

PARTHENIUM MEDIA CAMPAIGN: A STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT MEDIA/EXTENSION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Severe outbreak of dangerous weed species, *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. (Asteraceae), was observed in various districts of Sri Lanka. A multi media campaign, consisting wide spectrum of mass media and ground extension strategies was launched to eradicate this weed during one week in October 2000, named as 'Parthenium Week' by the Department of Agriculture (DOA). A huge amount of money, which DOA had never spent for any media campaign, was utilized for this campaign. Hence, cost effectiveness media used for this campaign has to be evaluated, considering the 'technology transfer' aspect as well as cost per recipient dimension. A questionnaire survey was conducted during November, December 2000 and January, February 2001. 1591 respondents from 18 districts, responded to the questionnaire. It was found that eighty percent of the respondents have received the message about the weed. This finding clearly indicates the effectiveness of the whole multi-media campaign. The percentage who received the message through television media was ranked first (65%), followed by radio (50%), newspapers (34%), ground extension through extension workers (12%), lateral communication through fellow farmers, friends and relatives (9%) leaflets (2%) and posters (0.8%). Although total cost was a high figure, considering the number of recipients who received the message, cost effectiveness of (cost per recipient) radio, television and print media was very low. The highest cost effectiveness was obtained from newspapers (three cents per recipient) followed by TV (ten cents per recipient) and radio (eleven cents per recipient). Although scientifically not evaluated, effectiveness of a new media innovation; 'street drama' was commended by most of the observers due to its message transfer capability in an entertaining environment.

KEYWORDS: *Parthenium hysterophorus*, Invasive-weed

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Agriculture (DOA) has recently identified a new invasive weed species; *Parthenium hysterophorus* L. (Asteraceae) in several districts in Sri Lanka. Its rapid spread is aided by factors such as short life cycle, low nuclear DNA content, efficient reproductive system including small seeds and mechanism for efficient spread and lack of pest and diseases (Jayasuriya, 2001). Further, if this weed establishes in favorable habitats, it behaves as an invasive species. This weed is a well-known threat to agriculture, human and animal health.

In the light of the true gravity of this weed and related alarming problems, concentrated efforts to combat and control this weed was initiated. For this purpose a multimedia campaign with ground extension strategies, was proposed by the Seed Certification and Plant Protection (SC and PP) Division of the DOA.

This campaign was almost similar to the Strategic Extension Campaign (SEC) developed by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and implemented in some countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. SEC is a strategically planned, problem solving and a participatory extension program conducted for relatively short time period. This was aimed at increasing awareness/knowledge level of identified target audience and changing their attitudes and/or behavior towards favorable adoption of a given idea or technology, using specifically designed cost-effective multi media materials (Adhikarya, 1994). The first step or phase in such an extension campaign would be baseline Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey of the target audience regarding the *Parthenium* weed. However, the campaign management of the DOA did not carryout a baseline survey as they had experienced that the majority of general public are totally unaware of this new weed. The campaign management decided on alternative methods of problem identification and needs assessment. These methods included:

- (a) literature search on the issues of *Parthenium* weed to the agriculture sector problems, health hazards to humans as well as animals and environment.
- (b) field observations by scientists of the DOA, especially the officers of SC and PP Division.
- (c) interviews with farmers regarding their perceptions of the reasons for not being aware of the weed and control measures.

Aim and objectives of the campaign

The main aim of the campaign was to create awareness among general public about the weed and to motivate them to control the weed. It was difficult to set objectives in quantitative terms as in SEC strategy, since no baseline or benchmark data was available to provide a basis for formulating such objectives realistically. However, results of this research study will provide quantitative data, which would be useful in planning future *Parthenium* weed control programs as well as any multimedia program.

The specific objectives of the campaign were as follows:

1. To create awareness among general public about the *Parthenium* weed (identification, adverse effects on agriculture, human life, animals and environment).
2. To inform the concerned/ general public about available control methods and to provide accurate information on negative consequences of not conducting weed control.

3. To motivate general public to co-operate with neighbors in controlling this weed in their villages.

Implementation of the campaign

After considering the above specific objectives, the framework for the mass informational and motivational campaign strategies and campaign material were designed. Following campaign material were produced and distributed /launched during 21st to 28th October 2000.

