CHAPTER IV

HOME SCIENCE - Prospects and Proposals

Home Science is considerably more than cooking or managing the Kitchen. Also, it is not an additional work either for its scope ranges from child rearing to preparing wholesome, palatable Diets besides placing them in aesthetically satisfying Fiji: at the table. Each of the activity connected with what we term as "Wholesome house uifing" - if such a term is permissible, falls under the broad category of Home Science. Health, nutrition, child rearing, domestic management and wholesome cooking etc. - all of these simply and collectively constitute Home Science. Over the centuries Man has learnt not only to enjoy food but also appreciate its quality like a live connoisseur. It is therefore not surprising that what was once a belly-filling activity has acquired the wherewithals of an art, if not exactly of a Science. The debate whether or not Home Science is an art or a science is irrelevant because a lot depends on the type of arguments one has a mind to put forth.

Need for the change in the Concept

As has been mentioned earlier, Home Science Education in India has been very much influenced by the Western pattern of education in Home Economics. The reason is that it is true that in ancient and medieval
India there were guilds which were responsible for vocational education and Home Science, though very much different from its present form had been covered under this education. But in 19th century when the question of developing the curricula of Home Science arose, concerned people invited experts from United States, England and Australia and their help was sought for the framing of the curriculum with the result that the needs of the western culture are reflected in this curriculum. In our country middle class, both upper and middle, girls go in for such course. Therefore, while giving lessons in Home Science one should keep in view the economic status of these girls. Let us take one instance, Interior decoration is one of the areas of Home Science Education. Indian traditions and customs show that Madhubani art and decoration with cow-dung have been very popular for a long time. Then came a period when this art went into the dark and again it is being given attention. So food and nutrition also is a topic which has been included in almost all the Home Science curricula. The tendency of teachers teaching these two papers is that they prefer Western studies and concentrate as little on the things which are within the access of a lower-middle class or low class individual e.g., while talking of colorless they talk of Soyabean and honey etc, which are beyond the access of a
person belonging to the low-income group. So it is suggested that while teaching such papers these things should be kept in mind and it would be better if it is mentioned in the prescribed course.

Based on our earlier chapters are certain conclusions that we would like to present here as background material on which basis we could offer certain concrete proposals. As would be evident soon considerable thought has been given to this matter both in India and abroad. No longer are we disputing the worthwhileness of the subject in the school or university curricula except that its exact shape and content may not be universally agreed upon. We have therefore reached a stage which should mark the beginning of a proper take off in the academic sense.

There are certain things which have emerged from the analysis of courses followed by different institutions of Home Science in India. It can be seen that the Home Science course adopted by these institutions has some characteristic features which are as follows:

1. **Home Science as a discipline**: Home Science is not just a discipline rather it has borrowed heavily from a number of science and Art subjects. When we look at the Home Science Course we find that the prospectus of one home
science institution differs from the prospectus adopted by another such institution. One of the reasons of this variation is that it is a wide subject which comprises of home management mother-craft, nutrition, dress-designing, interior decoration, cooking etc. At the same time knowledge of science as well as arts subjects is also necessary for taking up such course.

From this point of view we should adopt an inter-disciplinary approach for the study of Home Science and we all know that this is not a simple thing. In most of the institutions a candidate, before taking up a course in Home Science, is expected to have knowledge of Chemistry, Physics, Economics etc., but in some institutions it is not essential. For this such institutions must include one chapter on each subject for the benefit of students.

2. Home Science as both Science and Art: As has been stated earlier there is still a controversy regarding Home Science as a Science or an Art. Some people believe it that it is a science because it follows a definite scientific method for the purpose of study. Some believe it is an Art because
In decoration and cooking and service of food etc., a good housewife must have the artistic sense. This is evident when we compare two persons with the same degree in Home Science from the same institution in terms of their performance. They may vary considerably. In one of the articles* it has been stated that Home Science "is a science and an art of practical skill to aid a person in intelligent living". The analysis of Home Science courses provided by different institutions shows that while teaching Home Science, generally emphasis is laid upon Home Science as an art (except in some courses where there is a provision of giving a B.Sc., or M.Sc., degree in it) and very little is done to give it the form of science. What we have to develop is Home Science as a science. A scientific and systematic approach to Home Science should be encouraged.

