

Interdisciplinary Nature of Home Science

***Dr. Sushmita Nair**

Abstract

Home science is the science that includes all the things that concern the person, home, family members and resources. It is the education for "better living" and the centre of this education is the family ecosystem. It also deals with reciprocal relations between the family and its natural and man-made environment. The perception of a lay person is that it is a subject about home making and household chores. They are only partly correct because the area covered by the subject of Home Science is vast and varied. Its scope extends far beyond the 'home' and is not limited to cooking, laundry, needlework and home decoration. In fact, it is the only subject which prepares young learners for the two most important goals in their lives looking after their home and family and preparing for a career or vocation in life. According to Dr. Ellen Richards, an ardent-home maker " Home Science is concerned with the attainment of the well being of individuals and families, the improvement of homes and the preservation of values significant in-home life."

Home Science is both an "art and science". This is because it teaches the art of using resources so that a harmonious whole is achieved and an overall pleasant effect is created. At the same time, it provides the scientific basis of techniques involved in making a home a happy healthy and beautiful place to live in. For example, the subject Home Science imparts knowledge about the different food groups, the nutrients present in them, the causes of nutrient deficiency and the dietary management of various diseases. This is the '**science**'. However, the ability to prepare various recipes with required nutrients for a particular age group and serve it in a very attractive manner in a pleasant environment so as to motivate consumption of healthy foods and feeling of wellbeing is an '**art**'. (**Arti et al 2015**)

Today, there is awakening about women issues and status in our country. The meanings of housekeeping have changed. In 21st century, kitchens have turned to studios where meals are cooked with love as major ingredient to nourish the human race. Women has become homemakers rather than just housewives or house caretakers.

Interdisciplinary Nature of Home Science

Dr. Sushmita Nair

Home Science is a science-oriented, multidisciplinary subject which encompasses the multifarious activities that occur in families, households, and communities. Over years, the discipline has evolved and expanded to encompass activities and services of relevance, not only to the micro contexts of the family and community, but also to the macro context of the larger society. Home Science is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in its context encompassing the five major disciplines of Family Resource Management, Foods and Nutrition, Textiles and Clothing, Human Development, and Extension and Education. Each discipline has one or more specific areas of specialisation (Kiran 2004)

Study of foods and nutrition makes the students understand the functions of food and the role of various nutrients, their requirements and the effects of deficiency and excess. They learn about the structure, composition, nutritional contribution and selection of different foodstuffs, be familiar with the different methods of cooking, their advantages and disadvantages and they will develop an ability to improve the nutritional-quality of food. Acquaintance with all the concept of an adequate diet and the importance of meal planning gives immense knowledge. Learning about the factors affecting the nutrient needs during the life cycle and the RDA-for various age groups and dietary management in common ailments is the need of the hour.

Study of resource management, create awareness among the students about, management in the family as well as the other systems. Importance' of wise use of resources in order to achieve goals is one of the major objectives. Physical environment and its components, impact of human, activities on environment and the action needed for checking environmental threats are studied under this subject. Consumer economics increases the knowledge about all aspects related to consumers and their rights. Enhancing the capability of understanding the basics of arts and design through various methods gives students a broader vision.

Textiles has deep-rooted connection with textile chemistry, weaving, textile, designing, garments, production, and fashion designing, it increases the knowledge about the proper notion regarding choice of fabrics. It develops skill in clothing construction. It increases knowledge on different textiles finishes and their performances. Understanding the principles of laundry, various techniques of washing, sewing machines, pattern, tailoring and drafting is enhanced among students. The importance of Clothing, Sociological & psychological aspects of clothing for s emphasised. Selection of fabric for different garments embodied with the principles of designs, fashion, fashion trends, traditional embroideries broaden the vision.

Interdisciplinary Nature of Home Science

Dr. Sushmita Nair

Studying the subject of human development, the students learn about life span development which will increase the knowledge about the entire life span and traces the various developmental stages, from infancy to adulthood. It will increase knowledge about various methods and materials, which can be used while working with children. It will increase knowledge about use of different materials and various methods to enhance creativity skill for optimum development of children.