Radio programs

Eighteen different radio spots and twenty special programs were broadcast through Sri Lanka Broadcasting Service, *Sirasa, SriFM, Hiru/Tharu, Lakhanda, Shakthi, Suriya, Ruhunu Sevaya, Mahanuwara Sevaya, Rajarata Sevaya*, Tamil service, *Visira and Isira*. In addition, three hour live radio program was organised with the participation of DOA officers, farmers, general public and school children.

Television programs

Three TV commercials were telecast every day during this week over *RUPAVAHINI* and *SWARNAWAHINI* channels (Figure 1¹ Illustrates fear arousing video plate used for TV commercials). A TV documentary was telecast over *RUPAVAHINI* on 20th October at 9.30 PM. A news item was telecast in every channel on 20th October and another over 'LIVE at 8.00' programme prior to '*partenium week*'. Ten minutes video clip was telecast during two regular programs of DOA; *Mihikatha Dinuwo* and *Govibimata Arunalu* over *Rupavahini* channel.

News papers

Two newspaper supplements in *Thinakaran* and *Lankadeepa* in addition to DOA regular monthly supplements in *Dinamina* and *Divayina*.

Posters

15,000 posters were distributed island wide (figure 2: Illustrates the fear-arousing poster with symbolic *Parthinium* devil.)

¹ Figures 1 and 2 are provided in the plate at end of the paper.

Leaflets

30,000 leaflets were distributed.

Seminar

Two seminars were organized at Plant Genetic Resources Centre, Peradeniya on 21st October 2000.

Sramadana

Two *Parthenium* eradication Sramadanas were organised. First one on 22nd October at Kandakatiya and second on 28th at Vavuniya.

Street drama

A street drama was organised by the Faculty of Agriculture, Peradeniya.

Objective of the research study

As DOA has spent nearly Rs. 2.5 million for the "*Parthenium week*" media campaign, DOA staff especially who were involved in implementing multimedia campaigns have increasingly realized the need for and importance of conducting an evaluation study. Unlike formative evaluation, which is normally conducted at the planning stage or the early stage of campaign implementation (KAP study), impact study, known as summative evaluation (Adhikarya, 1987 and 1994; Jayatissa, 1993; Contado 1997), is almost always conducted near or after the conclusion of campaign programme. The results of a summative evaluation are normally used to determine whether the campaign has accomplished its objectives and if an improved or expanded campaign should be undertaken as a follow-up programme (Adhikarya, 1987). Therefore the main purpose of this research work; a 'summative evaluation', was to assess the performance, effects, impacts and cost effectiveness of the *Parthenium* media /extension campaign implemented during 21st - 28th October 2000. The specific objectives of the research study are given below:

1. To evaluate overall effectiveness of *Parthenium* media campaigns.
2. To study the message transfer capability of different media used for the campaign.
3. To study the cost effectiveness of different media used for the campaign.
4. To analyze the effectiveness of different formats within the each media used for the campaign.

5. To identify factors which effected the success of the campaign.
6. To identify shortfalls of the campaign for future reference.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A questionnaire survey through individual interviews as well as mail survey was conducted during November and December 2000 and January, 2001 in 18 districts, including Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. A sample of 1591, consisting of 718 female and 873 male, ranging from age 5 to 70 years were evaluated. The possible sampling method used was stratified convenient sampling. According to table 1, age level of respondents are representative.

Table 1. Age level of respondents.

<i>Age level (yrs)</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
5-10	3	0.18
10-20	452	28.28
20-30	495	30.97
30-40	263	16.45
40-50	158	9.85
50-60	98	6.13
60-70	26	1.62
70<	9	0.56
Not mentioned	87	5.46

The sample size of each district is given below. Trincomalee-117, Polonnaruwa-26, Hambantota-139, Nuwaraeliya-63, Kegalle-142, Matara-132, Colombo-33, Matale-22, Ku'gala-70, Kandy-462, Kalutara-20, Badulla-6, A'pura-19, Gampaha-8, Rathnapura-61, Monaragala-41, Jaffna-14, Vavuniya-211.

Enumerators were sent to the field when Audio Visual Centre (AVC) television crew was transported for video shooting. Some of the questionnaires were distributed among randomly selected general public and answers were obtained through mail. The questionnaire was structured to obtain a broader perspective in relation to both message transfer capability of different media in general and in-depth analysis of each media in particular. The questions were either open-ended or ranking answers to a given attitude scale (good, very good, excellent etc.). Respondents have to write the answers. e.g. Name of the weed, technical information about the weed, control methods, names of the

media/channel/ program from which the respondents received the message/information about the weed, names of the preferred media, channels, and preferred time.

