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## PARICHAY – A QUICK AND EFFECTIVE INTERPERSONAL MASS COMMUNICATION APPROACH

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**Abstract:** Interpersonal communication is more effective than media for convincing people to adopt new innovations. Individual extension approach can be of high quality, but costly and unable to reach all. This places extension programmes in a quality-quantity dilemma of cost effective, reaching many with high quality. This paper suggests a modest method for reaching larger audience at interpersonal level. An experiment “PARICHAY” was developed under AICRP Home Science– Extension. Women friendly Farm technologies were selected and disseminated through an innovative extension methodology and experimented in three different clientele specific locations with an objective of assessing impact of the approach. Women’s active participation was observed in mandal samakhya (90%) followed by mandal shandy (50%) and Marketyard (20%). The methodology also revealed greater advantages over other conventional extension methods. It is an interpersonal mass communication approach for effective transfer of technology.

**Keywords:** PARICHAY, Transfer of technology, interpersonal mass communication approach.

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**Introduction:** In transfer of technology face to face communication is of high quality, but costly and unable to reach all the people who actually need it. Mass media is cheaper, but there are certain problems with its features. Besides, it is not suitable for all topics and not as participatory. eg: Watching a television programme on mushroom cultivation may not be as effective as actually making it in the presence of the extension agent. This places extension programmes in a quantity-quality dilemma of how to keep costs down while reaching larger group of audience. Media material like video cassettes, pamphlets which costs less than TV and Radio is one option, but they are not suitable for all. The another way of beating the cost over quality is to make face to face communication larger. According to Rogers(1983) interpersonal communication is more effective than mass for convincing people to adopt innovations or new technologies.

Agricultural Extension, in the current scenario of rapidly changing world has been recognized as an essential mechanism for delivering knowledge as an input into modern farming. Agricultural Extension has to reorient itself beyond the narrow focus of transfer of technology package for which extension should become more diversified, knowledge intensive, and demand driven. ‘Business as usual’ will not help any longer. There is a need for redefining the way extension is carried out.

Effectiveness of any extension approach/ programme largely depends on what extension methods are being deployed. The choice of an extension method depends on number and location of the target audience and the time available for communication. Each of the methods has both advantages and limitations. The extension professional has to choose a particular method or combination of methods

according to the needs of the situation.

Agriculture and Home Science being life sciences develop various farm and homestead technologies through constant and continuous research which are to be disseminated to the target group. India being the highly populated agrarian country requires effective extension means to diffuse quality life technologies especially to the illiterate rural folk. In the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan development of the gender specific extension methodologies is one of the major research areas of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research, New Delhi. All India Coordinated Research Project (AICRP) on Home Science which is a research unit of the Directorate of Research on Women in Agriculture (DRWA) has taken up the responsibility to develop gender specific extension methodologies.

**Methodology:** The AICRP on Home Science, Hyderabad unit, Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University designed and experimented a methodology a modified version of Go public methodology called PARICHAY – a quick and effective mass communication approach to reach large audience at interpersonal level. It makes use of places where clientele meet spontaneously, like market yards, Mandal samakhyas and other public places.

Experimental research design was adopted. Three experiments were conducted in different clientele specific locations of Rangareddy district of AP i.e Gudimalkapur market yard, Chevella shandy and Mandal samakhya with an objective to assess the gender participation and standardization of the “PARICHAY” methodology.

Women friendly farm technologies from AICRP were taken for dissemination using public address system. Observation with point count method of assessment was adopted for analyzing the gender participation.

About one hour was spent in each location for experimenting the parichay methodology.

**Results & Discussion:** The experiments in three locations revealed that women’s active participation was observed in Mandal samakhya (90%) followed by Mandal shandy (50%) and Marketyard (20%), while men participation was high in shandy, marketyard and mahila samakhya. Mandal samakhya is a place where self help group members meet monthly twice at mandal office. Almost all women had shown inquisitiveness on displayed technologies, get trained and expressed freely without any hesitation.

On other hand only twenty percent participation of women was observed in market yard. The reason might be that the timing and gender role in patriarchal system. Farmers from surrounding villages of Ranga reddy district brought their produce to market yard early in the morning around 3.30am. We started the Parichay programme at 7.30 am. So obviously men active and extensive participation was observed over other locations.

**Technological awareness of the farmers:** Facts presented in Table 1 revealed that only five percent of the farmers were aware of the drudgery reducing technologies, but eighty four percent were aware of mulch material in market yard. The reason might be that the technologies developed at research station are not popularized and mass produced for which they intended. The high percentage of men participation reflected on the technological awareness of the farmers on the mulch material as majority of them are cultivating horticultural and floricultural crops in their fields.

With regard to mandal samakhya, 30 % of the participants were aware of the drudgery reducing technologies and more than fifty percent were aware of mulch material and Neem seed Kernel Extraction (NSKE) as a bio-pesticide. Even at mandal shandy also the same trend was noticed. This might be due to the majority of the women from the AICRP adopted villages who are informed and communicated constantly on the technological knowledge updation as beneficiaries of the programme.

