

COMMUNICATION AND ADOPTION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OF URBAN AND SEMI-URBAN HOUSEHOLDS IN TRINCOMALEE DISTRICT

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Waste disposal has become a serious issue in Sri Lanka, making her one of the highest waste generating countries in Asia. Previous research findings state that the key to successful waste management system is the cooperation of citizens, which could only be gained through public awareness, which is lacking in Sri Lanka. Thus, the focus of this research was to find out the role communication has in creating awareness and promoting adoption of waste management practices. Moreover, the research specifically focused on finding out the communication channels by which people receive information of waste management and the message content of those channels affecting the level of awareness and adoption of waste management practices.

The data gathered from three purposively selected Divisional Secretariat divisions based on the ethnicity, as the study area is a multi-ethnic area; 200 households were selected randomly from both urban and semi-urban GS divisions. Trincomalee Town and Gravets and Kinniya DS divisions, which are functioning under the urban councils, represent the majority of Tamil and Muslim populations, respectively, whereas Kanthale DS division functions under *Pradeshiya Sabha* represents majority of Sinhala population. Data were gathered using a questionnaire and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Results revealed that people received messages related to waste management by around 20 communication channels, which can be categorized into three: national mass communication channels, provincial formal communication channels, and informal communication channels. Among them, mostly used communication channel was the television. In addition, respondents used Public Health Inspectors, school education, Urban Council/*Pradeshiya Sabha*, and newspapers to receive information. However, a large amount of information respondents received was not directly related to waste management. The information received through school education, television, newspaper and non-governmental organizations showed a significant positive impact on awareness level, but, only school education had a significant positive impact on adoption level. In conclusion, the results emphasize that communication plays a major role in creating awareness of people regarding waste management. However, it alone cannot contribute to improve the adoption level, which requires the contribution of supporting services, such as the service of informal waste collectors and implementing rules and regulations.