The tabular analysis was used to present results of the survey and the percentages were calculated based on the total sample (1591). Few statistical analyses were done with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The percentage of respondent who have correctly stated the name of the weed; *Parthenium hysterphorus*, in each district are furnished in table 2. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents were aware of the weed and were able to recall correctly, the name of the weed. Fourteen percent (14%) of the audience were aware of a dangerous weed, although they were not able to mention the name. Only 6.% of the sample had not heard about the weed. These results reveal a significant impact of media campaign in creating awareness about the weed.

Table 2. The percentage of respondent who have correctly stated the name of the weed; *Parthenium hysterphorus*, in each district.

Districts																		
Trincomalee	Polonnaruwa	Hambantota	Nuwaraeliya	Kegalle	Mathara	Colombo	Mathale	Kurunegala	Kandy	Kalutara	Badulla	Anuradhapura	Gampaha	Ratnapura	Monaragala	Jaffna	Vavuniya	Average 80%
79	88	74	84	90	83	67	82	84	82	90	100	63	88	74	88	100	68	

The 1591 respondents were cross classified using 18 districts and recalling ability (recall/not recall) as categorical variables. The two-way data were analysed using chi-squared test. The results showed that there is an association between the district and recalling ability ($p=0.001$). These results suggest that proportion of people that can recall the parthenium message vary in different districts. The variation in the districts may be due level of extension priority given by different districts for the campaign, strength of ground extension force, level of exposure/access to different electronic media, level of reception quality etc. Some of these variables will be analysed in detail with reference to different media strategies in this paper. However, average recalling ability of 80% island wide,

indicates the power of mass media/extension strategies in transferring information to a larger audience in a shorter period of time. It could be seen further that intensified multimedia campaign within a short period of time (one week) has an effective message transfer capacity than haphazard media programs through few mediums during a long period of time.

The respondents who received information about *Parthenium* from different media is shown in figure 3. The respondents who received the message through television ranked first (65%), followed by radio (50%), news papers (34%), face to face communication through extension workers (12%), lateral communication through fellow farmers, friends and relatives (9%) and leaflets (2%), posters (0.8%).

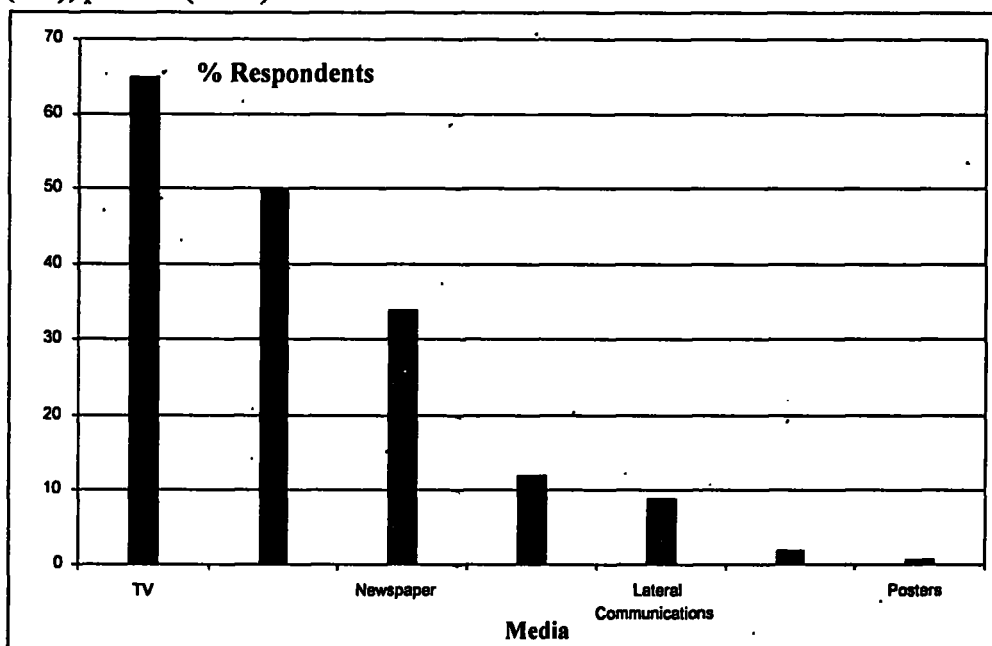


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents perceived the information about weed through different media.

