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Impact of mothers' employment on family meal management

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Abstract

The present study Impact of mothers' employment on family meal management was conducted in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh to achieve the three main objectives viz., to compare the time utilization pattern in family meal management by employed and non employed homemakers, to compare the expenditure incurred on convenience foods by employed and non employed homemakers, to determine the influence of media on food habits of children of employed and non employed homemakers. A random sample of two development blocks and two municipal councils were selected. Then four wards from each municipal council were selected and sample of 120 mothers (60 respondents each of employed and non employed mothers) was selected at random. Data were collected through personal interview method. The management problems faced by majority of the respondents in both the cases i.e. fulltime homemakers and gainfully employed homemakers were related to time management. The main cause of this problem faced by the respondents was non-availability of paid help, no help from other family members, lack of time and labour saving devices. The expenditure incurred on convenience foods was more in case of gainfully employed homemakers as compared to fulltime homemakers. The children of gainfully employed homemakers were more influenced by media and their demands regarding convenience foods were more fulfilled as compared to children of fulltime homemakers.

Keywords: Impact, mother, employment, family meal.

Introduction

The changing world has brought many new interests into women's orbit and has altered the pattern of domestic life. Now women have started asserting for quality of their rights at par with men seeking employment in novel and demanding professions. In the modern world, the role of women has extended much beyond the home and upbringing of children. They have to perform two challenging roles, one of the housewife and other of a wage earner

Meal management in modern families is a responsibility requiring a combination of skills that includes time and money management, energy conservation, goal settling, decision making and food preparation. The responsibility of meal preparation is a demanding one that is met in most of the families at least three times a day. The degree to which a family moves towards the goal of excellent meal management is important to all family members because of the role that meals can play in contributing to an involved and harmonious family group and also because of the financial implications of food costs in relation to the total family expenditure and specially the health care costs. It is an established fact that without management nothing is achieved. During the present era of life, there is a great role of mother's employment in family management system. Management as an administrative side of family living is planning, executing and evaluating the activities in order to achieve the desirable personal and family goals. In the family, the homemaker has a major role in directing and guiding the household affairs according to the needs of the family members. Keeping in view the above facts the present study was undertaken in the Kangra Distt. (HP) on Impact of mothers' employment on family meal management to evaluate some influence of media on food habits of children of employed and non employed home maker and role of mother's employment .

Material and Method

The study was conducted in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, since the district had higher literacy rate of 80.68 per cent (2000 census) and highest proportion of the state population (22.02%), the present area was selected for the investigation and the study was

carried out in Municipal council area to select the employed and non employed home makers. A multistage random sampling technique was used to select the employed and non employed home makers as shown in the figure. Data for present study were collected during the months of January, February and March of 2005 and same was analyzed by Z-test technique.

