

Content and coverage of selected Home Science areas in newspapers

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ABSTRACT

The research investigation was carried out during the period of five months *i.e.* from 1st April, 2007 to 31st August, 2007 in Parabhani district of Maharashtra state to know the coverage of some specific home science areas in selected dailies. On high circulation basis, two national English (Times of India and Indian Express) and two regional Marathi (Sakal and Lokmat) dailies were selected. The findings revealed that out of total 814 home science articles on selected areas from all four newspapers, maximum articles belonged to food science and nutrition (62.04%) followed by health and hygiene (27.15%). Most often covered sub areas were cookery, public health concerns and choice of clothing.

KEY WORDS : Food science, Nutrition, Clothing, Textile, Health, Hygiene

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INTRODUCTION

Newspaper is one of the most important low cost medium of mass communications, having the quality of conveying messages quickly to a large number of people. Newspaper is one of the print media, cosmopolitan in nature giving information on a variety of subjects and through which general public is informed and guided (Arya, 2002). Its authenticity and role as a tool of social change is paramount and undisputed. Newspapers serve people in three ways: they inform, educate and entertain. Now-a-days, almost every language of newspapers started publishing supplements and special pages containing family related home science information which cater to varied tastes and interests such as foods and nutrition, diet and health, exercise and fitness, choice of clothing, skincare, hair care, beauty concerns, etc. Hence, on this background the present study was conducted with objective to study the coverage of some specific home science areas in the selected dailies.

METHODS

Based on high circulation, two English and two Marathi dailies were selected for the purpose of research in Parabhani district of Maharashtra state. The English dailies selected were 'Times of India' and 'Indian Express'

whereas the Marathi dailies selected were 'Sakal' and 'Lokmat'. All these newspapers publish family related home science information under different headings in one or the other form daily or weekly. The sample was selected from the specified newspapers, only during the period from 1st April, 2007 to 31st August 2007 excluding the only general holiday on which newspaper was not published. A total of 814 issues regarding some specific home science areas *viz.*, food science and nutrition, clothing and textile, health and hygiene and skincare, hair care and beauty concerns published in selected two national English and two regional Marathi dailies formed the sample of the investigation.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The findings of the present study have been presented in the following sub-heads:

Distribution of newspaper articles according to selected main areas of home science:

Distribution of newspaper articles according to selected four main areas of home science has been shown in Table 1. Totally 814 items were recorded related to selected home science areas from all four newspapers. National English newspapers on an average published

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176.50 items, whereas, regional Marathi newspapers reported on an average 230.50 items.

Out of a total of 814 items reported by all four newspapers, maximum number of items belonged to food science and nutrition (62.04%) followed by health and hygiene (27.15%). Less percentage of home science articles were published on skincare, hair care and beauty concerns (5.53%) and clothing and textile (5.28%)

Considering average 176.50 items published by national English newspapers, items related to food science and nutrition had maximum percentage (50.71%) followed by health and hygiene (37.96%). Among national newspapers, food science and nutrition bagged first place in both Times of India (52.42%) and Indian Express (49.78%). Health and hygiene acquired second place in both Times of India and Indian Express with 37.90 and 37.99 per cent, respectively.

In respect of average 230.50 items appeared in regional Marathi newspapers, maximum number of items (70.72%) were on food science and nutrition followed by health and hygiene (18.87%). Considering regional newspapers individually, food science and nutrition acquired first position in both Sakal (66.81%) and Lokmat (74.78%), whereas, health and hygiene acquired second position in both Sakal and Lokmat with 25.53 and 11.95 per cent, respectively.

Thus, items related to food science and nutrition and health and hygiene were found to be most often reported home science issues by the national level newspapers as well as regional newspapers (Table 1).

Food science and nutrition area was covered with first preference by selected dailies. It may be because of the reason that food is the main basic need of the human being and nowadays people have become more conscious about diet and fitness. Another reason may be that majority of the items under this area were recipes, because both regional newspapers were publishing recipes almost daily. Thus, so many number of recipes might have made significant contribution in giving second position to food

science and nutrition area.