According to the results, television had transferred the message to a larger audience than any other strategy used in the campaign. The use of intensified TV programs may have greatly attributed for this higher percentage of message transfer ability of this media. Not only the increased number of TV programs, but also the time of telecast also has a cumulative effect over high message transfer capability of the TV media (during the whole *Parthenium* week, advertisements were telecast just before *Rupavahini* news telecast).

It is interesting to note that although not superior to a powerful audiovisual media like TV, the Radio also has a remarkable information transfer capability.

Radio commercials were repeatedly broadcasted during peak listening hours in different channels. (Commercial service, Lakhanda and Sirasa).

Another contributing factor for the remarkable message transfer capability of the electronic media is utilization of more than one TV channel and Radio channel for the media campaign. This strategy had definitely reduced the barriers of quality of reception, which is experienced in different parts of the country. As all media channels (both radio and TV) presented commercials during peak viewing/listening hours, majority of the audience exposed to the commercials.

News papers ranked third among a spectrum of media used in the campaign (34%). Although the print media ranks behind TV and Radio, still this traditional media has tremendous power to transfer the message to Sri Lankan audience.

About twelve percent of the respondents have received the information regarding the weed through extension workers and this face to face communication strategy ranked 4th in the media /extension strategies used for the campaign. It was found that two districts, namely Hambantota and Monaragala have shown significantly higher exposure to the weed related information through the extension agent than the other districts (table 3).

Table 3. Percentage of respondents exposed to the weed related information through extension workers.

<i>Districts</i>																	
Trincomalee	Polonnaruwa	Hambantota	Nuwaraeliya	Kegalle	Mathara	Colombo	Mathale	Kurunegala	Kandy	Kalutara	Badulla	Anuradhapura	Gampaha	Ratnapura	Monaragala	Jaffna	Vavuniya
9	0	28	3	18	7	0	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	8	70	0	13

Relatively low percentage shown by most of the districts may be partly due to low percentage of extension officers available at the village level. Furthermore, there were no preliminary awareness programs organized for the extension workers except in Hambantota and Monaragala districts. The percentage of information received through extension workers of these two

districts (28% and 70% respectively) clearly reflected the usefulness of creating awareness among extension staff. When consulting extension workers personally, researcher noticed that majority of extension workers were not aware of this weed until they themselves perceived the message through electronic and print media.

The percentage of the respondents (9%) who have received the message through fellow farmers, friends and relatives ranked 5th in the media/ extension strategies. Although this figure is comparatively low, still this communication strategy has played a vital role, without the knowledge of the campaign management and without any cost to the DOA budget. As majority had received the message through massive electronic and print media campaign, interpersonal communication within the community was increased (this issue was a 'discussion point' of the week among general public). Hence, people who were not exposed to the weed issue through media were able to receive the message from fellow farmers, friends and relatives.

Leaflets ranked 6th in the spectrum of media used for the campaign (2%). The probable reason for the low exposure to this media is the low number of leaflets printed by the DOA (only 30,000). Not only the low number printed but also the distribution mechanism, which involves a huge number of ground forces also seriously, affected people's access to this print media. However, campaign management has taken the initiative to distribute limited number of leaflets through an effective mechanism. Leaflets were distributed mainly among school children, as they are carriers of information to their parents. Although the percentage is low this figure indicates that even low number of leaflets also can be utilized effectively for technology transfer, if they are properly manipulated.

The information dissemination through leaflets can be considered as a multi-step or relay approach in communication, as it acts as 'intermediaries', both as a target and a channel of communication. Instead of reaching a large number of recipients directly through leaflets, the campaign management has realized that it was easier to locate such intermediaries from schools as message carriers (channel of communication) to disseminate information to unreachable large audience.

Posters ranked 7th in the wide spectrum of media used for the campaign (0.8%). Their capability as a message transfer media is relatively low when compared to TV, Radio and Newspaper. Probable reason for this low information transfer ability is the low exposure to this media by the audience due to low number of posters produced by the campaign management (15,000 posters). On the other hand, this percentage cannot be considered as low as this media has its own 'noise' factor, which affects the effective communication. The main noise

factor is the competition for displaying posters in public places. However, campaign management has effectively arranged to display posters in places where general public gather for their day to day needs. These include; *Govijana Kendras*, post offices, hospitals, schools etc. The life span of posters were very long in these places as risk of getting destroyed or another poster being pasted covering it, was minimum compared to public walls and bus stands in busy streets.

