FARMER ATTITUDES TOWARDS ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE PROTECTION TECHNOLOGIES: THE CASE OF INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT IN VEGETABLE CULTIVATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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This study examines empirically the extent to which vegetable cultivating farmers in Sri Lanka are willing to adopt effective, economical and sustainable crop protection technologies such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) instead of applying solely chemical pesticides to control pests. It uses primary data collected through a series of personnel interviews with a randomly selected sample of vegetable farmers (n = 100) that practice chemical control measures in the Kurunegala and Puttalam districts in the Wayamba Province from May to July in 2005.

The behavioural change in farmer attitudes and perceptions towards adoption of environmentally-friendly IPM techniques instead of applying chemicals on the vegetable cultivation on a regular basis were captured by means of two indexes – Additive Index (AI) and a Multiplicative Index (MI), which used the scores given by participants to the survey to a set of attitudinal statements (n = 17) explaining this behaviour on a Likert scale. The outcome of AI and MI were in turn modelled with the farmer's socio economic characteristics, including the age, sex, level of education, income, managerial time, experience in farming, extent of land allocated for cultivation, crop type, availability of credit and extension facilities etc. to test significance of these factors on this behaviour. The results suggest that many of these have a significant impact on the farmer's degree of responsiveness towards adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. The outcome of analysis highlights the need of provision of appropriate private and regulatory incentives for farmers to change their behaviour in this respect.

Key Words: Adoption, Attitude and Perceptions, behavioural Change, Integrated Pest, Management (IPM), Sustainable Agriculture