



ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2019; 5(1): 15-18
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www.homesciencejournal.com
Received: 08-11-2018
Accepted: 10-12-2018

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Attitude of rural women towards professional homemaking

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Abstract

Professional home making means home making activities performed in others' house by an individual on a payment basis after attaining a formal professional training. This study was carried out in two districts of Assam- Jorhat and Lakhimpur. The numbers of respondents selected were 100. Data were collected using an interview schedule and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The findings revealed that 70 percent of the respondents had favourable attitude towards professional homemaking, followed by 21 percent having highly favourable attitude and only 9 percent of the respondents had unfavourable attitude towards professional homemaking.

Keywords: Professional homemaking, attitude, rural women

1. Introduction

The role of women in the development of economy and society is not less important than men, who constitute almost half of the total population of the world. Over the last twenty years, the women empowerment and employment have gone through rapid changes and more women are working in the different sphere of society than ever. Women have taken parts in all over the world and in enormous fields of society. As a result, the equality gender is close to being solved especially in a quantitative approach resulting in overall development of the society. But, as there is always an opposite side of a coin, likewise empowerment of women in the society has brought some negative impacts as well. Families have become nuclear. The wives and other female members of the house have engaged themselves in various works, from which the crisis starts. Due to their busy schedule at work, the female members especially, have left least time for various household works without which a smooth running of a household in daily life is not possible. They do not get ample amount of time to cook for the family members, to look after their children, clean the house and so on, which are generally considered as primary duties and responsibilities of a wife. Still, regardless of all the challenges, families have somehow managed to arrange a maid or a domestic worker from nowhere for carrying out all the activities in place of the wives.

But, according to the report of the National Commission on Self Employment Women, this sector of working is the most unregulated, and disorganized, and often the most underestimated and humiliating. There are evidences of violence against the workers and by the workers. There are cases of third degree treatment, sexual exploitations and non-payment of wages. Also, there are innumerable news to be found in which the domestic workers commit crimes like thefts, kidnapping children, murdering the elderly, robbery etc. Professionalism of the workers or homemakers from an organised sector can be expected to greatly contribute to reduce the rate of crimes and other household violence in the society, showing better outputs in their household activities.

Thus, the home makers, before working in any household, should be given proper training and guidance to refine themselves and develop their skills in home making activities. But, before conducting any training programmes for the home makers, especially women, it is very much essential to understand them and how they perceive this idea of being professionalized. Keeping this in view, it has been decided by the researcher to undertake a study on "Attitude of rural women towards professional home making".

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1.1 Objectives

1. To study the background profile characteristics of the rural women.
2. To understand the attitude of rural women towards professional home making.

2. Methodology

Locale of the study: The study was conducted in two districts of assam, viz., jorhat and lakhimpur. Jorhat and north lakhimpur sub divisions were selected from jorhat district and lakhimpur district respectively for the present study using random sampling method.

Selection of sample: For the present study, rural women who were of 18-45 years and below the poverty line were selected. The samples were randomly selected from two study places namely jorhat and lakhimpur. 50 women from each study place comprising a total of 100 respondents were selected using simple random sampling for the present study.

Selection of variables and their measurement: Keeping the specific objectives of the study in view, the following independent and dependent variables were selected. These variables are described below along with their measurement/instrument used.

Table 1: List of variables and their measurement for background profile of the respondents

Sl. No.	List of Variables	Measurement/Instrument
i.	Age	Chronological age of the respondent
ii.	Religion	Structured interview schedule
iii.	Caste	Trivedi and Pareek scale (1963)
iv.	Marital status	-do-
v.	Type of family	-do-
vi.	Occupation of the Family	-do-
vii.	Educational qualification	NSSO (2007-2008) with slight modification
viii.	Size of the family	Dey (2000)
ix.	Annual income of the family	Structured interview schedule
x.	Subsidiary income of the family	-do-
xi.	Experience of homemaking in other's place	-do-

a. Operational definition of the key words

Rural women

Dictionary meaning of rural women is an adult female living in rural areas.

