45	(12)
	42 - 50	77	(20)
	50 - 60	64	(16)
	60 -<	38	(10)
02	Education Level	Number = 389	Percentage
	Never attended school	17	(4)
	Grade 1- Grade5	78	(20)
	Grade 6- Grade11	204	(53)
	O/L Pass	65	(17)
	A/L Pass	20	(5)
	Degree	5	(1)
03	Information about permanent residency	Number = 389	Percentage
	Yes	327	(84)
	No	62	(16)
04	Time period of residence	Number = 389	Percentage
	From Birth	176	(45)

	1-5 years	28	(7)
	6-10 years	31	(8)
	10 <	154	(40)
05	Occupation	Number = 389	Percentage
	Farming	161	(41)
	Unemployed	139	(36)
	Other	19	(5)
	Business	21	(5)
	Laborers	15	(4)
	Garment	11	(3)
	Government Sector	10	(3)
	Carpeting	5	(1)
	Driving	5	(1)
	Army	2	(1)
	Retired	1	(0)
	Private Sector	0	(0)
06	Monthly Income	Number = 389	Percentage
	1000- 3000	40	(10)
	3001 - 5000	44	(11)
	5001 - 10000	65	(17)
	10001 - 25000	93	(24)
	25001 - 50000	18	(5)
	50001 - 100000	5	(1)
	100000 <	3	(1)
	No Income	121	(31)
07	Reasons for unemployment	Number = 177	Percentage
	Childbearing and caring	86	(49)
	No suitable occupation	26	(15)
	Not interested	21	(12)
	Suffering from a disease	16	(9)
	Too old to do a job	16	(9)
	No education	12	(7)
08	Reasons for not cultivating crops in lands	Number = 196	Percentage
	Spare water resources	64	(16)
	No license for lands	37	(10)
	Issues with some animals	31	(8)
	Financial difficulties	28	(7)
	Lack of lands for cultivation	20	(5)
	Absence of labor	16	(4)
09	Consumptions of alcohol in family	Number = 389	Percentage
	Consume	159	(41)
	Not consuming	230	(59)
10	Members of the family who consume alcohol	Number =156	Percentage
	Husband	83	(21)
	Respondent	48	(12)
	Father	13	(3)
	Son	12	(3)
11	Type of alcohol consumed by residents	Number =204	Percentage
	Arrack	109	(69)
	<i>Cannabis</i>	48	(30)
	Pot Arrack (Kassipu)	47	(30)
12	Main issues in Thanamaliwila area	Number =	Percentage
	Issues confronted by people due to Alcohol	335	(86)
	Use of drugs	318	(82)
	Robberies	231	(59)
	Murders	166	(43)
	Suicides	163	(42)
	Child harassments	129	(33)
	Rapes	112	(29)
13	Reasons for increasing consumption and plantation of <i>Cannabis</i>	Number =	Percentage
	Economic difficulties	189	(49)
	Low-priced	105	(27)
	Unemployment	88	(23)

	Other plantations	83	(21)
	Poor Educational level	53	(14)
	Police is not paying attention	40	(10)
	Forestation	39	(10)
	Errors in law	38	(10)
	Political interference	30	(8)
	Good climate to plant <i>Cannabis</i>	28	(7)
	Help from wild life officers	09	(2)
14	Issues confronted due to consumption of <i>Cannabis</i>	Number =	Percentage
	Domestic conflicts	111	(34)
	Addiction of next generation	82	(25)
	Murders	54	(17)
	Suicide	19	(6)
	Mental diseases	16	(5)
	Good climate to plant cannabis	28	(7)
	Help from wild life officers	09	(2)

Discussion

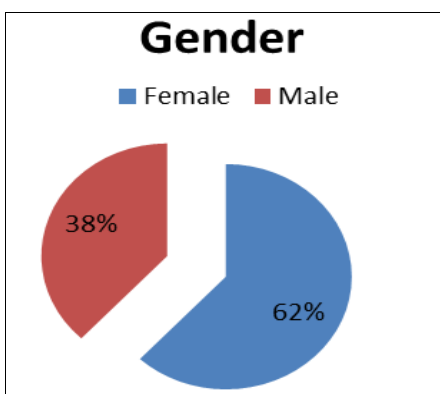


Fig 1: gender of the respondent

Table 3: Age of the respondent

Age group	Numerical value	Percentage
18 - 28	33	8%
24 -29	61	16%
30 - 35	71	18%
36 - 41	45	12%
42 - 50	77	20%
50 - 60	64	16%
60 -<	38	10%
Total	389	100%

When it comes to the age of participants' maximum age group is 60 years to onwards and the minimum age group is 18-28 years. Mode of the age group is 42 -50 years. According to data collection, 349 respondents were married and 25 respondents were unmarried while 1 respondent live together.

