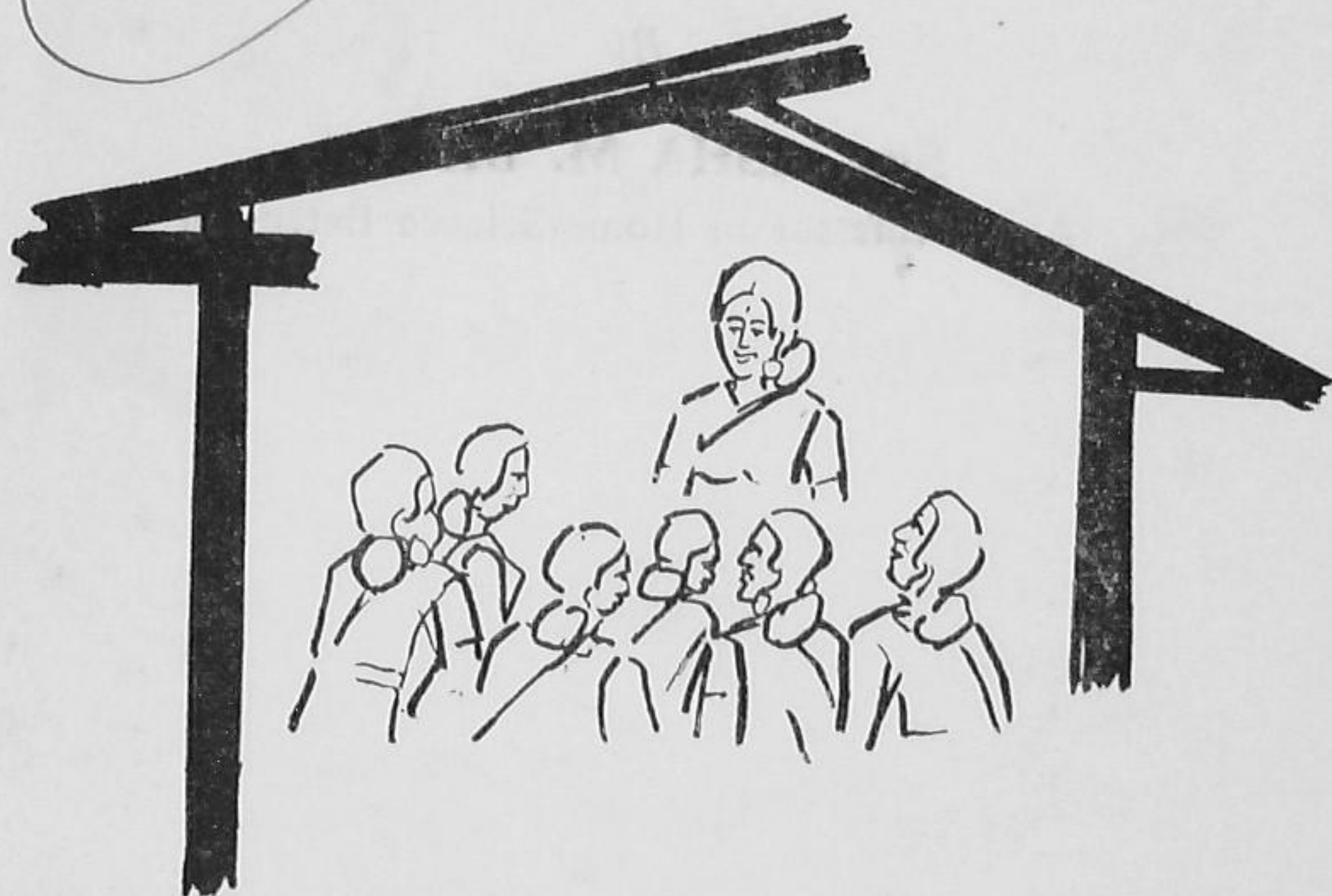


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EX 115/2

HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Extension Pamphlet No. 1

March, 1973

**HOME SCIENCE EXTENSION IN
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

I. What Is Home Science ?

Preparing young girls for their future homemaking responsibilities has been, in the past, and is still so to some extent, the function of the mothers and grandmothers in the family. However, during the last few decades, the concept of homemaking has undergone a revolutionary change as also have the circumstances of homemaking. With the result the homemaking knowledge of the older generation has, for one thing, a very limited, if not a total lack of, applicability to the present day needs of homemaking; and second, of however much worth their knowledge is, many a modern housewife are physically too far away from their relatives to derive the benefit of their knowledge. Decision making, for example, was in a very limited sense, a dimension of the olden day's housewife's role. The life was so steady and free of changes that all that the young bride had to do was to conform to the established traditions of the family. The joint family, which was the traditional training ground for young women, is yielding place to the nuclear family, where the young husband and wife settle far away from their parents to earn their living. Today, the young housewife cannot escape decision making. She is faced with the problem of selecting the 'right' foods, fabrics, equipment, housekeeping methods, child-rearing methods etc., from the large variety which the modern advances of science, technology and means of communi

cation have rendered available to her. The decision must be hers.