Rural women in this study are operationally defined as the adult women from rural sector between ages 18-45 years and who are below poverty line.

Professional Home making

Dictionary meaning of professional is relating to a person's work, especially work that requires special training.

Professional home making is operationally defined as the home making activities in others' house performed by a rural woman after attaining a formal professional training.

Attitude

The dictionary definition of attitude is a way of feeling or acting toward a person, thing or situation.

Attitude in this study is defined as the feeling of the rural women towards professional home making.

b. Attitude of the respondents towards professional homemaking

To measure the attitude of the respondents towards professional homemaking, scale was prepared. The scale consisted of 48 statements relating to professional homemaking.

c. Administration and scoring

The scale consisted of 48 statements relating to professional homemaking. There were 24 positive and 24 negative statements. The responses were recorded on a 5-point continuum as 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'undecided', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. The responses were scored as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively according to their weightage for the positive statements and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 for the negative statements.

Table 2: Statistical analysis and scoring of attitude of the rural women.

Category	Score Range	Score
Highly favorable	Mean + SD	3
Favorable	Mean- SD to mean + SD	2
Unfavorable	Mean – SD	1

3. Results and discussion

Regarding background profile of the respondents, the findings of the study reveal that majority of the respondents (40%) included in the study were of lower middle age group (27-35years), of OBC caste (52%), hindu (90%) and married (96%), had nuclear families (62%) with small family sizes (51%). Majority of the respondents (21%) were of middle school level, followed by high school level (18%). Most of the respondents (64%) had farming as their occupation, followed by the daily wage earners (28%), with moderate annual income (31%) followed by high annual income (27%). A large majority (72%) of the respondents did not have any subsidiary income for their families. Large majority of the respondents (86%) had no experience of homemaking at others' house.

In section of attitude of the rural women, the distribution of respondents according to the attitude towards professional homemaking is shown the table 3.

The attitude of the respondents was thus categorized as 'highly favorable', 'favorable', and 'unfavorable' on the basis of mean and standard deviation scores. The mean score was found to be 132.43 and standard deviation scored was 9.90.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their level of attitude towards professional homemaking, N=100

S. No	Levels of attitude	Percentage (%)
1	Highly favorable (>142.33)	21
2	Favorable (142.33-122.53)	70
3	Unfavorable (<122.53)	9

The table 3 clearly indicates that 70 percent of the respondents had favorable attitude towards professional homemaking, followed by 21 percent that had highly favorable attitude and 9 percent of the respondents had unfavorable attitude towards professional homemaking.

It might be due to the fact that the majority of the respondents were found to be of the lower middle age group (27-35 years). So it can be said that they were young enough to take this area as their source of income. People of this age generally tend to

accept change with their broader mind set. This may be the reason that a large percentage of women showed positive attitude towards the profession of homemaking which was not considered a respectful profession till yesterday. Moreover, majority of the respondents were found to be from nuclear families because of which it may be difficult for them to run the families smoothly with the income of a single member of the family, which ultimately can risk their livelihood security.

Table 4: Ranking of positive attitude statements according to their mean scores.

S. No.	Statements	Mean Score	Rank No.
1	Homemaking is a respectful profession.	4	I
2	Going for professional homemaking is a prestigious task for the family.	3.8	II
3	Professional homemaking is as good as any other salaried job.	3.13	III
4	Professional homemaking has high demand in the society.	3.11	IV
5	Professional homemaking is a job best fit to the aptitude of a rural woman.	3.06	V
6	Professional homemaking helps in reducing rate of household crimes like robbery, thefts and kidnapping.	2.97	VI
7	Professional homemakers have a great opportunity to get engaged in government guest houses.	2.92	VII
8	Professional homemaking makes full use of leisure time of the rural women.	2.77	VIII
9	Homemaking activity can be easily performed by the rural women; hence it is easy to make them professional.	2.73	IX
10	A trained professional homemaker is a threat to the untrained workers.	2.72	X

