

## Abstract

The study was conducted to assess knowledge, practices and some aspects of health and environmental issues of solid waste management among households of the Yatiyantota Medical Officer of Health area.

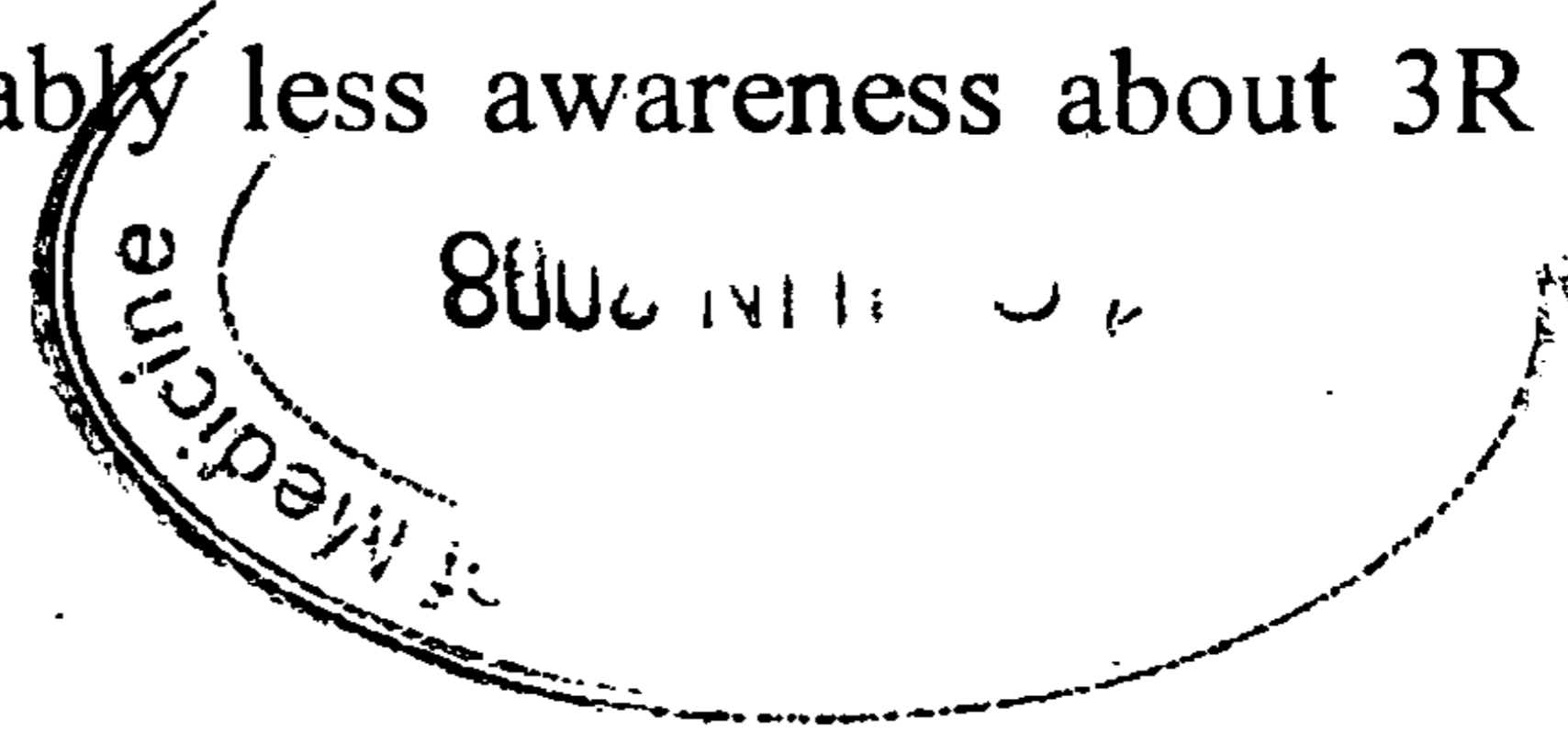
A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out to meet these objectives. Altogether 625 households from a total of 36 Grama Niladari divisions participated in the study. The selection of the sample was done using cluster sampling with probability proportionate to size. The study instrument consisted of a structured interviewer administered questionnaire. From each selected household the chief female occupant was interviewed.

The study revealed that only 10% of households practised composting at household level. There was a significant association ( $p < 0.05$ ) between knowledge and practices of composting with the educational status of householders. People who owned a land of more than ten perches significantly practice composting when compared to those with land more than 10 perches. Practice of composting was not depend on the occupation or the income. 51% of households practice separating their solid waste as biodegradable and non-biodegradable.

Overall knowledge in health messages on solid waste management is more advance than knowledge in environmental issues.

There is a significant association between income level and practice and knowledge on recycling and reuse of the waste material. It is statistically significant at  $p = 0.05$  level.

However there is no properly organized system for recycling in Sri Lanka even for those who practice recycling. There is considerably less awareness about 3R concept among the study population.



Burning of polythene is carried out more by housewives rather than working females. It was statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$  levels Overall the study revealed that participation of primary health care workers, specially PHIs on aspect of solid waste disposal are minimal.

The important finding was that the majority of people were not interested or not bothered on environmental friendly method of solid waste disposal.

The study identified the importance of the urgent need to disseminate the 3R concept up to the grass root level. It also highlights the importance of provision of responsible personnel within the existing infrastructure. The most important thing is to disseminate the simple messages on how to change the behaviour and attitude of people rather than launching expensive programmes on solid waste management.