Further, the present drive of formal education of women in schools and Universities also necessitates them to spend a larger part of their day outside the home which means that they have little or no time to spend with their mothers and grandmothers. And yet, homemaking continues to be an important function of every woman.

As such the need for agencies outside the home, which would assist in the task of educating women for homemaking, began to be felt around 1930 in this country. Since then many institutions one by one, began offering courses in different aspects of homemaking. By now, i.e., at the beginning of the 1970s, courses in home making education have become a common feature of most of our school and College curriculae. The concept, nature and scope of the subject have, in these 40 years, undergone a tremendous change. The contents and durations for which the courses are offered, still vary from univesity to university. But today, home scince is largely conceived of as "..... a field of knowledge and service primarily concerned with strengthening family life through :

- a) educating the individual for family living ;
- b) improving the services and goods used by families ;
- c) couducting research to discover the changing needs of individuals and families and the means of satisfying these needs ; and

- d) furthering community, national and world conditions favourable to family living."¹

II. Nature and Scope

Since home and family life form the focus of the subject the scope of home science has to be as wide as the dimensions of family life. Because the family life of today is subject to constant change the subject matter of home science must also be under constant revision and change. Generally the aspects of family life such as the following are of concern to the discipline :

- a) family relationships and child development ;
- b) consumption and other aspects of personal and family living ;
- c) nutritional needs and the selection, preservation, preparation and use of food ;
- d) design, selection, construction and care of clothing, and its psychological significance ;
- e) textiles for clothing and for the home ;
- f) housing for the family and equipment and furnishings for the household ;
- g) art as an integral part of everyday life ;
- h) management in the use of resources so that values and goals of the individual, the family, or of society may be attained.²

1. Dorothy D. Scott et al, "What Is Home Economics, "Journal of Home Economics", 51 (October, 1959), 680.

2. *Ibid.*

A typical degree programme in the subject of home science consists of a number of elementary courses in physical, biological and social sciences and arts followed by a variety of courses in each of the following areas :

- a) Child and family development.
- d) Food and nutrition.
- c) Clothing and textiles.
- d) Housing and home management.

The courses in the basic sciences and arts serve as the basis for better understanding of the nature of homemaking problems and their solutions. The courses in the four major areas of home science mentioned above provide an opportunity for scientific study of the problems related to those areas. A home science curriculum is thus different from a pure science or arts curriculum in that the latter seeks to promote the concerned/science or art and the student studies it for its own sake ; whereas the curriculum of the former includes their study only to the extent necessary to improve the lives of families and individuals.

Many people carry the impression that home science is more concerned with "things". rather than "people". However, the quality of "things" is sought to be improved only as a means to improving the quality of individual and family life rather than as an end in itself. It is, and should become more and more, humanistic in focus if it must establish deep roots and enjoy wide recognition in this country. In fact, though

it is an "American innovation" in the field of education³ there are already signs of it having become a very popular subject of study in the Indian universities. It does have the potential for universal appeal and applicability,

Apart from the knowledge drawn from the fundamental arts and sciences, home science also has to have its own research

- a) to discover the changing needs of individuals and families and the means of satisfying these needs ; and
- b) in improving the services and goods used by families.

Home science has its origin in the needs of urban young girls and households. Typical urban households are more of consumption units than production units. As such, the subject matter of home science largely developed around consumer needs. When the profession of home science must assist in the development of production oriented families such as those in our rural areas, its scope must suitably expand to meet the college. under our rural conditions the farm and home are so interdependent that none can develop in isolation. Moreover, the woman of the house must not only take care of the home and family but must participate in the agriculture beginning from decision making to evaluation of the crops. Then in her courtyard she can, and usually does, practice

3. Josephing H. Staab, "New Dimensions in Home Economics" *Changing Dimensions in Agriculture & Home Economics* Edited: E.J. Boone and C.M. Ferguson, National Agricultural Extension Centre for Advanced Study, Publication No. 13, (June, 1962), p. 68.

agriculture on a small scale whether it be kitchen garden, poultry house or a dairy unit. Under the extension programmes she is also encouraged to do it systematically. Thus fundamental knowledge in various branches of agriculture is an important need of the village homemaker and therefore must find a place in the scope of home science.