Cost effectiveness of the media campaign

The total cost for the whole media program was Rs. 2.4 million. As majority of the campaign materials was produced by the DOA, expenses incurred were minimal. This amount would have been doubled or trebled if the media productions were given to private commercial advertising firms. The various media material produced, their quantities and cost of production are given below:

Production cost of media programs

Radio programs- Total cost for broadcast	-	Rs. 900,000
Television programs-Total cost for telecast	-	Rs. 1,000,000
Total cost for news paper supplements	-	Rs. 150,000
Total cost for 15, 000 posters	-	Rs. 60,000
Total cost for 30000 leaflets	-	Rs. 30, 000
Total cost for the seminar	-	Rs. 125, 000
Total cost for two Sramadana	-	Rs. 40, 000
Street drama	-	No cost

Cost effectiveness of the media campaign

Cost effectiveness of the media campaign can be defined as cost incurred to transfer a message to a single person. This can be calculated by using the following equation.

$$\text{Cost effectiveness of the media campaign} = \frac{\text{Total cost}}{\text{Number of audience who received the message}}$$

Total cost for the media campaign = Rs.2,400,000

Total population (age between 5-70 years) = 16 million

(out of total population of 19.36 million)

(According to Economic and social statistics of Sri Lanka -2000, published by Central Bank of Sri Lanka and Central Bank report-2000)

As 80% of the sample audience have received the message (at least aware of the name of the weed), we can assume that 80% of the total population (age between 5-70) must have received this message (the sample is representative of all age categories between 5 to 70 as given in table 1).

Therefore, total number of people who received the message
80% = 16mill x
= 12,800,000
(12.8 million)

$$\text{Cost effectiveness of the media campaign} = \frac{\text{Rs.2,400,000}}{12,800,000}$$

$$= 19 \text{ cents (Rs.0.19) per person}$$

Therefore, the media campaign has effectively transferred the message to 12.8 million people and spent only 19 cents per person to create awareness about the weed. This figure clearly indicates the cost effectiveness of the whole multi media campaign. It clearly proves that investing for an intensified multimedia program within a short period of time is fully worthwhile task. Although cost incurred was high, value for money is justifiable.

Cost effectiveness of television programs

Total cost for TV programs = Rs.1,000,000 (1million)

According to the study 65% (figure 3) of the sample audience have received the message through TV media. Therefore, number of people who have received the message through TV media will be around 10.4 million (16 mill x 65%).

$$\text{Cost effectiveness of the TV media of the campaign} = \frac{\text{Rs.1,000,000}}{10,400,000}$$

$$= \text{Rs.0.1 per person}$$

In other words, the campaign management had effectively transferred the message to 10.4 million viewers through TV at a cost of 10 cents per person.

Cost effectiveness of Radio programs

Total cost for Radio programs-Rs.900000

Percentage of the audience who received the message through radio = 5 0%

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cost effectiveness of Radio programs} &= \frac{\text{Rs.900,000}}{16,000,000 \times 50\% (8 \text{ mil})} \\ &= \text{Rs.0.11} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore campaign management had effectively transferred the message to 8 million listeners through radio at a cost of 11 cents per person.

Cost effectiveness of news paper media

Total cost for newspaper suppliments-Rs.1, 50000

Percentage of the audience who received the message through news papers = 34%

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Cost effectiveness of news paper articles} &= \frac{\text{Rs.150,000}}{16000000 \times 34\%} \\ &= 3 \text{ cents (Rs.0.03)} \end{aligned}$$

Therefore campaign management had effectively transferred the message to 5.44 million people through newspapers at a cost of 3 cents per reader. According to figure 4, the cost effectiveness of newspaper ranked first (three cents per recipient) followed by TV (Ten cents per recipient) and radio (Eleven cents per recipient).

Impact of media for transferring technical messages of the campaign

Table 4 reveals the number of technical messages transferred as a consequence of the campaign. Only 52% of the respondents filled this question and the balance did not respond at all. This was the last question in the questionnaire and the respondents were asked to write all the information that they knew about this weed on the other side of the questionnaire. As 80% have clearly mentioned the name of the weed, one could expect respondents to write at least one information; "*Parthenium* is a dangerous weed". However, majority had not written anything thus indicating that they have not taken any interest to write long sentences to the last question. This error could have been corrected if the questionnaire was properly pre-tested.

