

Abstract

This study is titled “A Policy Suggestion to Reduce the Social Impacts due to Alcohol Consumption of Young People: A Case Study of Phitsanulok Province. The objectives of the study are 1) to investigate the social impacts resulted from young people’s consuming alcohol; 2) to prepare a policy suggestion to reduce the social impacts because of alcohol consumption in the next five years’ time. Therefore the researchers employed the qualitative and future research approaches by analyzing current situations and social impacts. The following data were collected from research papers, focus group discussions and interviews with stakeholders’ namely young people, public and private sectors, related sectors and traders.

The results of the study on social impacts revealed that alcohol consumption causes many impacts to the consumers themselves, their family and the society. The young people’s drinking habits are problems which tend to become more and more serious and lead to other problems or cause various negative effects or serious damages to the nation. The duties to reduce or control the consumption of alcohol belong to the Provincial Public Health Office and NGOs working on anti-alcohol campaign. However, in the form of provincial policy which the alcohol control working committee has no clear working plan for controlling alcohol consumption of young people. Though the policy and strategies to prevent alcohol consumption were used by educating local people about the Alcohol Beverage Control Law in a form of the project titled “Phitsanulok: the Healthy City - Smoking and Drinking Free”, such strategies are still too broad and the program is still under the operation of the Provincial Public Health Office and Stop Drink Network Organization. This causes lack of integration and cooperation from other units working on the public policy.

The previous operations were conducted with cooperation of Stop Drink Network from 9 districts through the coordinators of each district by driving the strategic projects together with local leaders to promote the campaign and regulate the consumption of alcohol. In addition, the focuses of the measures are on control and prevention measures. Young people were educated about legal measures regarding consumption of alcohol. Due to lack of control and prevention campaign, young people in rural areas are free to consume alcohol. This leads to their improper consumption of alcohol, and thus, causes social impacts.

The results from the future research through Scenario Technique forecast that in five years' time due to alcohol consumption, there is a chance that the following worst cases are likely to occur: 1) economic growth are likely to result in more consumption of alcohol; 2) more young people desire to consume alcohol due to the availability of various products and marketing strategies while the control measures are unclear. 3) impacts on young people, their family and society tend to become more serious and cause more impacts on the surrounding people.

The policy suggestion can be concluded that the civil society, private sector, government sector, and academic sector need to integrate their cooperation and resources to urgently prevent alcohol consumption, solve problems and reduce social impacts resulting from young people's consuming alcohol so that within 2017, Phitsanulok will be known as the city whose young people are non-alcohol drinkers. This can be done by applying society measures and public communications as well as the legal measures and strict law enforcement. The following-up process and evaluation in the PDCA Cycle, Composite Indicator, Outcome and Impacts can be indicators of progress and success of the plan.