III. Home Science Extension and Its Scope

India's Community Development Programme, which is concerned with upliftment of the rural life in general, and the farm and home in particular, was inaugurated in October, 1952. Extension Education and Community Organization were the two chosen methods for realising the objective of the programme.

Agricultural education has been the most important concern of extension ever since its commencement in 1952. About three years later i.e., in 1955 a specific provision was made in the Community Development programme for activities of women also. Homemaking being the important function of our rural women by tradition, it is quite natural that the planners of the women's programme thought it fit to provide for educational activities which would increase their competency as home makers.

IV. Role of Home Science Extension in Rural Development in India

When developing an extension programme the extension worker has two responsibilities. First, to guide his/her clients in satisfying their felt needs; and secondly, to contribute, through the clients, in achieving the national goals. In the process of programme

planning, which itself is an educational process, the extension worker must help his/her clients in developing awareness of the national problems and objectives so that when they set priorities for their day-to-day problems to be solved with extension's help, they could be helped to see the importance of selecting those with dual advantage of realizing their personal goals as well as the national goals. Some of the present day problems of our country, the strategy of solving which falls, at least in part, within the scope of home science extension include the following :

- a) food and water shortage ;
- b) poor health and nutrition ;
- c) over population ;
- d) environmental pollution ;
- e) poverty ;
- f) lack of understanding and/or practice of democracy ;
- g) low work efficiency on part of all elements of our population etc.

Home science extension has a definite role to play in assisting the rural homemakers to contribute their small bit in solving many of these problems as they perform their routine functions. The point may be further elaborated with examples.

Taking the example of the first problem namely, food and water shortage, the homemakers can be assisted in reducing the intensity of it by educating them on the lines such as these :

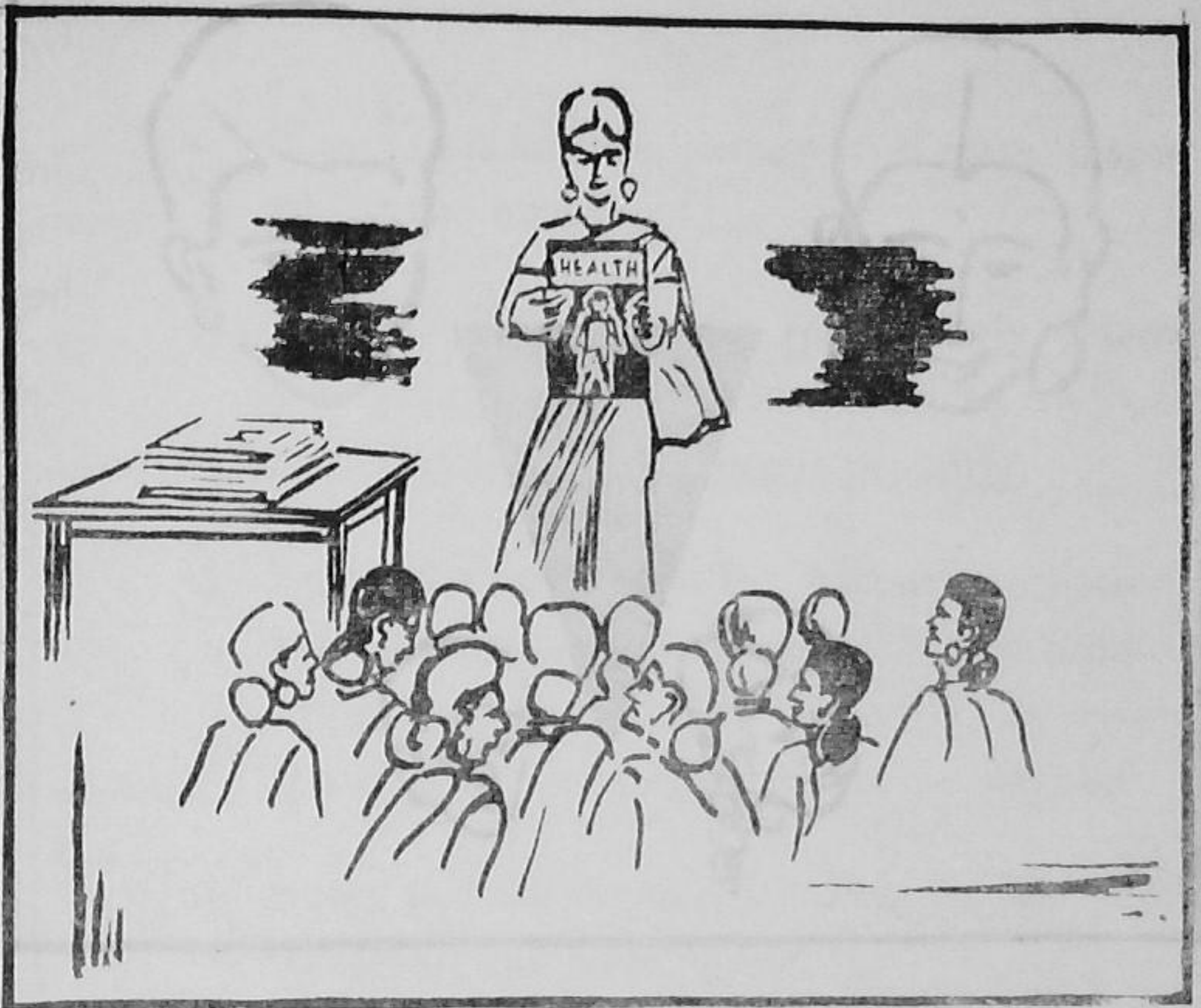
- i) Replace part of the cereals in their diet with suitable substitutes so that the pressure on cereals is somewhat eased.