Subject of extension education provides career opportunities as social workers/Counsellors, arranging conference, Research assistants, community worker audiovisual worker, market surveyor is the list of employment opportunities. (Roy et al 2015)

But today in the 21st century home scientist requires a combination of knowledge and correlated approach from several specialisations. It is not desirable to impart education in an isolated manner. It has to be knit together with other subjects. Home science has proved its close relations with social studies, mathematics, literature, physical education, moral education, economics, spiritual education etc. Without correlation with other fields or subjects it will fail in the long run because correlation helps in unification of knowledge existing in different branches of learning. It makes the teaching meaningful and effective.

It establishes reciprocal relationship that exists among different subjects. Home science has a fair deal of correlation with physical education. Physical education is related with the improvement and maintenance of good health through physical exercises. Home science stresses the overall development of the body by providing optimum and adequate nutrition for the sound health. The utilization of nutrients and their dietary requirements in various sports have brought them even closer. The biochemistry of body during exercises help us to understand the processes by which the optimal nutritional status can be maintained.

Social studies study about man and interaction with other people, institutions, society etc. and Home science intends the development of man, in its own social structure and framework. It helps in the development of well-informed intelligent person who accept the responsibility of homes as of society. Since home science deals with home as a basic unit in society and is closely interlinked with community. It has proved its strong correlation with social studies.

Home science deals with the best utilisation of both human and non-human resources. It has helped women community to learn more about money management, budgeting, consumer protection and education. Planning, maintenance of households accounts, finances help the home maker to manage economically their time, talent, energy, efforts and other resources. Because of this close relation with economics new name of home science as emerged as home

Interdisciplinary Nature of Home Science

Dr. Sushmita Nair

economics.

Home science is closely related with mathematics. A knowledge of maths is required for all our daily activities at home such as purchasing, recipe cooking, laundering household management. If a family plans to save money, they have to adjust here and there in the budget and the knowledge of mathematics is utilised. Any kind of nutritive value estimations, calculations with RDA or statistical evaluation of any results requires the use of maths.

Today in the times of individualism, stresses and materialism a correlation of spiritualism and home science cannot be neglected. A physical body is made up of matter and energy, a subtle body is made of mind, intellect, ego and a casual body is made of soul and spirit. Anatomy as a subject teaches about the human body but home science in its cumulative form deals with the human soul. It aims to promote spiritual values in the family. Strong spiritual values are embedded in the mind of children which help them to grow into intellectual, social, emotional and moral wellbeing.

Literature is the subject of feelings, emotions, love etc. and these are the basic ingredients for creating a real home since a home scientist is expected to provide good health, happiness, comfort, convenience, love and affection to all the members of the family, a woman with literature background, a loving nature and emotional heart can make the roots of family stronger. Hence Home science has proved its close and strong correlation with literature.

Home Science is also related to moral education. Moral values are learnt by the child in the family without any formal education. A home scientist imparts noble qualities such as heroism, honesty, integrity, sacrifice, truthfulness etc. This relevance has become more significant today as there is a flush of thoughts and things from the west. Home science inspires people with new idealism in such a way that our feet settle in our own bed of great culture, values, traditions and patriotism. Once the nucleus of society "the home" is sound, the society will automatically prosper into a great nation.

Home Science draws a major portion of its content from pure science disciplines such as physics, chemistry, biochemistry, physiology and biology. It also draws its content equally from economics, sociology, anthropology, psychology, community development, communication, media and technology. Hence, it is an interdisciplinary field with much scope as it encompasses the salient features and components of both science and arts courses. (Pokharel 2010) Thus, the awareness of such interdisciplinary connections is increasing and making Home science into a more integrative and supportive discipline. It has become a fine and unique blend of human values, aesthetic qualities, harmonious living, interactions and household process. Therefore, Home science education appeals widely to the future parents

Interdisciplinary Nature of Home Science

Dr. Sushmita Nair

and citizens of India.

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Reference

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Interdisciplinary Nature of Home Science

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