

Empowerment of Women through Home Science Education

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ABSTRACT

All over the world, the movement for empowering the women's status has always emphasized education is the most significant instrument for social change. Education for women's development should include education self-reliance, personal development, social development, productive capacity, social integration and political understanding. Home Science education is the perfect means for achieving the above given requirements. Home Science education is not developed to educate the girls merely to obtain the degree which is a passport to matrimony, but it is designed to attain the fullest development in all respects, personally, socially and economically. Home Science education provides complete and equal access to and control over factors contributing such empowerment, particularly, health, education, information, life-long learning for self development, vocational skills, employment and income earning opportunities, technical services, inheritance and matrimony, common resources, credit, technology, market, mass-media, family planning, women rights etc. Home Science education has released women power on the outside world of work. Home Science education has proved that women along with being home maker, she can be a teacher, researcher, entrepreneur and administrator. Thus, it utilizes and proves the woman's potentials in every field of life.

Key words: Empowerment, Women, Home Science, Education, Development

INTRODUCTION

A woman is the nucleus of the family, particularly, in rural India. She not only collects water, fuel wood, fodder and food but also plays a significant role in preserving the culture, grooming the culture and shaping their destiny. Although women represent only 50% of the total population, they contribute 75% to the development of our society while men contribute only 25%. Unfortunately, in spite of their laudable and valuable roles, which cannot be substituted by machine or men, women

have been neglected for generations. As a result, today women are the worst sufferer in the society due to drudgery, social and financial insufficiency, deprivation and humiliation. Backwardness of women ultimately leads this segment of population towards poverty and powerlessness and women are the worst sufferers during the period of scarcity and calamity. No wonder India hosts over one-third of the poor in the world, as a lack of empowerment of women is significant cause of poverty.

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Table 1: Decision-Making Score by Age

Sr. No.	Age	Cases	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Overall Avg.	188	13.53	4.34
2	15-24	29	19.34	4.82
3	25-34	56	13.46	2.94
4	35-44	61	12.36	3.68
5	45-54	25	11.16	3.68
6	55-Above	17	11.47	3.43

EMPOWERMENT PROCESS

Empowerment is an active, multi-dimensional process which should enable women to realize their full identity power in all spheres of life. It would consist of greater access to knowledge and resources, greater autonomy in decision-making, greater ability to plan their lives, have control over circumstances that influence their lives and free them from shackles imposed on them by customs, belief and practice.

WOMEN AND HOME SCIENCE EDUCATION

All over the world, the movement for empowering the women's status has always emphasized education is the most significant instrument for social change. According to Gunnar Myrdal (1969), education should have an independent as well as "instrumental" value, i.e. the purpose of must to rationalize attitude as well as to impart knowledge and skills. Education for women's development should include education self-reliance, personal development, social development,

productive capacity, social integration and political understanding. Home Science education is the perfect means for achieving the above given requirements.

Home Science education is not developed to educate the girls merely to obtain the degree which is a passport to matrimony, but it is designed to attain the fullest development in all respects, personally, socially and economically.

THROUGH HOME SCIENCE EDUCATION, THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN CAN BE ACHIEVED IN FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. Economic Empowerment

Home Science is the only discipline which trains the students for two important goals in life:

- I. Caring for home and family
- II. Shaping up a bright career

Home Science education provides wide variety of employment in both wage and employment and self-employment.

Tables 2: Job Opportunities in the Areas of Home Science

Sr. No.	Vocational Areas	Job opportunities after graduation	Job opportunities after advanced course
1.	Food and Nutrition	Food Laboratory Aide, Dietary Aide, Food Product Tester, Kitchen Food Assembler, Quality Control Technician, Short Order Cook, Baker helper, Waiter/Waitress, Dining Room Attendant, Cake Decorator	Food Technician, Dietary Assistant, Dietetic Technician, Home Economist, Dietitian, Food Technologist, Nutritionist, Caterer, Baker, Food Service Manager, Specialty Cook, Chef
2.	House Keeping	Guest Service Clerk, Housekeeping Maid, Host/Hostess, Establishment Guide, Lodging Facilities Attendant	Guest House Manager, Housekeeping Manager, Hospitality Supervisor, Hotel/Motel Manager, Convention Coordinator
3.	Interior Designing, Furnishings and Maintenance	Showroom Assistant, Interior Design Aide, Furnishings Sales Associate	Window Display Designer, Interior Design Assistant, Photo Stylist, Furnishings Buyer, Housekeeping Instructor