All the news papers covered clothing and textile related newspaper articles with very less percentage. The possible reason could be that the newspapers may not feel much importance for this area. There may not be much realization that this area has its own significance and should be given sufficient attention.

Distribution of newspaper articles according to sub areas of food science and nutrition:

Table 2 is representing the distribution of newspaper articles according to fourteen sub areas of food science and nutrition. Here the ‘any other’ sub area included topics such as food supplements, eating disorders, food related policies, meal planning, food wastage, foods developed for special purpose, etc. Totally 505 items were reported in all four selected newspapers on food science and nutrition. National English newspapers published on an average 89.5 items. Whereas, regional Marathi newspapers published 163 food science and nutrition related issues on an average.

Among the total 505 items, majority of them (45.94%) were on cookery followed by nutrition and dietetics (20.99%). Very less coverage was given to food spoilage and bakery science with 0.59 and 0.39 per cent, respectively.

With regard to average 89.50 items covered by national English newspapers, items related to nutrition and dietetics appeared with maximum frequency (37.99%). Community nutrition and catering management related items were published with almost equal percentage. The items on bakery science, food spoilage and sports nutrition were published less frequently (1.12% each).

The regional Marathi newspapers recorded on an average maximum items on cookery (69.32%) followed by nutrition and dietetics (11.66%). The newspaper articles belonging to food spoilage and food security were covered less frequently with equal percentage of 0.30 each. Not a single item related to bakery science was published.

Table 1 : Distribution of newspaper articles according to selected main areas of Home Science (n=814)

Home science areas	Name of the newspaper						Total
	English			Marathi			
	Times of India	Indian Express	Average	Sakal	Lokmat	Average	
Food science and nutrition	65 (52.42)	114 (49.78)	89.50 (50.71)	157 (66.81)	169 (74.78)	163 (70.72)	505 (62.04)
Clothing and textile	8 (6.45)	19 (8.30)	13.50 (7.65)	8 (3.41)	8 (3.54)	8 (3.47)	43 (5.28)
Health and hygiene	47 (37.90)	87 (37.99)	67 (37.96)	60 (25.53)	27 (11.95)	43.50 (18.87)	221 (27.15)
Skincare, hair care and beauty concerns	4 (3.23)	9 (3.93)	6.5 (3.68)	10 (4.25)	22 (9.73)	16 (6.94)	45 (5.53)
Total	124 (100)	229 (100)	176.50 (100)	235 (100)	226 (100)	230.50 (100)	814 (100)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

A glance towards individual national newspapers showed that the sub area nutrition and dietetics was covered with maximum percentage in both Times of India (36.92) and Indian Express (38.60). Food security got the second rank in Times of India with 12.31 per cent, whereas community nutrition got second rank in Indian Express with 13.16 per cent.

When regional dailies were considered individually, it was found that items related to cookery were published with maximum frequency in both Marathi daiy (69.32 %). Lokmat gave second position to food science with 10.65 per cent coverage.

In respect of all selected newspapers, Lokmat recorded highest number of food science and nutrition related items followed by Sakal, Indian Express and Times of India.

In Indian families, the major work done by women is cooking. Naturally they show much interest in knowing and trying new recipes. So, the topic ‘cookery’ might have covered with highest percentage. Now-a-days people are very much conscious about their diet and nutrition. Hence, the topic ‘nutrition and dietetics’ might have given important place with second rank. To get adequate nutrition through various food stuffs and to know different methods of processing them, knowledge of food science is essential. Thus, it was also given coverage at third place.

National newspapers covered majority of the issues

regarding nutrition and dietetics, community nutrition and catering management. Today people are very much conscious about weight management and physical fitness and so also to know more about dietary guidelines for lifestyle diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular complications, etc. Thus, more articles on nutrition and dietetics are published. Another reason may be that authentic information is given by nutritionists and dieticians working in reputed hospitals and concerned institutions such as health club, gym., etc. With respect to publication of issues on community nutrition, it can be said that malnutrition, specially under nutrition and nutrient deficiencies among children, adolescents, pregnant and lactating women and old age group are severe issues nowadays, which requires awareness among public to combat it. Thus, community nutrition sub area might have given second preference. The plausible reason behind covering ‘catering management’ topic with third rank might be that it is an emerging field in modern days.

