



Sulvadi case : Agrochemical body disapproves usage of pesticide



S Ganesan, adviser to Crop Care Federation of India, and Archana Nair, director of Centre for Environment and Agriculture, explain about the effects of Monocrotophos in Mysuru on Tuesday.

MYSURU: Crop Care Federation of India (CCFI), the apex trade body of agrochemical industries, has brushed aside the charge by the authorities concerned that Mono-crotophos, a pesticide, was the cause for the death of 17 persons and illness of over a hundred people, who consumed prasada at Kichchugatti Maramma temple at Sulvadi in Hanur taluk of Chamarajanagar district.

Addressing a media conference, here on Tuesday, S Ganesan, an expert advisor to CCFI, and Archana Nair, director of Centre for Environment and Agriculture, released a white paper titled 'Hanur Temple Food Poisoning. Was it a premeditated pesticide poisoning?'

Ganesan said, "The white paper scientifically deconstructs and disproves the police claim that Monocrotophos was used while preparing the tomato bath that led to the food poisoning. After the incident of food poisoning on December 14, 2018, at the temple, the police blamed it on the criminal misuse of Monocrotophos while cooking 15 kg of prasada

(tomato bath) that was given to over 150 devotees."

"Considering the physical, chemical and toxicological properties of Monocrotophos, there was no way that Monocrotophos could have been secretly used for poisoning the prasada. While cooking tomato bath or any rice, the temperature reaches 100 degree Celsius, whereas Monocrotophos begins to enter the vapour phase and emits toxic fumes beyond 58 degree Celsius," said Ganesan.

"The dark, dense toxic fumes, coming from the burning pesticide would be several thousand times higher than the lethal levels for human beings. This toxic vapour from the kitchen should have caused immediate and extensive death of the people assembled at the temple even as the prasada was being cooked. This did not happen," he pointed out.

Listing out the past cases of food poisoning deaths in Karnataka, including the one at Gangamma temple in Chikkaballapur district, Archana Nair said, "Food poisoning at places of mass cooking are not uncommon in India and they should not be mistaken for pesticide poisoning, unless established by proper and verifiable scientific evidence.

No info

"The authorities concerned in the CFTRI and the KR Hospital have failed to give information on the tests and investigations so far, sought under the RTI Act, even though the mandated 30 days are over long back. However, our report will be submitted to the Police department and the Deputy Commissioner in Chamarajanagar district to give the right direction to the investigation," said Archana Nair.

Ganesan said, Monocrotophos is not available in any combination, in reply to a query on the possible dilution.