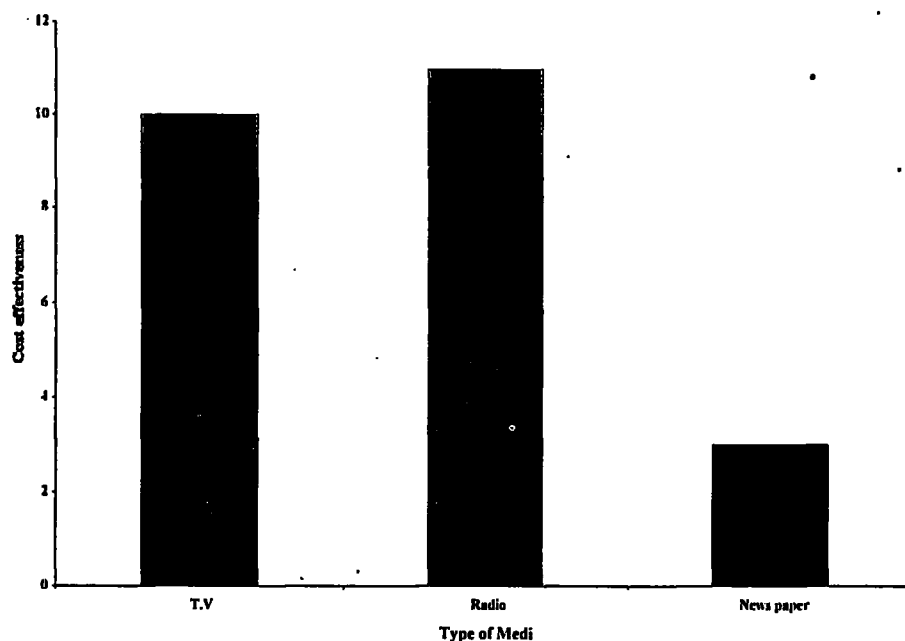


Figure 4. Cost effectiveness of different media programs.

Table 4. Number of technical messages transferred as a consequence of the campaign.

<i>Technical information</i>	<i>Percentage of technical points that has been transferred through campaign</i>
1. Health problems for human	31
2. Damage to agricultural crops	25.1
3. Fast spreading	15.2
4. White inflorescence at the terminal	8.58
5. Leaves are closely similar to Daspethiya and Atapethiya plants	7.90
6. Harmful for animals	5.52
7. Whole Plant is covered with tiny hair	3.48
8. Uproot and burn / use Glyphosate or 24D	3.54
9. Other minor technical points	4.23

The data in table 4 deal with the influence of media campaign on gain in knowledge and retention of knowledge. The results revealed that majority had correctly perceived the main and important information that has been highlighted by all most all media programs utilized for the campaign. (health problems for humans, damage to agricultural crops, fast spreading, white inflorescence at the

terminal, leaves are similar to Daspetheiya and Atapethiya plant, harmful for animals). The message; 'Health problems for human' is the main message that has been perceived by majority (31%). Sensitivity of people for health related information might have attributed to this. Messages like 'white inflorescence at the terminal, leaves are similar to Daspetheiya and Atapethiya plants and whole plant is covered with tiny hair' are related to identification characters of the plant. A considerable number has correctly stated this information. This result indicates that visual elements of media programs have effectively transferred the message, even though these points were not mentioned verbally in TV advertisements.

After in-depth analysis of number of messages received through TV, Radio and Newspaper media separately (eg. if a respondent received the messages only from TV, number of messages that could be recalled were tabulated) it was found that there was no wide variation between the type of media and the number of messages remembered by respondents (figure 5). Although TV media is well known as a transient media which communicate at the moment of broadcasting (Boren, 1994), the high number of information retention due to exposure to TV indicates that this media is no more an awareness creating media. It has some cognitive domain that improves retention of knowledge as well.