Regional newspapers published majority of the newspaper items on cookery followed by nutrition and dietetics. Various new recipes are favoured by most of the readers to satisfy their taste buds. Especially home makers are more fascinated to it for both improving nutritional status of their families and adding variety to the diet. Importance of diet and nutrition is also significantly felt by people. Thus, these issues made a major

Table 2: Distribution of newspaper articles according to sub areas of food science and nutrition (n=505)

Sr. No.	Sub areas	Name of the newspaper						Total
		English		Average	Marathi			
		Times of India	Indian Express		Sakal	Lokmat	Average	
1.	Food science	2 (3.08)	7 (6.14)	4.5 (5.03)	7 (4.46)	18 (10.65)	12.5 (7.67)	34 (6.73)
2.	Cookery	1 (1.54)	5 (4.38)	3 (3.35)	116 (73.88)	110 (65.09)	113 (69.32)	232 (45.94)
3.	Bakery science	1 (1.54)	1 (0.88)	1(1.12)	-	-	-	2 (0.39)
4.	Catering management	5 (7.69)	11 (9.65)	8 (8.94)	1 (0.64)	2 (1.18)	1.5 (0.92)	19 (3.76)
5.	Processing and quality control in food industries	1 (1.54)	7 (6.14)	4 (4.47)	1 (0.64)	3 (1.77)	2 (1.23)	12 (2.38)
6.	Food spoilage	1 (1.54)	1 (0.88)	1 (1.12)	-	1 (0.59)	0.5 (0.30)	3 (0.59)
7.	Food habits, facts and fallacies	3 (4.61)	4 (3.51)	3.5 (3.91)	-	2 (1.18)	1 (0.61)	9 (1.78)
8.	Food security	8 (12.31)	7 (6.14)	7.5 (8.38)	1 (0.64)	-	0.5 (0.30)	16 (3.17)
9.	Street foods	7 (10.77)	5 (4.38)	6 (6.70)	1 (0.64)	2 (1.18)	1.5 (0.92)	15 (2.97)
10.	Nutrition and dietetics	24 (36.92)	44 (38.60)	34 (37.99)	23 (14.65)	15 (8.87)	19 (11.66)	106 (20.99)
11.	Community nutrition	2 (3.08)	15 (13.16)	8.5 (9.50)	2 (1.27)	4 (2.37)	3 (1.84)	23 (4.55)
12.	Sports nutrition	1 (1.54)	1 (0.88)	1 (1.12)	2 (1.27)	-	1 (0.61)	4 (0.79)
13.	Food and nutrition related technologies	4 (6.15)	1 (0.88)	2.5 (2.79)	3 (1.91)	1 (0.59)	2 (1.23)	9 (1.78)
14.	Any other	5 (7.69)	5 (4.38)	5 (5.59)	-	11 (6.51)	5.5 (3.37)	21 (4.16)
	Total	65 (100)	114 (100)	89.5 (100)	157 (100)	169 (100)	163 (100)	505 (100)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

contribution to the food science and nutrition related items in regional dailies.

Distribution of newspaper articles according to sub areas of clothing and textile:

Distribution of newspaper articles according to six sub areas of clothing and textile is presented in Table 3. Any other category included value addition to fabric (with embroidery, painting, etc.), care of clothing, stain removal, etc. Overall only 43 newspaper articles appeared on this topic in all the four selected newspapers. Average number of clothing and textile related newspaper items reported by national English and regional Marathi newspapers were 13.5 and eight, respectively.

Of the total 43 clothing and textile related items, majority of the items were concerned with choice of clothing (25.58%) followed by fashion designing aspects (23.25%) and any other category (18.60%). The least covered topic was choice of accessories suitable for dresses (6.97%).

In respect of national dailies, equal percentage of articles appeared on textile related concerns and fashion designing aspects (25.92% each), followed by any other (22.22%) and choice of clothing (18.52%). Least published items were related to stitching and choice of accessories suitable for dresses (3.70% each).

