

# Analyzing the Home Science Curriculum and its Perceptions Amongst its Stakeholders

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## Abstract

Home Science is a systematized and a scientific body of knowledge which helps the individuals to improve their personality for a better and fulfilling life yet the social stigma of being related to household work only has deteriorated its image and de-popularized the subject. Efforts have been made to change the perception of the stakeholders yet the goal seems to be distant. Therefore the need was felt to explore into the causative factors responsible for obstructing the subject's growth and the reforms that would help in uplifting the subject.

## Keywords

Home Science, Curriculum, Syllabi

## I. Introduction

Home Economics was initiated as a field of knowledge and teaching in the United States of America during the decade 1899-1908. It was concerned with enabling families to identify and create alternative solutions to significant problems of everyday life and to take responsibility of consequences of their decisions for the global society and environment. It was known as Domestic Science in Europe and India. It was aimed at helping people understand the national issues and concerns and to contribute to the development of the country. Established in 1932, Lady Irwin College was the first premier institute of India to achieve national leadership in the discipline of Home Science. By 1950 most of the states introduced Home Science education in schools and colleges. In 1952, Secondary Education Commission recommended Home Science education for girls in the schools. It was also recommended by the report of the Kothari Commission. Furthermore, Home Science Association of India emphasized the need for publicizing the discipline for the job opportunities.

The subject saw a downfall in June 1977 when Ishwar Bhai Patel Committee<sup>1</sup> introduced "Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW)" into the school curriculum in view of vocationalizing Home Science. It was made a compulsory subject. In addition to it in late 1970s the Home Science stream was completely removed from the school curriculum. Since then the subject is regarded menial in comparison to the other subjects. In spite of the efforts of the National Policy of Education 1986, the image of the subject has significantly deteriorated.

Home Science is a subject that teaches its students to be prestigious and practically skilled at the same time. They are trained to be economically and socially productive members of the society linked to the developmental work at various stages. The need of the hour is to treat this discipline as on the same footing with the other disciplines. In this regard the study seemed to be of immense importance to analyze the Home Science curriculum and its perceptions amongst its stakeholders.

## II. Objectives of the Study

- To review and compare the objectives of teaching Home Science at +2 level as prescribed by CBSE & those proposed

by NCERT.

- To compare & contrast the Home Science syllabi as prescribed both by CBSE & NCERT and identify the relevant course contents.
- To study the awareness of the students and the teachers regarding the changes coming in the field of Home Science Education at senior secondary level, under graduate level and post graduate level.
- To examine the need for reformulating the Home Science syllabus at senior secondary level and change in its nomenclature.

## III. Research Design

The present study was descriptive as well as qualitative in nature.

### • Sample

The sample consisted of

- Director of Home Science College of University of Delhi (Lady Irwin College)
- Chief advisor of NCERT Syllabus
- 10 Teachers of subjects other than Home Science
- 10 Teachers of Home Science in various government and public schools of Delhi
- 25 Teacher Training (B.Ed) students of Lady Irwin College (Post Graduate)
- School students of class XI

### • Tools Used

- An interview schedule was used to examine the need for reformulating the Home Science syllabus at senior secondary level and change in nomenclature. The schedule was developed by the researcher for seeking the opinion of the experts in the field of Home Science. It consisted of questions for investigating the potential of the change in nomenclature in providing thrust to the subject.
- The Rating Scale for the teachers of Home Science was used to get their experiences of dealing with the subject.
- Different self prepared questionnaires were used to seek the information from the B.Ed students of Lady Irwin College,

<sup>1</sup>The Ishwarbhai Patel Review Committee (1977), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) Working Group (1984) and National Policy on Education (NPE) Review Committees (1990) made several recommendations to reduce the academic burden on students

non-Home Science teachers and students of class XI to get an insight into their perceptions of the curriculum and suggestions for improvising upon the same.

**• Analysis of the data**

The quantitative data collected was represented graphically through bar graphs and pie charts. Simple statistical techniques were used to get an insight of the current situation.

**IV. Findings of the Study**

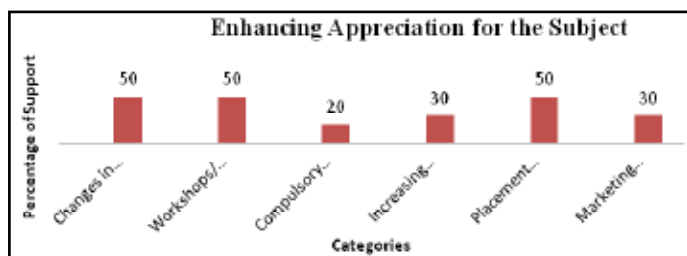
The results of the analysis are discussed as under:

**The objectives of teaching Home Science at +2 levels:** The objectives of teaching Home Science at +2 levels given by CBSE are formulated on the basis of the Guidelines of NPE 1986. The syllabi seem to be useful in developing a balanced personality. The subject prepares individuals for all aspects of complete development and provides growth of all aspects. It teaches the utilization of different forms of art for aesthetic appreciation with the purpose of preserving country’s art and culture. Great importance has been laid upon the professional and vocational orientation of the subject to prepare the adolescents for a potential and successful career ahead. It was found to have an inferior image in comparison to the other subjects mainly because of its name. Majority of topics included seem to be very relevant as they provide a strong technical and a scientific knowledge to the students.

**Problem in implementation of the Home Science curriculum:** Home Science teachers are often over loaded with additional tasks such as involving children with the co-curricular activities etc. as they are usually perceived by the other staff members to be less burdened in comparison to others. Invariably the groups of all the sampled population believed that Home Science education is equally beneficial for boys as it is for the girls. The students, teachers and the teachers of other subjects are also not aware of the changes brought in the subject.

**Enhancing appreciation for the subject:** There is a need to enhance the appreciation for the subject amongst all its stake holders. Changes in syllabi, introduction of new workshops, making the subject as compulsory at the upper primary level, increasing creativity, widening placement opportunities and marketing of the subject were highlighted as some of the most potent ways to do the same. The same may be seen in the chart below:

Chart 1: Means of Enhancing Subject Appreciation



The subject needs to be marketed well with more lucrative job options to invite the wide attention of the society. Inviting dietitians, inviting ex-students, arranging for seminars, competitions and providing suitable career guidance were suggested as some major interventions to achieve the targeted goal.

**Reformulation of the syllabi and change in the nomenclature:**

The subject does not hold a very strong image as compared to the

other subjects and is considered rather simple in comparison to other academic areas. This is mainly attributed to the name of the subject that gives a wrong impression as being associated only to the household work. The subject requires the change in nomenclature to make it more suggestive to the students. The subject needs to adopt a more professional approach by highlighting its scientific methodologies and practical works.

**V. Conclusion**

The subject needs to be worked upon in terms of syllabi and marketing strategies that need to be adopted to make it sustain its status and image among its stakeholders. The subject needs to be re vitalized and worked upon to make it more professional in its approach.

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