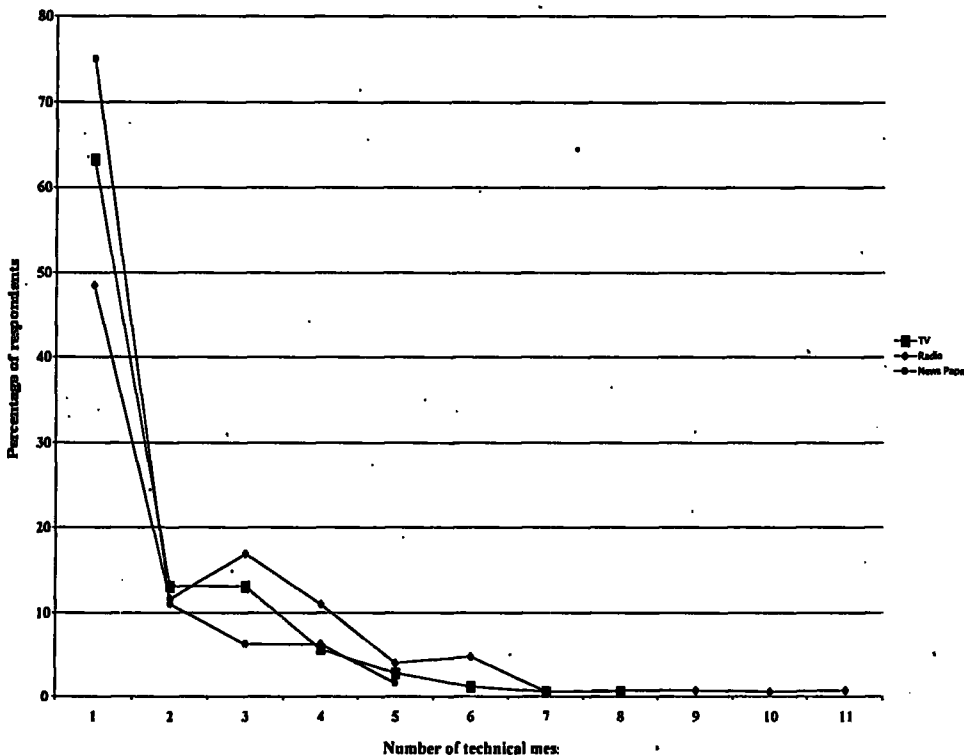


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of respondents according to number of technical messages received from different media.

In-depth analysis of radio programs

Researcher investigated different radio formats in relation to transfer of information about the weed (table 5)

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to the type of radio programs for creating awareness about the weed.

<i>Radio programs</i>	<i>Percentage who mentioned the name of the radio program</i>
Can't remember the name of the program	14.1
Radio advertisements	23.3
Radio news	12
Agricultural programs	4.75
<i>Parisarayata Winadiyak</i>	1.12
Suriya Sirasa	0.81
Special Radio programs	0.75
Hiru FM	0.62

As shown in table 5, radio advertisements ranked as the most consumed radio format for message transfer about *Parthenium*. Radio news and agricultural radio programs were ranked 2nd and 3rd popular formats respectively. Among radio programs, *Suriya Sirasa* and *Parisarayata Winadiyak* (both belong to *SIRASA Radio*) are the only names of the programs mentioned by the respondents (0.81% and 1.12% respectively). This result is more or less consistent with the previous findings indicated by Hewavitharana (1999); the majority of the people couldn't recall any name of DOA radio programs. However, considerable proportion have listen to advertisements (23%), agricultural radio programmes (4.75%) and news items (12%) produced by Farm Broadcasting Service of DOA for *Parthenium* media campaign. About 14% couldn't recall name of any radio program related to the weed. The probable reason for this may be a large number of radio programs with various names being broadcast during the recent past through so many radio channels coming into operation. Therefore, people remembered that they received the message from radio but they were unable to recall the program. They have just mentioned some popular radio programs that they listen regularly as the program that they received the message from.

In-depth analysis of TV programs

Researcher investigated different TV formats in relation to transfer of information about the weed (table 6)

Table 6. Percentage who mentioned the name of the TV program that they received the message about the weed

<i>Television programs</i>	<i>Percentage who mentioned the name of the TV program</i>
Television news	16.3
Rupavahini news	5
Agricultural programs	3.3
<i>Parisarayata winadiyak</i>	3.0
TV advertisements	1.93
Live at 8.00	1.68
<i>Parthenium</i> special programs	1.62
<i>Govibimata Arunalu</i>	0.62
<i>Krushu sandalla</i>	0.56
<i>Mihikatha dinuwo</i>	0.50
ITN news	0.31
Sirasa news	0.25
Namayai Paha	0.18
Pahan Piyasa	0.12
Eye news	0.12