Table 4: Education Qualification

Education Level	Numerical Value	Percentage
Never attended to school	17	4%
Grade 1- Grade5	78	20%
Grade 6- Grade11	204	53%
O/L Pass	65	17%
A/L Pass	20	5%
Degree	5	1%
Total	389	100%

17 respondents from the sample have never attended school and majority of respondents which means 204 patients have

only attended from grade 6 to 11 classes. There are only 5 respondents who hold a degree in this area

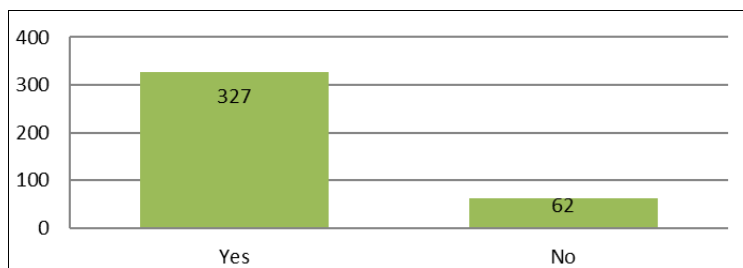


Fig 2: information about permanent resident

327 respondent’s permanent residence was Thanamalvilla and 62 patients were migrated to Thanamalvilla from different areas.

Moreover, Thanamalvilla was 176 respondents’ born place and 154 respondents live in Thanamalvilla for more than 10 years.

Table 5: Time period of residence

Time period of residence		
From Birth	176	45%
1-5 years	28	7%
6-10 years	31	8%
10 <	154	40%
Total	389	100%

Table 6: Occupation

Occupation		
Farming	161	41%
Unemployed	139	36%
Other	19	5%
Business	21	5%
Laborers	15	4%
Garment	11	3%
Government Sector	10	3%
Carpeting	5	1%
Driving	5	1%
Army	2	1%
Retired	1	0%
Private Sector	0	0%
Total	389	100%

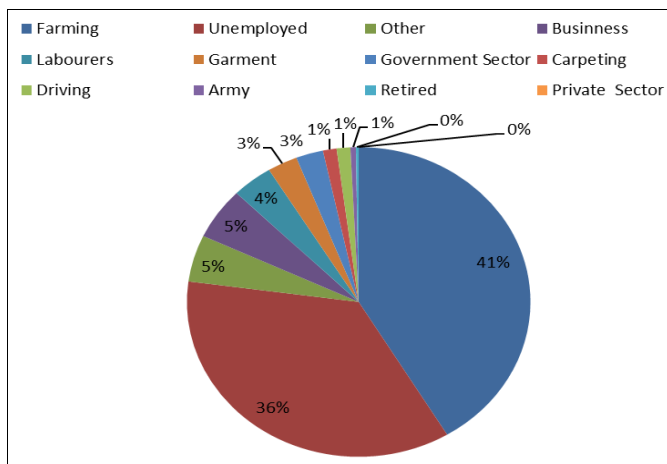


Fig 3: Occupation

When it comes to the occupation of respondents' majority of the population were farmers (161 respondents) and also 139 people were unemployed. Only 10 respondents were working in government sector.

Table 7: Monthly Income

Monthly Income		
1000- 3000	40	10%
3001 - 5000	44	11%
5001 - 10000	65	17%
10001 - 25000	93	24%
25001 - 50000	18	5%
50001 - 100000	5	1%
100000 <	3	1%
No Income	121	31%
Total	389	100%

Majority of the participants in the sample have no specific monthly income and also 93 respondents' monthly income was 10001 – 25000/=.

