

Although, the government has tried to promote hazard-free use of pesticides through various measures, an increasing trend of indiscriminate use of pesticides in crop production is also evident.

A study was carried out to understand marketing and application related activities of pesticides in rice farming in southern Sri Lanka. Sixty farmers selected at random and all traders engaged in pesticide trade in two villages of Hambantota District were interviewed using structured questionnaires.

The study revealed that majority of farmers in the study area does not adopt optimum procedures in using pesticides. Proper transportation, recommended dosages and timing, and proper disposal methods. Were used only by about a one half of the farmers. Proper storage practices, using masks or gloves were adopted by less than a one fifth of farmers. However, the majority of the farmers used a special measuring cup and used wind direction as a precautionary measure.

Traders did not oblige the compulsory licensing requirement. Some traders had followed the training course conducted by the Department of Agriculture. None of the traders followed proper storage procedures. Though animal feed was available with some traders, the majority sold pesticides with non-food items.

Farmers depend mainly on their own experience when decisions on using pesticides are made. Extension agents' role was meager in the system. Traders are also a source of advice to farmers. Traders' recommendations were based on information from their client farmers. It is also noted that traders' recommendations were biased.