

Appraisal of Home-Science Extension Education Curriculum: SWOT Analysis of SNTD University

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ABSTRACT

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'Home Science Extension Education' is one of the vital branches of Home Science faculty. It develops required knowledge and skills in the Home Scientists to be able to apply their knowledge and wisdom for the causes of the rural and urban communities, socially and economically deprived women and families and for people with special needs. Extension Education is one of the prime departments of the Home Science faculty of SNTD Women's University, Mumbai. Extension Education as a specialization is offered at UG, PG and doctoral level.

The process of developing a syllabus is a reflective exercise. It directs the instructor to carefully deliberate on the philosophy of teaching. It also mirrors the professional importance of the course, the relationship of the course with the discipline, the topics to be covered, the nature and role of assignments and other important considerations about the course at hand. Syllabus also serves as an agreement between teacher and learner. It can be preserved as a permanent record and it helps a great deal as a learning tool in many ways.

The present effort reflects on the updated syllabus of the 'Home Science Extension Education' as a specialization area which is restructured at a small and regular interval to keep the curriculum abreast in meeting the changing values, socio-economic needs and work responsibilities of the potential extension professionals. The paper presents case study as SWOT analysis of the SNTD- Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University's 'Extension Education' syllabus offered at degree and post graduate level.

Key Words : Drinking water, Toilet Facility, Electricity

Key Words:

Extension Education, Home-science Extension, SWOT Analysis, Curriculum

Introduction:

'Home Science Extension Education' is one of the vital branches of Home Science faculty. It develops required knowledge and skills in the Home Scientists to be able to apply their knowledge and wisdom for bringing about constructive change in the rural and urban communities, socially and economically deprived women and families and for people with special needs.

Home Science Extension Education trains the students with worthy knowledge of understanding the community, working with them harmoniously and also equips them with lateral skills, positive attitude and appropriate practices. The main thrust of the subject is to disseminate the useful and constructive knowledge of Home Science to the community. And the syllabus of the discipline helps to accomplish this goal.

Meaning of syllabus:

A syllabus is a guideline of an educational programme that tells us about the objectives with which the course is taught, the structure of the course, emphasis given to different course components, course policies, important regulations and rules, related texts and reference books and also about the schedule of assignments. In short a syllabus can notify nearly everything one needs to know about how a course will be run and what will be expected of from the students. According to Slattery (2005) the syllabus is a contract between faculty members and their students, designed to answer students' questions about a course, as well as inform them about what will happen should they fail to meet course expectations.

Purpose of Syllabus:

The syllabus helps to create a transparent understanding between the teacher and students on policies related to the educational programme. It clearly states expectations about learner's behavior, learner's commitment, course design, objectives of the course, course content and the pedagogical inputs. In Parkes and Harris's (2002) view, 'the syllabus is both, a professional document and a personal document, one that reflects the instructor's feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about the subject matter, teaching, learning, and students, as well as setting out the 'nuts and bolts' of the course. When so constructed, the syllabus can serve as a guide to the instructor as much as a guide to the class.' A syllabus lets students know what the course is about, why the course is taught, where it is going, and what will be required for them to be successful in the course. (Altman and Cashin, 2003)

Parkes and Harris (2002) depicted three main purposes that a syllabus should serve. They are as follows:

- Syllabus as a contract- It should clearly state the rules and regulations.
- Syllabus as a permanent record- here it serves the accountability and documentation functions.
- Syllabus as a learning tool- it should helps students to become more effective learners and give their best to the course.

The process of developing a syllabus can be a reflective exercise, leading the instructor to carefully consider his or her philosophy of teaching, why the course is important, how the course fits in the discipline, as well as what topics will be covered, when assignments will be due, and other important considerations about the course at hand. (Eberly, 2001; Grunert, 1997)

S. N. D. T. Women's University:

Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey (SNDT) Women's University is the first Women's university in India as well as in South-East Asia. The University was founded by Maharshi Dr. Dhondo Keshav Karve in 1916 for a noble cause of promoting Women's Education in India. The first five women graduated in 1921 from this University. The University Headquarters is in Churchgate Campus, Mumbai.

The SNDT Women's University claims to be a world class university that continually responds to the changing social realities through the development and application of knowledge through its variety of courses offered at college level. The purpose of such engagement will be to create an inclusive society that promotes and protects the dignity, equality, social justice and human rights for all, with special emphasis on empowerment of women in India. SNDT Women's University is committed to the cause of women's empowerment through access to education, particularly higher education, through relevant courses in the formal and non-formal streams. The university is also committed to provide a wide range of professional and vocational courses for women to meet the changing socio-economic needs, with human values and purposeful social responsibility and to achieve excellence with 'Quality in every Activity'.