- ii) Store the foodgrains and other edibles in the house with proper care to avoid wastage due to weather or infestation by insects, micro – organisms etc.
- iii) Use the available foods in a way which would enable the family to get the most out of them.
- iv) Grow or produce some of the foods on the home scale such as fruits, vegetables, poultry Products etc.



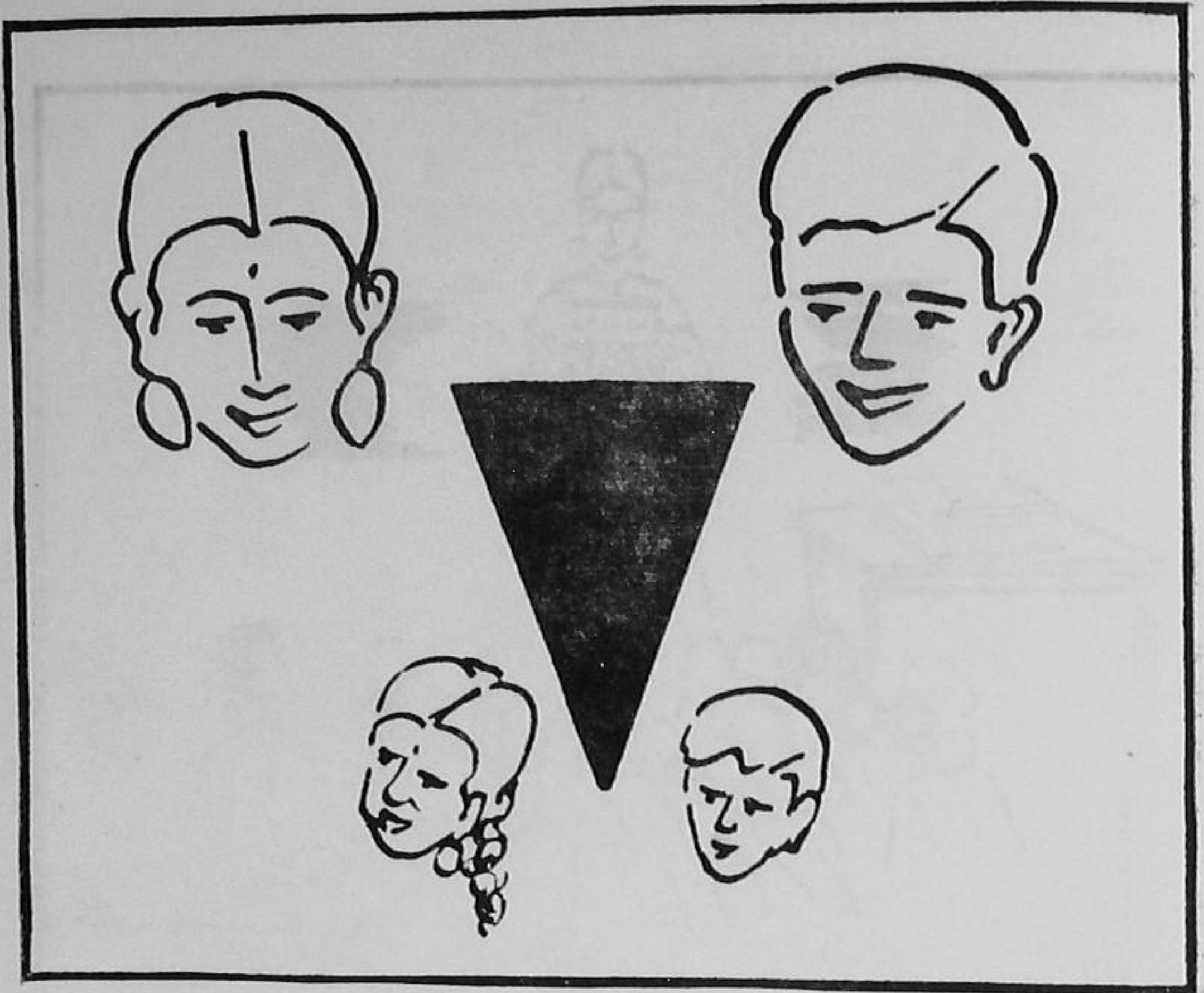
Growing fruits and Vegetables on Home scale is one way of minimising food problem

