



Tropentag, September 15-17, 2021, hybrid conference

“Towards shifting paradigms in agriculture  
for a healthy and sustainable future”

## Suicide and Suicide Attempts from Pesticides: A Major Problem for Women in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

Suicide and suicide attempts by pesticides remain alarming in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. This study was based up on qualitative data that combines in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with women smallholder farmers. The easy availability of pesticides through illegal parallel markets, unlabeled smaller containers and storage inside home induced suicidal behavior that was triggered by a wide range of corona-virus pandemic behaviors that creates isolation, rape, unwanted pregnancies, and the disruption of livelihoods. The interview reveals that the major pesticides responsible for many of the deaths and attempted suicides were rodenticides (Zinc Phosphide), fumigant (Aluminum Phosphide) and insecticides (Endosulfan, Dimethoate, Chlorpyrifos), while some survivors were not able to recall the name of pesticides used for committing suicide. Many of the pesticides used stored inside each home/fields. Drinking soap, cow-dung and yogurt were used to remove the ingested pesticides from the stomach. For cultural and religious reasons, many cases of suicide and attempts were hidden. Survivors are often excluded from society that also denies them marriage and other social relations. In order to reduce the incidence of suicide and suicide attempts, this study suggests i) bio-pesticides that are less hazardous, ii) local pesticide market control, iii) public education on pesticide hazards, iv) well-equipped health services and facilities that diagnose poisoning symptoms.

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, pesticides, rural women, suicide, suicide attempts