4.	Consumer Services	Advisor consumer rights, Product Demonstrator, Sales representative, Consumer Reporter, Personal Shopper, Staff of consumer Forum	Food/Consumer Products Tester, Product Representative, Public Relations Representative, Consumer News writer
5.	Family and Human Services	Adult Day Care Worker, Residential Care Aide, Elder Care Worker, Family Aide, Personal/Home Care Aide, Homemaker's Aide	Social Services Technician/Aide, Community Worker, Special Needs Case Worker
6.	Child Development and Education	Pre-school Aide, Family Child Care Provider, Recreation Aide, Teacher Aide	Child Day Care Supervisor, Pre-school Teacher, Special Education Aide, After-School Program Supervisor
7.	Fashion Design, Manufacturing and Merchandising	Fashion Design Aide, Fabrics/Accessories Estimator, Sales Associate, Costumer Assistant, Employee in a dry cleaning shop, Employee in a garment manufacturing firm, Employee in a Textile Industry, Employee in an Embroidery unit	Assistant Designer, Fashion Illustrator, Textile Technician, Computer Imaging Consultant, Merchandise Displayer, Fashion Buyer
8	Extension and Communication	Journalist, Counselor, Press reporter, News Reader, Media-programmer, Teacher Investigator	Counselor, Researcher on voluntary basis, Professor,

Thus Home Science education can enrich the women economically and can make them independent as well as self-reliant. This will increase their self-confidence and make them able to establish unique identity amongst the society. This will further lead to raising the living standard of the family and quality of life.

B. Social Empowerment

▪ Elimination of Violence Against Women

All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, particularly, sexual abuse and violence, including through resources to customs, traditions and practices can be eliminated by Home Science Education. As it enables the woman to be aware regarding various rules and rights related to women protection, domestic violence, sexual harassment etc. For example Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955,

The Maternity Benefits Act, 1961, The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, The Consumer Protection Act, 1986, Act of Sexual Harassment etc.

▪ Ending Discrimination Against Women

Recognizing the equal entitlement of women and men to human rights and fundamental freedom in all spheres, political, economic, social, cultural, civil etc., home scientists will never allow the discrimination in law or practice against women. She will access equal rights in respect to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment and equal remuneration, occupational health, safety and social security.

▪ Elimination of Discrimination Against and Violation of the Rights to the Girl Child

All the discrimination against the girl child and violation of her rights shall be eliminated

by the Home Science education. The Home Scientist will never allow the activities like pre-natal sex selection and feticide, female infanticide, child marriage or society. This will remove the discrimination in the treatment of the girl child in the family and outside. She will give special emphasis on the needs of the girl child and thus empowerment of the women and girls continues.

C. Personal Development

▪ Decision Making

Since Home Science education provides knowledge regarding every aspect of life like health, nutrition, food, body physiology, time management, money management, budgeting, banking, family planning, child rearing, clothing, entrepreneurship, communication and many more, a home scientist woman has knowledge of every aspect of life. And this knowledge enables her to take decisions independently regarding her personal life, family and other social affairs.

▪ Education

Home science education ensures the equal access to education for women and girls. Such education develops occupational, vocational and technical skills of women.

▪ Health

Home Science education provides holistic approach to women's health and gives special attention to the needs of the women throughout their lives, including in terms of nutrition and basic services during infancy, childhood, adolescence, reproductive years and old age. This knowledge can enrich their own as well as their family's nutritional status and nutritional morbidity and mortality can also be reduced.

▪ Maximum Utilization of Resources

The home Science education emphasizes on how to make proper utilization of all the available human and non-human resources in such an efficient way to get maximum output. This reduces the wastage of time, energy, materials and space and provides efficient output to the woman.

▪ Capacity Building

Capacity building is the principle feature of Home Science education. Since it builds the

capabilities to create awareness, improve skills of women develop leadership and link with recent technologies trend, financial institutions and local governance. These empower the women by encouraging her to take active part in socio-economic development at par with others. Such a woman will lead the community towards a literate and progressive society.

D. Political/Societal Empowerment

Home Science education not only contributes in recognizing the status of women in the family but also to the economic and social development of the community. Home Science education realizes women their capacity to play a major role in community development. Many home scientist women are participating in gram sabhas and work for the development of the community. A home scientist can definitely work more efficiently for societal development than other layman. Now-a-days a leadership of women has been recognized by society also.

CONCLUSION

A synergy of development measures will be affected and affirmative action designed for the holistic empowerment of women. Home Science education provides complete and equal access to and control over factors contributing such empowerment, particularly, health, education, information, life-long learning for self development, vocational skills, employment and income earning opportunities, technical services, inheritance and matrimony, common resources, credit, technology, market, mass-media, family planning, women rights etc. Home Science education has released women power on the outside world of work. Home Science education has proved that women along with being home maker, she can be a teacher, researcher, entrepreneur and administrator. Thus, it utilizes and proves the woman's potentials in every field of life.

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