So far as water shortage is concerned, perhaps there can be no actual reduction in the quantity required daily. But, the homemakers can definitely be helped in avoiding wastage and using the available quantity more efficiently,



Health education is an important area of help to rural families

Poor health of our rural masses is a result of a variety of factors including poor nutrition, lack of sanitation, climate, inadequate material resources, heredity and above all lack of awareness of the poor health and knowledge for improvement. Obviously, it is one problem penetrating several aspects of family life such as family planning and child development ; nutritional needs and preservation, preparation and use of food ; management of housing, equipment, furnishings for the household ; house keeping etc. If the families can be helped to adopt improved practices in all these areas, the problem of poor health can be greatly minimised.



Rural parents need to be motivated to limiting the size of their families

Overpopulation, rather the high rate of reproduction, is another serious problem of the country. Home science extension can play a dual role with regard to easing this problem. Firstly, they could be motivated to consider ways and means of limiting the size of their families. Secondly, they could be fed with the necessary information pertaining to the methods of birth control.

The problem of environmental pollution is certainly aggravated by poor housekeeping habits of the homemakers as also by poor planning and construction of houses, poor selection of household equipment, health habits etc. Home science education can help at least

partially to overcome this problem, in a variety of ways such as the following :

- a) Plan a neat sewage, garbage and trash disposal for the household ;
- b) Select such equipment (particularly stoves, ovens etc.), which would minimise environmental pollution, and use it properly.
- c) Revise the house plan for better ventilation. greater dryness and inclusion of a bathroom, toilet, sink and laundry areas. If necessary the plan for the cattle can also be revised.
- d) Select and use suitable disinfectants for food water, air and flooring etc.
- e) Select and use scientific methods of cleaning the house equipment, clothes etc. and of disposal of waste resulting thereby.
- f) Use of improved methods of management of the cattle, birds etc.
- g) Give proper care to the members suffering from communicable diseases as also to his environment including disposal of his body wastes.



Village families need to be helped to plan their budgets

Poverty in our country is attributable to many factors. Important ones from the home science point of view are: poor economic and family planning, low efficiency of our people, poor health, poor use of the available resources including leisure time. Home science extension has a definite role to play in helping the families work out economic plans, family development plans, plans for better use of all their resources including food, energy, time, house, equipment etc., and in their implementation as well as evaluation.

Though democracy is our ideal few of us including villagers consider it possible and necessary in the day-to-

day family and social life. Home science extension has the best chance of introducing democratic methods in the management of the household and upbringing of the children even without talking about democracy as such. Practice alone can convince the homemakers and other members of the family of its benefits for home life as well as for life in the society at large.

Low work efficiency of our people both physically and mentally, is another important problem of our country which is responsible for much of our poverty. This in turn is due to a host of other factors important of which are: poor health and nutrition, and a very low standard of living. Home science extension has a direct access to health and nutrition education as explained earlier. Efforts to improve the standard of living however must be spread over several aspects of personal and family living and the extension's approach must be general rather than specific

V. Conclusion

In case of most of these problems, the main necessity is to change the value system of the clients with reference to all aspects of their living rather than changing specific practices. This is the most challenging of all the tasks of extension, not only because it is a very slow process requiring the agency's attention for over a long period of time but also because it requires intensive efforts with each client. A balanced 'farm and home development' approach would be most essential and ideal.

Lastly, home science extension work, will result into a raised standard of living for the rural families and into a more satisfying and dignified life for them. The raised aspirations of the rural family, as a result of home science extension work, will in turn help to create the necessary motivation among the members for efforts to increase the farm production. Increased farm production is a means for raising both the level and standard of living. Home science extension and agricultural extension are thus complementary to, and dependent upon, each other.



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