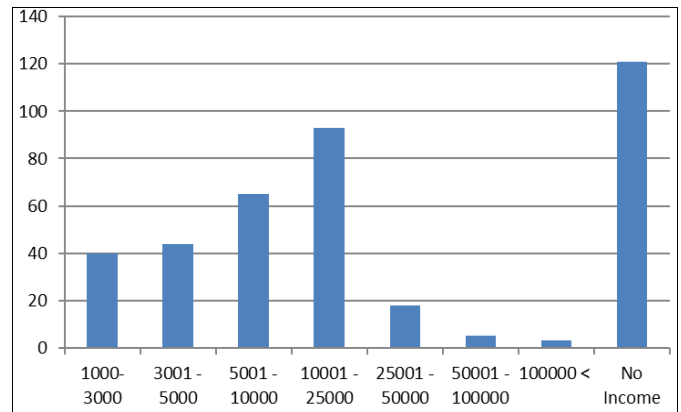


Fig 4: Monthly income

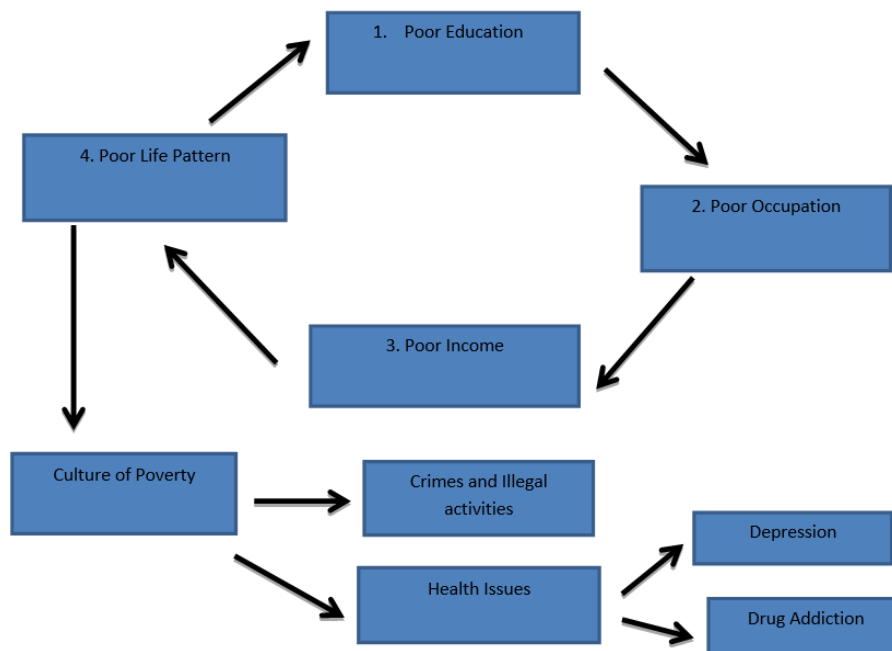
Table 8: Reasons for unemployment

Reasons for unemployment		
Childbearing and caring	86	49%
No suitable occupation	26	15%
Not interested	21	12%
Suffering from a disease	16	9%
Too old to do a job	16	9%
No education	12	7%
Total	177	100%

The main reason for unemployment was childbearing and caring. 15% participants' idea for unemployment was not having suitable occupations in that area. 12% of the population is not interested in an occupation. According to 7% of the sample lack of education is the reason for their unemployment.

Conclusion

When concluding the topic according to the topic poor education system can be seen in these areas. Moreover, the majority of people who live in these areas have landed from their parents. Majority of people who live in this particular area have a low educational level and also poor income. Due to the low educational level, they tend to do illegal activities to earn money in this area. As a result of that most of people who live in Thanamalwila have engaged in activities which are related to *Cannabis*. Therefore their life patterns also linked with these activities.



Recommendations

- The government should provide suitable occupations for these residents.
- Adequate drainage facilities to drain excess water or strictly follow irrigation schedule should be provided to maintain the economy in this area.
- Development of infrastructure facilities should be needed for the wellbeing of people.
- There should be well organized awareness programs to educate people about *Cannabis*.
- There should be counseling programs to encourage consumers, to overcome from their situations.

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