Home Science as both General and Vocational Course: In the new system we find that in the curriculum framed for ten years of schooling Home Science has been covered under work experience and it does not have the status of an independent subject. That clearly establish one thing i.e., a sound vocationalized course in Home

Science can be offered to those who are interested in taking it up. Apart from that certain professional and vocational courses in Home Science e.g. tailoring, food-preservation, cooking, embroidery and needle work etc. It is found that people have a completely wrong perception of this branch of knowledge as an independent subject. They perhaps think that it is a very easy subject and does not require much of labour. In fact, they are wrong in their thinking. Home Science, at present, borrows heavily from other subjects but it has its own status and it is in the process of developing as a discipline. This is a point in its favour that it serves both as a general subject and as a subject in which a rich vocationalized course can be offered.

4. **Gap between theory and practice.** The analysis of the Home Science courses offered by a number of institutions shows that there is a wide gap between theory and practice. At school level the difference is very wide. Whatever is taught to the students is not used for practical
work with the result that the students get theoretical information about certain things and because of the lack of practice tend to forget it soon. On the other hand as practical training is not followed by sound theoretical information it goes waste.

As the University level also the same trend is observed. As we have Applied Chemistry, Applied Physics, Applied Psychology we do not have Applied Home Science which means that emphasis has been put on the practical aspect of the subject. The picture in case of the institutions like women Politechnics is just the reverse. The courses followed by such institutions are more practice oriented and the theoretical aspect has relatively been neglected. Secondly for going for such courses the background of liberal education is required which is deprives the students to understand the subject fully. This wide gap between theory and practice should be taken care of.

Position of Home Science in the new education system 10+2+3: In the new pattern of education which has been implemented in most of the States, the status of Home Science has been
changed. It is a known fact that in this new system the emphasis has been put on the work experience and vocationalization of education. For the first ten years, seven subjects are compulsory and work education is one of them. Home Science has been covered under this. The logic behind it is perhaps that Home Science is a subject in which more practical training is required with solid theoretical background. It certainly does not show that Home Science is meant for slow learners only. This will provide better opportunity to practice the theoretical information given in the class.

6. Need for new Teacher Training Institutions: As is obvious, for the new system of education, a different set of teachers is needed. We have seen for the last so many years that the same teacher teaches a number of subjects. But now to enter the field of teaching a teacher has to do specialization in one subject and that specialization will also be of a very different type. Firstly training should be more practice oriented than it has been in the past. Secondly, it must include more varying practical training and thirdly, this practical training should be preceded by sound theoretical and conceptual
information. The type of work education (specially related with Home Science) at different levels should also be taken care of while making the teacher training programmes.

Change in the system will also result in the establishment of completely different teacher training institutions which produce trained teachers for teaching this course at +2 level. As the courses at this level are vocationalized, a complete change in the teacher training curriculum is needed.

7. **Academic background of the Teachers**. So far as the academic background of Home Science teachers is concerned we find a high variations. Sometimes teachers with a background of the knowledge of arts subjects are accepted while at other places a candidate with the background of science subjects having a higher degree in Home Science is thought to be the fittest person for Home Science teaching. This variation in the academic background of the teachers leads to difference in the way and standard of teaching the same course. There should be uniformity over this point.
One of the major drawbacks of Home Science Curriculum is that it is not comprehensive. At present either no or almost no attention has been paid to giving training to Home Science teachers. The teachers who take up the job of teaching this particular subject either come with the degree of B.Ed., L.T., or M.Ed., which certainly does not qualify them for Home Science teaching or have no training at all. All the same time it is relatively difficult to find a qualified Home Science teacher. This lack of special training on the part of the teacher results in the ignorance of the practical utility of the subject and their class-lectures are confined to theoretical information only which is not proper. There is an intense need of making the courses more comprehensive.