Regional Marathi dailies recorded most of the newspaper articles on choice of clothing (37.50%) followed by stitching and fashion designing aspects (18.75% each). There were no items on textile related concerns.

A look at the individual national dailies showed that any other category covered half of the items in Times of India followed by textile related concerns (25.00%). In Indian Express the first, second and third position were allotted to fashion designing aspects (31.58%), textile related concerns (26.31%) and choice of clothing (21.05%), respectively.

In case of regional dailies, items related to stitching

and choice of clothing were covered with highest percentage (37.50% each) in Sakal. In Lokmat first rank was given to choice of clothing (37.50%) and second rank to both fashion designing aspects and any other category (25.00% each).

Overall, it can be concluded that national dailies were leading in publishing textile related concerns and fashion designing aspects when compared to regional dailies, whereas, regional dailies were ahead of national dailies in newspaper items on stitching and choice of clothing.

The choice of clothing includes how to choose clothes while purchasing suitable for the physique of the person, purpose, occasion, season and related aspects. Everybody is conscious about clothing at different occasions and purpose such as parties, interviews, formal occasions etc. It may be the probable reason for covering the sub area ‘choice of clothing’ with first rank. Fashion designing is today’s emerging trend as career. It has its own importance, because of which it covered with second preference.

Regional dailies recorded most of the items on choice of clothing, followed by stitching and fashion designing aspects. Here the category stitching included various new ideas about stitching for surface enrichment or renovation of the original garment. It is immediately useful for many of the housewives, specially those who know stitching. This reason might have contributed to cover the ‘stitching’ category with second importance.

Distribution of newspaper articles according to sub areas of health and hygiene:

Table 4 shows the distribution of newspaper article according to ten sub areas of health and hygiene. ‘Any other’ category included health and safety, use of ice-cubes in medication, etc. Overall 221 health and hygiene related issues were published by all four news papers. Average health and hygiene related issues reported by national and regional newspapers were 67 and 43.50,

Table 3: Distribution of newspaper articles according to sub areas of clothing and textile (n=43)

Sr. No.	Sub areas	Name of the newspaper						Total
		English		Marathi		Average		
		Times of India	Indian Express	Sakal	Lokmat			
1.	Stitching/tailoring	-	1 (5.26)	0.5 (3.70)	3 (37.50)	-	1.5 (18.75)	4 (9.30)
2.	Choice of clothing	1 (12.50)	4 (21.05)	2.5 (18.52)	3 (37.50)	3 (37.50)	3 (37.50)	11 (25.58)
3.	Choice of accessories for dresses	-	1 (5.26)	0.5 (3.70)	1 (12.50)	1 (12.50)	1 (12.50)	3 (6.97)
4.	Textile related concerns	2 (25.00)	5 (26.31)	3.5 (25.92)	-	-	-	7 (16.28)
5.	Fashion designing aspects	1 (12.50)	6 (31.58)	3.5 (25.92)	1 (12.50)	2 (25.00)	1.5 (18.75)	10 (23.25)
6.	Any other	4 (50.00)	2 (10.52)	3 (22.22)	-	2 (25.00)	1 (12.50)	8 (18.00)
Total		8 (100)	19(100)	13.5 (100)	8 (100)	8 (100)	8 (100)	43 (100)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

respectively.

Out of the total 221 health and hygiene related issues majority of them were on public health concerns (29.41%) followed by women and child health problems and remedies (17.65%) and clinical aspects of health (10.86%). Least number of items were reported on communicable diseases and health with 1.36 per cent.

National dailies recorded most of the items related to public health concerns (41.04%) followed by clinical aspects of health (12.69%). Least coverage was given to communicable diseases and health with 3.73 per cent.

Regional dailies published items on women and child health problems and remedies with maximum frequency (32.18%). The items on obesity and weight management, exercise and fitness and public health concerns were covered with equal percentage (11.49% each). The least covered items belonged to any other category with percentage of 1.15.