As shown in table 6, about 10% couldn't recall the TV program that they received the message from. Majority has received the message through television news (16.3%) but they couldn't recall the channel. Only 5% have clearly mentioned that they received the message from Rupavahini news. About 3.3% have mentioned that they received the message through an agricultural program, although they were unable to recall the name of the TV program. This condition is again similar to results of radio programs. Only 0.62%, 0.56% and 0.50% have indicated the names of DOA television programs; *Govibimata Arunalu*, *Krushu Sandalla* and *Mihikatha Dinuwo* respectively. Although *Govibimata Arunalu* and *Mihikatha Dinuwo* programs have been telecast for nearly three years, majority were not able to recall these names. This may be due to the scheduled telecast time not being popular with the public. *Mihikatha Dinuwo* is telecast every Thursday at 5.20 pm. The *Govibimata Arunalu* program is telecast every second Sunday of the month at 6.00 pm. Non regularity and the time of telecast might be the reasons for the number of viewers being low. Although *Krushu Sandalla* was started recently, it ranks similar to the other two DOA programs, thus indicating increased popularity for this new live discussion format. On the other hand, the



Figure. 1 Fear arousing video clip used for the TV commercial

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- ලැපට් අවස්ථාවේදීම ගලවා පුළුස්සා දමන්න
- ග්ලයිපොසෙට් හෝ 2-4D වල් නාශකය භයාදන්න

මෙම වල් පැළෑටිය දැඩි විනාශ අප බේන දැනවන්න

පැළෑටි සංරක්ෂණ කේන්ද්‍රය, සහතිකයේ දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව, කැලණි 22, (පළාත්පාලන සේවා පදනම),
රාජගල, ඇපක. 08-3888316
සහතිකයේ දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව, සහතිකයේ හා ලේඛන ප්‍රවේශනා කළමනාකරු

Figure. 2 'Parthenium devil; a fear arousing media strategy used for the entire media campaign (visual of the poster)

scheduled telecast time (every Monday at 7.30 PM) in the EYE channel also might be a positive point for attracting more TV viewers. It is interesting to note that although, the campaign management had spent to telecast *Parthenium* program in some selected channels and programs only, most of the popular programs have discussed this issue even without the knowledge of DOA (see the long list of programs in table 6).

A novelty effect of a traditional media; street drama

From times immemorial, traditional media like street drama and folk drama have played a vital role in solving emotional problems and channeling the destructive forces into constructive once. A group of university students from Faculty of Agriculture, Peradeniya performed a street drama before groups of people in different locations where the weed problem was severe. Although, message transfer capability was not measured (only two respondents were exposed to this media), this strategy had been commanded by viewers due to its entertainment value and novelty effect and thereby, it might have led to higher gains in knowledge among general public.

CONCLUSION

Except for the problems in number of posters and leaflets produced, the planned campaign activities had been carried out quite satisfactorily and the campaign has made a significant impact to disseminate information regarding *Parthenium* weed. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents were aware and were able to recall correctly, the name of the weed. Among the wide spectrum of mass media and extension strategies used for the campaign, the respondents who received information about the weed through television was ranked first, followed by radio, newspapers, face to face communication through extension workers, lateral communication through fellow farmers, friends and relatives, leaflets and posters. The results showed that there is a high value of intensified multimedia campaign over haphazard media drips that have been used by most of the previous DOA media campaigns. Owing to the fact that people are exposed to a competitive media traffic, repeated use of attractive and effective media flow will definitely help people to comprehend and retain information that need speedy dissemination. On the other hand an intensified media campaign has another unintentional advantage, as a massive media agitation will automatically awaken all the media personal in the country. As a consequence cumulative effect for dissemination of information can be achieved with no cost to the campaign management. Furthermore, a powerful and penetrating media campaign through direct communication (from source to receiver; from television to viewers) has a

cumulative advantage as lateral communication in the community also getting strengthened automatically.

Although, the total cost is very high in most of print and electronic media, considering the cost per recipient component, still these media are cost effective. The whole media campaign has effectively transferred the message to 12.8 million people and had spent only 19 cents per person to create awareness about the weed. The cost effectiveness of newspaper ranked first (three cents per recipient) followed by TV (Ten cents per recipient) and radio (Eleven cents per recipient). As ground extension staff were not informed prior to the media campaign, their role, as technology transfer agents were not effectively utilized for this campaign. Therefore, the ground extension system must be strengthened with sound technical backup before launching a mass media strategy for better action in the field.

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