Variations in the Courses: If we take up two courses taught at the level of the first degree level or post-graduation, we can see the vast difference between them. In fact no two Home Science institutions follow the same or similar course. This difference can be seen at all levels. Firstly, in some institutions this has been accepted as an art subject while in
other institutions a student seeking for the first degree in science may also opt for it. However, a wide variation is visible in the Home Science curriculum available for the first degree examination depending upon the duration and treatment of the subject as belonging to Art or Science. Secondly, the difference also exists in terms of duration of the course. Some institutions have the provision of giving first degree in two years while others need three or four years for the same. Duration of the course is related with the content of the course also. There should be uniformity in terms of both content and duration of the course so that two persons coming from two institutions with the same degree become comparable.

A difference in the quality of the course also exists. As we know there are all types of courses in Home Science available. We have pass courses, Honours courses and specialized courses. But the strange is that same 4 years pass courses are better than honours and specialized courses in the same subject. As a matter of fact specialized courses should be
better than the pass course but in reality they are not. The standard of such courses should be raised so that they really become specialized ones.

10. Recognition of Courses/degrees. Most of the Home Science institutions as stated earlier are run by private bodies. The existence of such institutions is noted when they apply for registration. At that stage it has become almost mechanical to recognize the degrees given by these institutions. Very little attention is given to the quality of their course and its comparability with other courses available in the same field. Secondly there might be some institutions with rich Home Science teaching but due to certain internal and technical problems are unable to approach the concerned authorities. Such institutions should be given proper help.

11. Admission Requirements for the students. Before taking admission in a Home Science institution/universities/schools for earning some degree in Home Science or having the practical knowledge of the subject, the candidate has to fulfill certain requirements which differ from one institution to the other. In some institutions/collages the minimum requirement is a
higher secondary degree, some prefer candidates 
with the knowledge of different arts subjects 
while others attach more importance to the 
knowledge of science subjects. So it varies 
from the general knowledge of all the subjects 
to specific and sound background of science 
subjects. This difference results in the differ-
ence of standards of these institutions. When 
we talk of the same or similar course we should 
also equalize the admission requirements.

Management of Home Science Institutions: As in 
other fields, Home Science institutions differ 
in terms of management they are having some 
institutions are private institutions which 
have their own management, Some colleges are 
governed by Universities/Agriculture Univer-
sities, some are government institution while 
others are semi-government. This varied type 
of managing system creates problems in bring-
ing all the Home Science Institutions to the 
same level. It would be better if all the 
colleges/institutions are brought under univer-
sities which would in turn help in main-
taining a good standard of education in the 
field.
13. **Financial aspect of Home Science Education.**
Depend upon the type of programme Colleges or Universities offer.

14. **Home Science Association:** There is hardly any association of Home Science teachers and those who are engaged in this work. At all India level we have one association known as Home Science Association of India (Registered in 1953) which worked quite satisfactorily in the beginning but "the Association having neither permanent headquarters nor a full-time Secretariat, is at present unable to fully carry-out its stated objectives. Members of the Association complain that State and Central Government Departments do not utilize their expertise in programmes which are initiated."* They are not consulted while organizing programmes. The result is there are only few selected persons who really are interested in the research work done in the field and think of the problems seriously. At present there is a greater need of establishing such associations at state level which may resolve their own problems and then their representatives

* Abraham, S. op. cit., p. 385.
can participate in the programmes of the Association at the national level. This way most of the problems would be resolved at the state level and more complicated problems would be handled by the All India Home Science Association. This will also encourage the research work in the field.

15. **Rural and Urban Group** As is obvious most of the Home Science Institutions are in cities. Generally speaking, a major group of the Home Science students comes from the urban areas but there are rural girls also who are interested in this. In general we find that the demands and requirements of the urban group are cared while framing the course or developing the curriculum. Very little attention is paid to the requirements of rural group. There is a need to study such demands and requirements of the rural group also and give them proper place in the curriculum.

16. **Research and Extension Work** It is not that no research work has been done in the field of Home Science but that is confined to certain specific areas e.g., nutrition, hygiene
and physiology, medicine and health care etc, but most of the areas are left untouched. As has been mentioned earlier, in the new 10+2+3 education system, this subject has been covered under work education, we need more researchers in all the areas of the subject. Since emphasis has been put on the practice aspect, extension programmes should be organized at all the levels. This will help in the circulation of the research findings which would certainly improve the standard of classroom teaching of the subject.