The Table. 4 clearly shows that highest mean score was found in the attitude statement "Homemaking is a respectful profession" whose mean score is found to be 4. The respondents scored second and third highest mean score in the statements "Going for professional homemaking is a prestigious task for the family" and "Professional homemaking is as good as any other salaried job" respectively. It is because since the respondents have agreed that homemaking is a respectful profession, therefore going for such a respectful profession will be a prestigious task for

them. Further, they agreed that professional homemaking is as good as any other salaried job as after being fully trained in this sector of working, no employers will hesitate to pay them a handsome salary for their efficient and good quality of works, which can be almost similar to any other formal jobs. Although respondents agreed upon positive statements regarding professional homemaking by a large percentage, but a sizeable percentage of respondents have agreed to the negative statements regarding professional homemaking as well.

Table 5: Ranking of negative attitude statements according to their mean scores

S. No.	Statements	Mean Score	Rank no.
1	The professional homemakers may suffer from inferiority complex among her friends' circles.	4.11	I
2	Professional homemaking is deprived of legal protection.	3.75	II
3	Professional homemakers suffer from uncertainty.	3.72	III
4	Professional homemakers need to take great risks in doing homemaking at others' place.	3.67	IV
5	The employers do not show any respect to the professional homemakers.	3.57	V
6	Professional homemaking is a low- paid job.	3.56	VI
7	The wages of professional homemaking are irregular.	3.28	VII
8	Professional homemaking is a sub-serviant job.	3.27	VIII
9	Professional homemaking is only for poor people.	3.26	IX
10	Educated children or relatives do not prefer the mothers to go for professional homemaking.	3.24	X

Table. 5 shows that clearly shows that highest mean score was found in the attitude statement "The professional homemakers may suffer from inferiority complex among their friends' circles" (4.11), followed by the statement "Professional homemaking is deprived of legal protection" whose mean score is 3.75 and then "Professional homemakers suffer from uncertainty" whose mean score is 3.72. Quite a large number of respondents agreed to the statement that homemakers may suffer from inferiority complex among her friends' circles; it is because of our society's typical narrow mindset. In Indian societies, a person doing job in others' house is generally looked down for which they may suffer from inferiority complex. Moreover, the question of insecurity at others' place always arises in case of the female workers for which they agreed that there is no legal protection for the professional homemakers. According to Sathya Sundaram (1996), the workers in unorganized sector remain unprotected by law.

They are the most vulnerable section of the society and they enjoy no job or income security with little bargaining power. Again, generally it can be seen that whenever the employers feel they no longer need a professional homemaker, or do not like their quality of working, they immediately throw them out of the work without prior notice, sometimes without even paying for their works. That may be the reason why the respondents agreed that professional homemakers suffer from uncertainty.

Similar findings were found by researchers as there is no guarantee of employment as employers can ask workers to leave with no prior notice or financial compensation. (Jagori 2004, Mehrotra 2008, Neetha 2008, Menon 2010).

4. Conclusion

Since the attitude of the people is found to be positive, thus, opening a professional homemaking training centre is the

need of the hour. A business enterprise like a professional homemaking training centre started by any youth or any businessman can be of high demand in the society. One can start a training centre and give the society a chance to realize that well trained professional homemakers are of great importance for almost all the families. Once the society understands its importance, then within a very short time it can be expected that such training centres may be opened in almost every district of Assam on people's demand and gradually in other states of the country as well. This research is a true reflection of R & D (Research & Development) to be taken by any business organisation having a strong innovative entrepreneurial mindset.

Moreover, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has already started a flagship scheme namely Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) under which a large number of people, especially the youth are provided with many skill development training programmes in various areas for securing a better livelihood. So, the researcher recommends that the ministry should include this area of professional homemaking also and train the people in different homemaking activities as the people are already found to have favourable attitude towards it.

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