Home Science Extension Education:

Home Science Extension Education aims at improving the lives of underprivileged and downtrodden women and their families who are mostly outside the mainstream by disseminating knowledge, teaching skills and improving their practices and reach for gaining material resources. Home Science Extension Education uses non-formal education system to interact with the adolescents and adults in order to bring about a change in their understandings, competencies and routine habits. It also aims at opening up new opportunities of livelihood to improve their standard of living. In short, Home Science Extension Education transforms lives through diffusion of scientific knowledge and technological innovation in the areas of Home Science. It is an out-of-school system of education in which adults and young people learn to think and determine their own needs, find ways to resolve their problems and help them to acquire knowledge and develop convictions in that direction by doing practical things.

As per the view of Kameswaran (2004) the philosophy of 'Home Science Extension' is based on the development of the individual, who is considered the most important component of the community and nation. It believes that every individual has the ability to solve his/her problems and in the process they learn, improve and develop by bringing about a change in their practices and preconceived ideas to enable them to climb up the ladder of development. Home Science Extension has a definite role to play in assisting the urban and rural home makers to contribute in solving many of the everyday problems while they perform their routine functions; such as, food and water storage and preservation, poor health and nutrition, environmental pollution, illiteracy,

over-population, poverty and lack of understanding and practice of democracy, and problems related to agriculture, etc.

Methodology:

For the present study, syllabi offered at Undergraduate and Post Graduate degrees for specialization of ‘Extension Education’ in 11 different Universities and colleges throughout the country as well as with ‘Proposed Syllabus of B.Sc. Home Science-Choice Based Credit System, UGC (2015)’ was examined and compared with the UG and PG level syllabus of SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai. A SWOT Analysis has been worked out and conclusions were drawn on the basis of those presumptions.

These institutions were,

- Banaras Hindu University- Varanasi,
- University of Delhi, New Delhi,
- Banasthali University- Rajasthan,
- Avinashilingam University for Women- Coimbatore,
- Haryana Agriculture University, Haryana,
- Banglore University, Banglore,
- Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology-Uttarakhand,
- ICAR- PUSA- New Delhi,
- Nirmala Niketan College of Home Science, Mumbai,
- University of Calicut, and
- Mahatma Gandhi University- Kerala.

Institutions were selected with a view of having a wide geographical representation and also availability of the syllabi offered for Home-Science Extension at UG and PG level.

SWOT Analysis:

A SWOT analysis is a systematic method used to estimate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in a project, a process or a method. A SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, place, procedure, industry or a person. This analysis also studies the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve objectives of the entity under study. As it is put by Goodrich (2015),

- Strengths represent characteristics of the project that give it an advantage over others.
- Weaknesses represent characteristics that place the project at a disadvantage relative to others.
- Opportunities represent elements that the project could exploit to its advantage.
- Threats represent elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the project.

Table: No. I: PROPOSED SYLLABUS of B.Sc. Home Science- Choice Based Credit System UGC, 2015.

TYPE OF COURSE	TITLE OF COURSE	Credits	Theory/ Practical
CORE	COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION	THEORY-4, PRACTICAL-2	Both

CORE	COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS AND SOCIAL CHANGE	THEORY-4, PRACTICAL-2	Both
Elective	COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT	THEORY-4, PRACTICAL-2	Both
Elective	EXTENSION MANAGEMENT	THEORY-4, PRACTICAL-2	Both
SKILL ENHANCEMENT	SOCIOLOGY OF WORKING WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES	THEORY:-2	
	LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION	THEORY 2	
	NGO MANAGEMENT & CSR	THEORY 2	
	TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT	PRACTICAL-2	
	SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION	PRACTICALS- 2	
	INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION MATERIALS FOR DEVELOPMENT	PRACTICAL 2	

(Source: http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/3880686_B.Sc-Home-Science.pdf)

SWOT analysis of the syllabus offered for 'Home-Science Extension Education' in SNDT Women's University:

Strengths:

- The Course structure and content development has been done by expert teachers having an extensive field and teaching experience and it is restructured at small and regular intervals to keep the curriculum abreast in meeting the changing values, socio-economic needs and work responsibilities of the potential extension professionals.
- The syllabus of Extension Education has a balanced distribution of theory and practical courses to give students a theoretical background of the subject as also the opportunity to apply it in practice. (Approximately 40% theory and 60% practical portion)
- The syllabus of 'Extension Education' is not been diluted by mixing a heavy component of 'Communication' to it as many other syllabi.
- To cultivate the 'think locally and act globally' capacities in students many of the students go out of the state of Maharashtra for internship. This develops in them a unique perspective at an early stage of career.
- Students of SNDT University are well equipped to handle changing needs of technology as they are trained in 'Computer Applications'.
- These students are equipped with skills of 'Guidance and Counseling' which are important abilities for a field worker.
- Majority of students (more than 70%) of 'Home-Science Extension Education' are working and earning. They find jobs mostly with the NGO's and Government.
- SNDT Women's University is placed in a metropolitan city of Mumbai in an educationally leading state of Maharashtra. The students are a group of girl students with diverse religious and economic backgrounds. This nurtures a broad

and accommodative outlook in students that enables to develop broad minded and tolerant personalities to become excellent extension workers.

- SNDT is one of the oldest Women's Universities and so has an exhaustive library to give a solid academic support to the course.

Weaknesses:

- The syllabus could include components of 'Human Rights', 'Entrepreneurship Development', 'Corporate Social Responsibility' and 'Science and Technology for Rural Development' to make it more comprehensive.
- Students need more exposure of working with rural communities to develop insight into the realities of rural India.
- Courses which develop additional competencies such as 'photography' could be offered as elective options and not as core subjects in order to accommodate relevant subjects of extension.

Opportunities

- Forming MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding) with other Universities offering 'Extension Education' as a specialization, Governmental departments and bodies related to Extension activity and established NGO's; to pay yearly visits and to organize syllabi or subject related workshops can help in the following ways:
 - Placement of students,
 - Internship,
 - Student exchange programmes,
 - Onsite training,
 - Syllabus development and rectification,
 - Added exposure to students,
 - Possibility of financial grants, etc.
- With the new government's thrust on 'skill development', the department can propose new diploma courses designed for 'Extension Workers' to bridge the gap between 'employment opportunities and trained professionals' in the development sector. This can give a new impetus to 'Home Science Extension Education' as a discipline.
- SNDT being a five star accredited, esteemed Women's University situated in the economic capital of the country having a full-fledged, long standing and active department of 'Extension Education' can attract students from other states of India. These students can act as ambassador to propagate the successes of the department and help it grow in size and reach for bi-lateral benefits.
- SNDT University being a trend setter can introduce new courses to address the changes in social patterns, population profiles, lifestyles and environment.
- SNDT University being an old, recognized and high rated University can try to have collaborations with other universities of the world to create a two way channel for student exchange, employment benefits and to offer a joint degree to advantage the students.

Threats

- The field of 'Extension Education' is dominated by Agricultural Universities. 'Extension Education' departments of Agricultural Universities are well supported by government in every way. The 'Home Science Extension Education' is not seen as a mainstream course. This may hamper the opportunities of 'Home Science Extension Education' in getting government patronage.
- The department of Extension Education may face following difficulties to approach and avail the opportunities mentioned above:
 - Financial deficiency
 - Constitutional barriers
 - Legal permissions and hurdles
 - Policy related matters
 - Apathy of the existing staff
 - Technical inadequacy
- Even though the 'Home Science Extension Education' caters mainly to women and children; it also focuses on many important aspects of the entire family; such as health, nutrition, family planning, child rearing, family living, literacy and education, income generation, etc. Even then, the 'Home Science Extension Education' has to struggle to carve its niche and develop a firm footing. It is neither accepted as a full-fledged department of 'Home-Science' nor of 'Extension Education'.

Conclusion:

A good syllabus needs to accomplish many specific purposes. It contains all essential components and it answers essential questions too. Yet, the syllabus needs to be concise and pin-pointed. It has to give students and teachers a clear understanding of its objectives, depth of the subject, learning methods used, etc. so that the students willingly become partners in the teaching-learning activity.

The syllabi offered for 'Home-science Extension Education' at under-graduate and post-graduate level courses when compared with 12 other syllabi revealed that it has more strengths and opportunities in relation to weaknesses and threats. Keeping in mind this positive and strong position of the curriculum SNDT Women's University should extend itself to reach out and avail all the opportunities mentioned herein, by overcoming the weaknesses and minimizing the threats.

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