

The situation in Cambodia

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The population of Cambodia in 1995 was some 10.5 million of which 5.7 million were aged 15 and over. The majority, 79.3 per cent, live in rural areas. Cambodia is a mainly Buddhist country.

Consumption and harm

Accurate per capita alcohol consumption figures have not been published. The WHO estimated that, in 1996, the total per capita alcohol consumption in pure alcohol for persons over 15 was 0.34 litres, of which 0.20 was spirits and 0.14 beer. Although spirits have traditionally been the leading alcoholic beverage in Cambodia, some domestic breweries exist. After the turbulent times, Cambodia is now opening its markets to the internationals.

Some work has taken place in the country's capital Phnom Penh in relation to the effects of alcohol on society, particularly in relation to domestic violence and traffic accidents. The Department of Sexual Trafficking and Violence states that between 2000-2001, alcohol was the cause of 33 per cent of the 122 cases of domestic violence. Other causes of violence were adultery (33 per cent), gambling (16 per cent), and poverty (18 per cent).

In their January-June 2001 report, the Office of Police Traffic, Phnom Penh, giving the causes for the 231 reported traffic accidents, named alcohol as the cause in 15 per cent of the cases. The majority (54 per cent) were unaware of the traffic legislation and 29 per cent were speeding. Other causes count for the remaining 2 per cent.

Preventative action

ANRA has run some awareness programmes on tobacco and alcohol. The target groups have included young people, soldiers, and police. Lack of financial resources forced ANRA to drop the alcohol element and the programme now concentrates on tobacco.

Advertising

Street advertising in Phnom Penh is increasingly popular. Back in 1994, ANRA recorded some 35, 944 adverts and billboards. Of these, 46 per cent were for tobacco, 38 per cent for alcohol, 7 per cent for soft drinks, 6 per cent for business, and 3 per cent for other products. Alcohol was also advertised on 16 separate occasions on television during the main viewing hours (6pm to 11pm).

With the Cambodian market opening to the international brewers and distillers, they all now run rather basic advertising campaigns in the country. Some brewers even provide weddings with free beer. All brewers produce a vast quantity of varying promotional material and are spending money in providing popular restaurants and beer gardens with umbrellas and other brand decorated accessories.