

South Korea

Kuyng il Park, R.N., College of Nursing, Ewha Women's University, Seoul.

The population of South Korea is about 47 million of which some 35 million are adults aged 15 years and over. Over 80 per cent of the population lives in urban areas.

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.

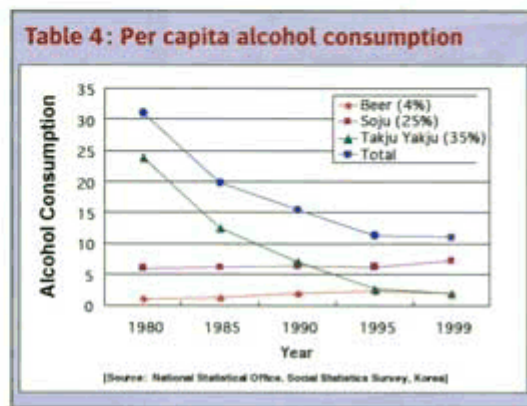
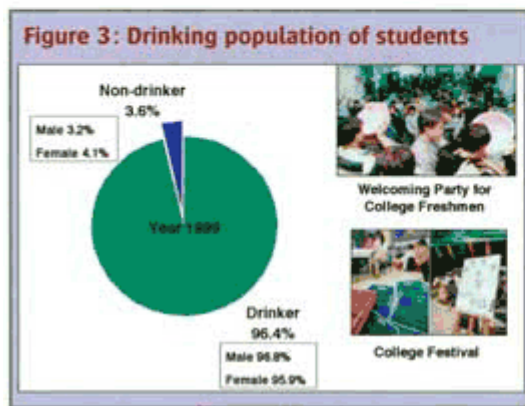
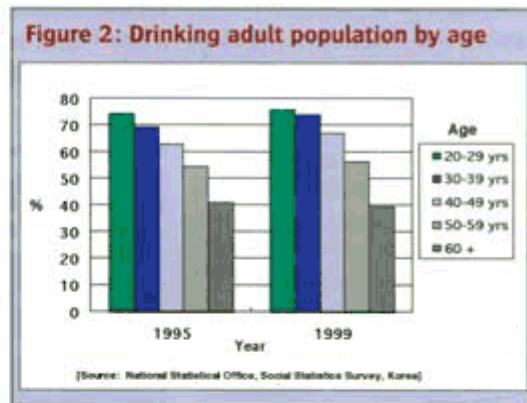
Advertising

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.

The number of those in South Korea who consume alcohol is growing. The percentage of drinkers has increased from 55 per cent to 65 per cent during the

last decade (Figure 1). In 1987, the number of drinkers overtook the number of non-drinkers.



During last five years, whilst the number of the male drinkers has stayed much the same, the number of the female drinkers has increased by 3 per cent. This trend can be related with the increase of women working outside homes.

The number of those in South Korea who consume alcohol is growing. The percentage of drinkers has increased from 55 per cent to 65 per cent during the last decade (Figure 1 (page 3 in PP)). In 1987, the number of drinkers overtook the number of non-drinkers.

During the last five years, whilst the number of male drinkers has stayed much the same, the number of the female drinkers has increased by 3 per cent. This trend can be related with the increase of women working outside homes.

A slight increase in the age of the drinking population has taken place since 1995 in all the age groups apart from the 60+ (Figure 2). The percentages fall as age increases. In the age group 20-29 years old, about 75 per cent are drinkers. More drinking is associated with a younger age and a higher level of education.

The percentage of students, most of them aged 19 to 22, who drink is incredibly high at 96.4 per cent (Figure 3). There is very little difference between the sexes. The pictures shown are common scenes in Korean colleges. The freshmen are sharing alcohol with their peers while the older students cheer as they watch their freshmen drink probably the first bottle in their lives.

Although this tradition seems to be slowly fading out, it is still very popular and sudden deaths have been reported due to first-time heavy drinking. However,

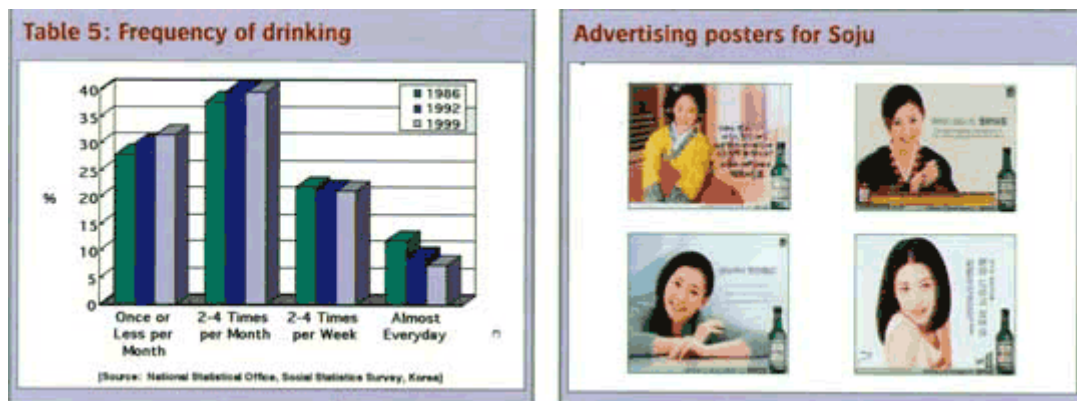
this kind of social tradition is generally accepted by most of students as a good way to build strong ties with their group and make friends.

The per capita alcohol consumption in Korea during the last twenty years is shown in Table 4.

The consumption of beer and Soju (25 per cent alcohol) has increased slightly. However, consumption of the stronger, 35 per cent-alcohol, Takju Yakju dropped drastically in the last twenty years. This had the effect that the total 100 per cent pure alcohol consumption in Korea dropped very considerably. This is mainly due to the decrease in spending on stronger and more expensive alcoholic drinks. The drinking population increases, but it consumes drinks with a lower alcohol content. Per capita consumption of alcohol in Korea remains one of the highest in the country-to-country comparisons.

The most common drinking occasions in South Korea are social meetings and family gatherings. After them come happy events and personal stress. According to the data, drinking occasions at family gatherings increased drastically compared with other social events. At almost all social meetings in Korea alcohol is served and drunk.

Drinking habits have changed slightly in the last 15 years. The "Once or less per month" category increases and "almost every day" category has decreased (Table 5).



Advertisements

The alcohol industry methods of advertising are as aggressive and all-pervasive in South Korea as in other countries in Asia.

Beer:

This is an advertising poster for one Korean beer. The marketing policy of beer seems not changed during the last half century.

Soju:

This advertisement for traditional alcohol, Soju focus their marketing on a woman of pure image. The female drinking population has increased drastically! This different brand of traditional alcohol, Soju advertises its image of purity with naked partygoers.

Football World Cup

This advertisement with a local sports star relates beer with World-cup 2002 which will be held in Korea and Japan.