

Paving the Way to Women Empowerment through Home Science

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Home science is an applied field of knowledge, though based largely on science yet art blended into it to a fair extent. As it is said for science in the present times, - best science is one which makes its reach out to the masses benefiting them as quick, as good and as far as it can - Home Science aptly fits this bill. It is an area of knowledge and skill building that imparts quality to the home, health and lifestyle of human beings of all ages and stages in its own imitable manner. Through Home Science, society reaps rich and healthy harvest of the benefits of a knowledge area where facts and principles, enunciated through controlled research studies or the scientific method, innovation and improvisation, are made to benefit masses through their adoption, adaptation and usage in the household, family and community. It is a unique discipline with a mix of science and art which goes to empower the women with a variety of skills. An education for healthy and aesthetic living, the core of this education is 'family ecosystem' which extends into community and its natural and human made environment. It dwells on the art to manage resources efficiently on one hand and the science to accomplish healthy and happy home on the other, alongside offering many a successful career options.

As a matter of fact, when one has access to knowledge and resources, one gets the feeling of high self worth, has the wherewithal to plan the course of one's life and destiny in arenas ranging from career to economic standing. Education, they say, is the biggest source of empowerment. If we look for Home Science education as the one imparting empowerment to women, we find that by taking up this area of education, they

become self-reliant, socially inclusive and politically participative. The fact that women are ushered into using '*both their heads and hands to learn theoretical and practical aspects*' of as many as five fields, viz foods and nutrition, human development and family studies, apparel and textile science, family resource management and extension education & communication management, makes it a dynamic discipline. By virtue of these characteristics, Home Science education conforms to the view of Mahatma Gandhi about education. Likewise, swami Vivekanand's assertion - '*Education manifests the best of what is inherent in a human being*' - cannot prove more appropriate for Home Science education as this learning endeavour prepares the students for multiple vocational and career choices. An empowered woman can become both, a substrate and catalyst, for her success and progress of society. Her being self worthy makes her take up the challenges of life adroitly. Going through Home Science stream of education, women not only acquire knowledge for solving problems that beset life but also acquire skills to take up entrepreneurship besides proving their acumen in management, administration and business. There are opportunities galore ranging from food science and catering, dietary and family counselling, food processing and many more, in keeping with the swelling demands of the contemporary society. If one delves deep into the curriculum of this discipline, one finds that the students going through the rigors of Home Science education become best equipped to inculcate values and ethical norms to navigate life like a magnanimous human being. The students imbibe the various facets of empowerment- personal, social, economic, political and

cultural through this education. This is an area which churns out women into teachers, entrepreneurs, consultants, chefs, dietitians, researchers and the like along with making them diligent home makers.

It's a matter of concern and consternation that this field is plagued by receding enrolment. It is high time for all home scientists, budding and veteran, to undertake the stock-taking, do introspection to identify the reasons and devise remedial strategies. This message should go home to the prospective learners that Home Science is one of those educational disciplines that would hone their craft for the twin goals of life, namely, taking care of home and family in ways scientific and aesthetic, along with making them take up multiple careers or vocations. Adolescents, the major group prone to behavioural modification and future students going for specialisations, need to be convinced by descending down to their level of understanding to straighten and strengthen their perceptions. Both quality and content of this field need to be interpreted meaningfully and lucidly, rather than going for the empty, voluble rhetoric. It is very important to generate light and not heat in this pursuit. Further, it is interdependent and interdisciplinary world and one doesn't attain the tangible by ploughing one's lonely furrow, in abject segregation. Instead, a level playing field needs to be created with no command or subjugation in place, to network interdisciplinary ties with other sciences, such as Agriculture and Health, social sciences such as Sociology and Psychology, Mass Media, Management and Marketing, as well as emerging areas, such as Environment and Demography. Coupled to this is the need to illuminate the 'would be learners' about the wide range of career options in subtle, convincing ways.

In the present times, whole world is in the midst of uncomfortable issues that are degrading the environment, escalating the armed conflicts, sustaining the poverty and impeding the development. To nip these evils, comity of

nations at UN has come up with a set of goals (total 17 in number) called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030 through the collective participation of all the nations. When one looks at these goals, one discerns that vast and varietal knowledge that is disseminated through Home Science 'teaching – learning' can enable women to humbly contribute their pie towards the fulfillment of the following goals. They go as under

- Goal 1 – No poverty
- Goal 2 – Zero hunger
- Goal 3 – Good health and well being
- Goal 4 – Quality education
- Goal 5 – gender equality
- Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation
- Goal 7 – Affordable and clean energy
- Goal 13 – Climate action

Wars, it is aptly said, are not fought in the battlefield to begin with. They are fought in the minds first and then on the ground. Let all concerned be in the 'revamping mode', with thinking streamlined and message 'loud and clear'. Prospective students are certain to repose trust in Home Science and reap the precious dividends.

Further reading:

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