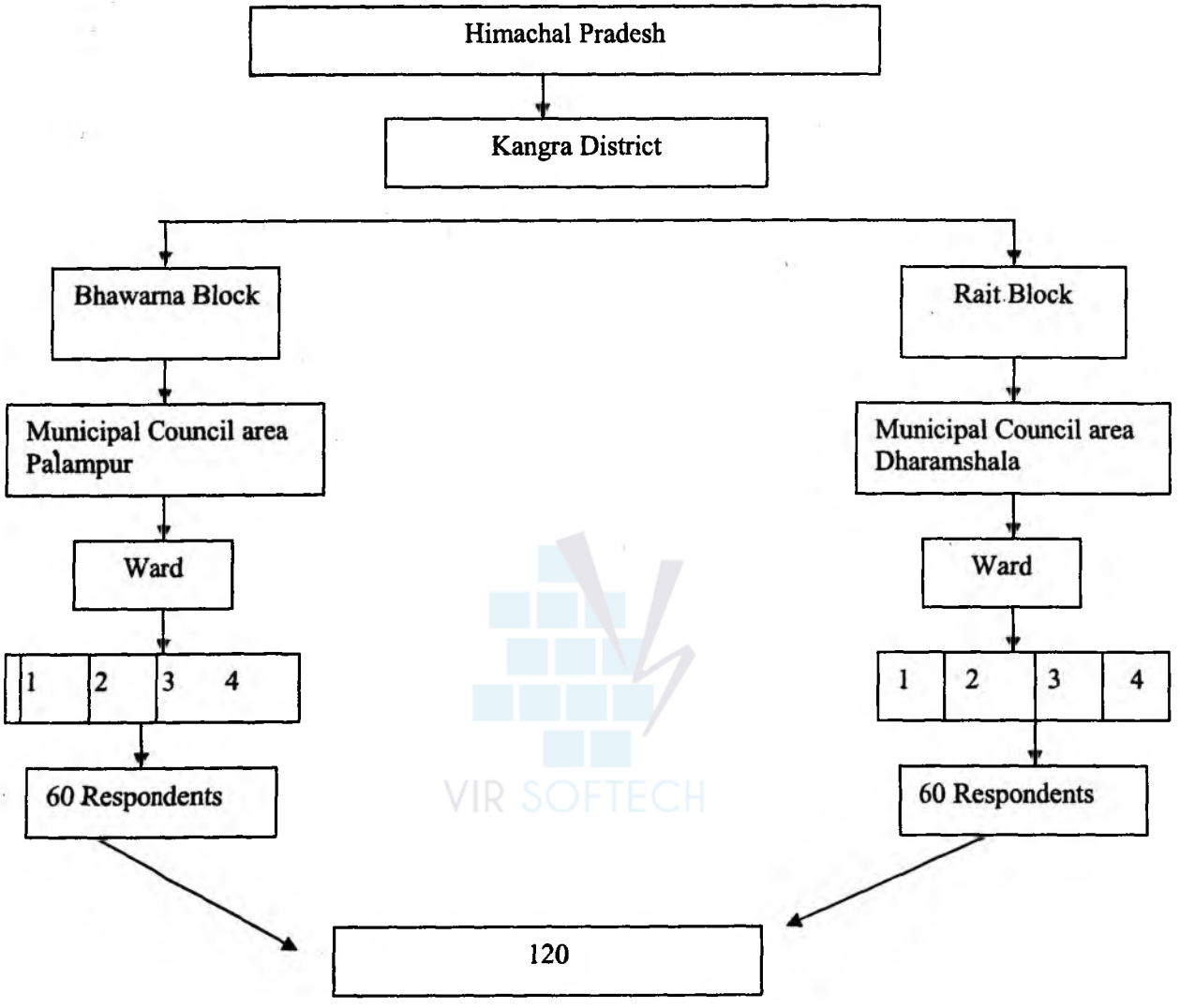


Fig.1

Results and Discussion

Perusal of tables 1, 2, and 3 indicates that the impact of mothers' employment and media on family meal management is significant; Table 1 revealed that maximum respondents i.e. unemployed homemakers (36.12%) and employed homemakers (30.99%) preferred the use of pressure cooking method, whereas 9.86% of employed home makers preferred to use steaming method. Boiling method of cooking was moderately preferred by unemployed homemakers (22.41%) and employed homemakers (21.13%).The results obtained for time use pattern in shape of methods used for cooking were in conformity with the results obtained by George and Batra (1983).

Consumption pattern of convenience foods by children

Data in table 2 indicate that the consumption of convenience food by children was different in case of both types of homemakers. The data were collected for four days from the children regarding their consumption habit of convenience foods and it is clear from the data that the total amount of money spent was more i.e. Rs. 345 in case of

children of employed homemakers as compared to the children of unemployed homemakers (Rs.290/-) The findings so obtained were in conformity with findings of Geissler and Rabiee (1992) and Vijaylakshmi and Lakshmi (1982).As far as table 3 is concerned about the distribution of respondents according to attraction of their children towards packaging of convenience foods, it clearly indicated that children of employed homemakers (65%) were more affected by packing than those of unemployed homemakers (28.33%), this may be because of the fact that packing of these foods attracted their attentions and the same was in conformity with the findings of Achterberg and Gilliespie (1992).

Table 1. Method of cooking used by the respondents

S. No.	Method	Unemployed homemaker's	Employed homemaker's
a	Simmering	12 (20.69)	10 (14.08)
b	Boiling	8 (13.79)	17 (23.94)
c	Frying	13 (22.41)	15 (21.13)
d	Steaming	4 (6.90)	7 (9.86)
e	Pressure cooking	21 (36.21)	22 (30.99)

Figures in parenthesis indicates % age of total
Mean 11.6, 14.2, Variance 12.69, 11.78, Z-value 4.11, Significant at 5% level

Table 2. Consumption of convenience foods by children

		Children of full – time homemakers (60)						Children of gainfully employed homemakers (60)					
S. No.	Food item	1st day	2nd day	3rd day	4th day	Total Consumption by children out of 60	Total money spent (Rs)	1st day	2nd day	3rd day	4th day	Total Consumption by children out of 60	Total money spent (Rs)
1	Maggi	12	7	26	-	45	10	23	8	12	31	56	20
2	Bread	9	12	10	7	38	10	6	14	7	19	46	20
3	Soups	-	4	6	-	10	30	-	-	10	-	10	30
4	Vermicilli	6	-	2	-	8	10	-	10	3	-	13	10
5	Dalia	-	7	-	-	7	12	9	-	1	-	9	12
6	Biscuits	11	13	15	21	60	15	14	29	22	21	58	20
7	Juice	-	4	5	12	20	15	8	11	-	4	23	15
8	Health drinks	10	6	14	31	60	50	16	27	21	15	54	50
9	Coffee	-	-	3	-	3	20	-	-	2	-	2	20
10	Burgers	7	-	4	-	11	8	-	4	-	-	4	8
11	Cutlets	-	-	3	-	3	8	-	-	-	3	3	8
12	Chips/ Kurkure	3	11	-	17	31	20	13	8	11	-	32	20
13	Hot Dog	-	6	-	-	6	7	2	-	-	7	9	7
14	Cake	-	3	1	-	3	15	-	1	4	-	5	20
15	Pizza	-	2	-	-	2	25	-	-	3	-	3	25
16	Sauce	6	4	8	4	22	25	3	3	6	9	21	60
	Total						290					5	345

Mean = 20.56 21.75, Variance – 78.35 79.97, Z Value = 1.877, Significant 5% level

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to attraction of their children towards packaging of convenience foods

S. No.	Attraction of children	Unemployed home maker's	Employed homemaker's
a.	Yes	17 (28.33)	39 (65.00)
b.	No	43 (71.67)	21 (35.00)
	Total	60 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

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