Among national dailies, both Times of India and Indian Express gave first preference to the topic ‘public health concerns’ with 38.30 and 42.53 per cent, respectively. In Times of India second place was allotted to clinical aspects of health with 17.02 per cent, whereas, in Indian Express second place was allotted to sanitation and hygiene with 11.49 per cent.

When regional dailies were considered individually, it was found that in Sakal first and second rank were given to women and child health problems and remedies (40.00%) and exercise and fitness (15.00%). In Lokmat first rank was given to public health concerns (37.03%)

and second rank to ‘obesity and weight management’ and ‘sanitation and hygiene’ (18.52% each). National dailies covered items related to public health concerns with maximum frequency, whereas regional dailies covered women and child health problems and remedies more often.

According to Table 4, majority of the health and hygiene related issues were on public health concerns followed by women and child health problems and remedies and clinical aspects of health. During the newspaper reviewing period from April to August 31st May was celebrated as World Anti-tobacco Day and in the same period Chikungunya disease affected so many people. Since it was rainy season many diseases were spreading among people. Women and children are most vulnerable groups. Hence, there should be awareness for their common health problems and remedies to tackle them. So, the women and child health problems and remedies were covered with second importance. People should know about common clinical signs and symptoms of common and hazardous diseases. April 7th was celebrated as World Health Day. Thus, around this day, many articles were published giving information regarding various clinical tests to be done specially after the age of 40 years. This could be the reason for giving third importance to the sub area clinical aspects of health.

National dailies recorded most of the items related to public health concerns followed by clinical aspects of health and obesity and weight management. Now a days, due to sedentary lifestyle and mechanization of household

Table 4 : Distribution of newspaper articles according to sub areas of health and hygiene (n=221)

Sr. No.	Sub areas	Name of the newspaper						Total
		Times of India	English Indian Express	Average	Sakal	Marathi Lokmat	Average	
1.	Women and child health problems and remedies	3 (6.38)	8 (9.19)	5.5 (8.21)	24(40.00)	4 (14.81)	14 (32.18)	39 (17.65)
2.	Non-communicable diseases and health	4 (8.51)	6 (6.89)	5 (7.46)	6 (10.00)	-	3 (6.89)	16 (7.24)
3.	Obesity and weight management	5 (10.64)	7 (8.04)	6 (8.95)	6 (10.00)	5 (18.52)	5.5 (12.64)	23 (10.40)
4.	Exercise and fitness	2 (4.25)	3 (3.45)	2.5 (3.73)	9 (15.00)	1 (3.70)	5 (11.49)	15 (6.79)
5.	Communicable diseases and health	1 (2.13)	-	0.5 (3.73)	2 (3.3)	-	1 (2.30)	3 (1.36)
6.	Public health concerns	18 (38.30)	37 (42.53)	27.5 (41.04)	-	10 (37.03)	5 (11.49)	65 (29.41)
7.	Clinical aspects of health	8 (17.02)	9 (10.34)	8.5 (12.69)	7 (11.67)	-	3.5 (8.05)	24 (10.86)
8.	General health aspects	2 (4.25)	7 (8.04)	4.5 (6.72)	6 (10.00)	1 (3.70)	3.5 (8.05)	16 (7.24)
9.	Sanitation and hygiene	-	10 (11.49)	5 (7.46)	-	5 (18.52)	2.5 (5.75)	15 (6.79)
10.	Any other	4 (8.51)	-	2 (2.98)	-	1 (3.70)	0.5 (1.15)	5 (2.26)
	Total	47 (100)	87 (100)	67 (100)	60 (100)	27 (100)	43.50 (100)	221 (100)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

activities, there is very less physical exertion. In addition to that consumption of more refined and empty calorie food have contributed to obesity and related complications among both middle and high class people. Thus, physical activities and other measures for weight management might have been given coverage. Because of this reason, obesity and weight management topic was given importance with third place. Lichter *et al.* (2007) showed the similar findings.

The findings revealed that out of total 814 home science articles related to selected areas from all four newspapers, maximum articles belonged to food science and nutrition (62.04%) followed by health and hygiene (27.15%). Most often covered sub areas were cookery,

public health concerns and choice of clothing. The less covered areas clothing and textile should be given adequate coverage by newspapers.

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