Technology	Aware	Not aware
Market yard		
Drudgery reducing	<b>6(5%)</b>	<b>114(95%)</b>
Mulch material	71 (84%)	49(40%)
NSKE	36 (30%)	(84)70%
Mahila samakhya		
Drudgery reducing	15(30%)	35(70%)
Mulch material	35(70%)	15(30%)
NSKE	30(60%)	20(40%)
Madal Shandy		
Drudgery reducing	18(25.8%)	52(74.25%)
Mulch material	46(65.71%)	24(34.28%)
NSKE	21(30%)	40(70%)

**Strategic procedure for conducting Parichay :**

- 1. Identifying the facilitator:** the extensionist or researcher leading the programme should have good technical background to be able to explain the technology besides attracting a crowd and maintain a lively dialogue. He should have an idea of the likely questions that the farmers may ask and the questions that should be asked to the farmers.
- 2. Find the right venue:** Selecting the right place is important and choose it in advance and ask permission from the relevant authorities. For example, markets are open to women and men for transactions, but for putting up a technological stall in the market certainly require permission.
- 3. Display the demonstration materials:**

PARICHAY can be made practical by using portable demonstration materials which can be found locally and arrange them in ways that allow many people to see them at once, or that can be easily demonstrated to the crowd which helps to stimulate questions and allow more people to take part

- 4. Parichay event:** After display and arrangements are ready, the facilitator addresses the crowd using public addressing system, the scientists of the concerned components will start explaining the technologies to the gathered clientele and clarifying their queries. Some enthusiastic clientele asked the team to have hands- on experience with the technologies, immediately the technologies were handed over to them. After

observing the technology they were asked to give utility, drawbacks and feedback on the technology.

5. When the event is in full swing, one of our team members recorded clientele profile like where people are from, what types and roughly how many people are attending, their feedback and interesting discussions that emerge on the technologies.
6. **Reflection:** Analyse what went well at the PARICHAY, and what could have been better, i.e. was it set up in the right spot, was it too noisy, were there too many distractions, how was the learning environment affected by the location?

We encouraged the facilitators to write their experience in a lively narrative immediately after the event. This is a relaxed way to let people document their views and reactions. Short quotes should be recorded to document reactions, local knowledge and comments of people in the crowd. These could be used to clarify future action points, or be combined with the narratives into short stories, as we did.

#### **Success Factors:**

- Keep it simple. Have a well-planned programme with a clear learning topic, the right amount of demonstration materials, and a facilitator who knows the topic and is comfortable speaking in public.
- Be creative. Think of possible problems and concerns before doing it, and come up with answers to solve them before they occur.
- Few resources are needed. One or two extensionists, transport, some demonstration materials, a few good ideas.
- Be sure that clientele's time is not disrupted. One farmer remarked: "This system is very good, and we can learn a lot without any fixed schedule." He appreciated not being taken from his farm work by an extension programme with a lengthy agenda.

#### **Merits:**

- This method is cost effective and time saving
- Flexibility: is a flexible method that has been used in several countries, for various topics, and with diverse institutions, facilitators and audiences, making it a proven, transferable method.
- With ingenuity and planning even complex ideas can be communicated.
- On the spot training is possible,
- Instant responses and feedback can be obtained.
- It allows two way communication between scientists – extensionist – farmer
- It is a mass Interpersonal approach where huge no. of clientele can be interacted.

- New technologies can be tested and refined based on the instant feedback of the clientele
- Useful for introducing the new technology to the apt clientele at their location.
- Extensionists can show innovations to people, answer questions and potentially introduce and disseminate new technology, like any individual method.
- It allows contact with people from many areas at once

**Limitations:** A main initial concern of programme was that women would not be reached using this method, if it is conducted only at markets. Experiences of the programme raised the point that "PARICHAY is no substitute for field work". Indeed, some topics like vermicomposting, are better done in the field, or in more controlled meetings than in a session.

The success of the parichay depends on the attributes of the organizing team. It requires managerial skills like coordination, talent, patience, credibility on the part of facilitator. Advanced planning is necessary for conducting parichay programme.

The negative characteristic of PARICHAY is that the facilitator has no control over the audience flow. Effectiveness of this new extension methodology is hard to measure the adoption rates as the audience may come from various places and differ every time. As with any other extension method, researchers will need to measure the impact of it, which poses extra challenges due to the fluidity of the audience.

**Conclusion:** The experiences of this approach revealed that selection of the apt clientele specific location is one of the crucial factor in organizing the parichay programme. The methodology proved that flexibility, cost and time saving, on the spot training, instant responses and feedback are some of the advantages of this approach. It allows scientists, extensionists to show the benefits of the technologies to people, answer questions and potentially to introduce and disseminate new technology, as in any individual method. But it is quick and allows contact with people from many areas at once. With ingenuity and planning even complex ideas can be communicated.

The limitations are that the facilitator has no control over the audience flow so, impact of approach is hard to measure. It requires managerial skills, talent, patience and credibility on the part of facilitator.

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