

Comprehension of Women's Knowledge, Attitude and Practices Associated with Household Waste Management

Kalpana Srivastava

Department of Family Resource Management, S.M. Patel College of Home Science, Vallabh Vidya Nagar, Gujarat, India

(Received 17 August, 2021; Accepted 22 September, 2021)

ABSTRACT

An appropriate waste management has been a major problem for human existence and their health, affecting both urban and rural areas. A clean environment influences good health and, good health further affects the productivity of man. To sustain, healthy living conditions in any environment, proper waste disposal management is very essential. Women are assumed as the soul of the household, they are the one who take care of the house from end to end. The knowledge, attitude, and practices the women follow are of the utmost importance to generate a healthy and hygienic environment within the home and around. The current research was undertaken with the intention to identify and study the women's knowledge, attitude, and practices associated with household waste management. It was revealed that women possess good knowledge about household waste management but then, their attitude was indifferent towards household waste management and practices of managing household waste quite average. This outcome reflects the immediate need of working out in these fields to form the cognizance for appropriate household waste management.

Key words : Women, Waste management, Household, Knowledge, Attitude, Practices

Introduction

Anything which is not used by its possessor and thrown away or discarded is waste. In discriminant disposal of waste now has created lots of problems, such as environmental pollution and health hazards associated to these pollutions. As compared to developed countries this problem has become more threatening for the developing countries. In spite of putting their best efforts to resolve the problem authorities have not been able to manage it very productively. In the recent years there were many campaigns and researches and studies were conducted to make people conscious towards effective waste

management. Waste management refers to the practice of collecting, transporting, managing and monitoring, processing or disposing of various waste materials. When we talk about effective waste management what it means is, instead of just dumping the collected waste in the junk yard or landfills, focus should be upon sustainability of the environment. The goal of sustainable waste management is to reduce the number of natural resources consumed, try to reuse them as many times as possible so that the waste generation could be reduced. In India waste generation is increasing day by day as more and more people are moving from rural area to urban area to pursue higher education and in

search of job etc. The growing population and their increasing income are influencing their consumption level and pattern of goods they tend to use, which in turn is adding to oodles of waste. The increasing waste are substantially affecting the environment as well as the cost of managing solid waste (Kumar, *et al.* 2014) Samir Lahiry, has reported in his article in May 2019, that 62 million tons of municipal solid waste is produced yearly by more than 377 million urban people who live in 7,935 towns and cities in India. From this waste only 43 million tons of the waste is collected, 11.9 million tones is treated and 31 million tones waste is dumped in landfill sites. It is believed that India is following a flawed system of waste disposal and management.

(<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/waste/india-s-challenges-in-waste-management-56753>)

Waste management practices especially the municipal solid waste differ for developed and developing nations, for urban and rural areas, and for residential, commercial and industrial producers. Waste collection methods vary widely among different countries and states. Domestic waste collection services are often provided by local government authorities, or by private companies in the urban cities. Countries and experts alike spend lot of time and resources to come out with a solution to the problem of environmental degradation and climate change. A problem created by mankind due to thoughtless act of consumerism Many families feel that nonexistence of punishment and lack of strict laws is the substantial reason for inappropriate waste management (Kumar and Nandini'2013). Domestic waste is one of the major contributors to environmental pollution and as women are the leading members of the families, it is desirable that they should take part in segregating their household waste at source itself. There should be strict law related to segregation of waste at source, it would help in better management of waste also would develop healthier environment (Gani, *et al.* 2012).

Statement Of The Problem

It's difficult to talk about waste but very easy to detect waste in the surroundings. The solid waste is a global problem and continuous efforts are being made by the people of different continents to confront this problem. Hillock of waste is the cost of rapid urbanization and swelling population. Tons and tons of waste are generated every day in the world. Though handling and managing waste is a

complicated issue but looking at the global scenario it has become high time to act for the government and the citizens of several countries to take the problem on the priority level. India is no different, now the waste management in every nook of the country and cities are grabbing the attentions.

It is known that whenever the protection of environment is talked about, the contribution of women cannot be overlooked. According to E.O. Wilson "**The Education of Women is the best way to save the Environment**". Women are always expected to fulfil their duties whether at home or at workplace as, all women are homemakers. Irrespective of their position and work responsibilities women are predictable to take care of their home and families. When management of household waste comes then homemakers are the first that straightaway comes to our mind. Women can easily impart knowledge to their family members regarding managing their household waste in an appropriate manner. But before this, it's important to identify the knowledge, attitude and practices of the women themselves, associated with household waste.

The main objective of the present research was the comprehension of women's knowledge, attitude and practices associated with household waste management (HHWM). The knowledge, attitude and practices of selected women were studied and evaluated.

Methodology

The nature of the present research study was descriptive. The primary and secondary data were used in the study. The secondary data were gathered through review of literature and for collection of primary data field survey was conducted. Structured questionnaire was prepared for the survey that comprised of basic information of the respondents, their existing knowledge about management of household waste, their attitude towards household waste management and their practices regarding household waste management. Survey was carried out on 470 women of semi urban area of Anand in Gujarat.

The Knowledge, Attitude and Practices "KAP" is the means of assessing the knowledge, attitude and practices of the people in the community. To measure the Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) of the women, related to household waste management, scales were developed. Reliability of the scales

were checked through Cronbach’s alpha test and the reliability was found more than 7.6 for all three scales of KAP.

Results

The data revealed that more than 80% women were between 20 – 40 years of age. Majority of the women belonged to nuclear family. Data indicated that eighty six percent of the respondents had their monthly family income more than sixty thousand.

Knowledge of the respondents about HHWM

It can be seen from the figure below, that 58.1 percent respondents hold high knowledge regarding household waste management. Whereas, 21.9 percent respondents were found with average knowl-

edge and 20 percent respondents had low knowledge regarding management of household waste (Ref. Fig.1)

Attitude of the respondents towards HHWM

The analysis of attitude of the respondents showed that 21.9 percent respondent possesses positive attitude towards household waste management. Whereas, more than two third of the respondents had indifferent attitude towards household waste management which is a matter of concern. Merely 8.3 percent respondents were found with negative attitude towards household waste management. In a research study by Kaithery *et al.* (2019) discovered that more than three fourth of the participants had above average attitude towards household waste management. Banga (2011) too has reported in her

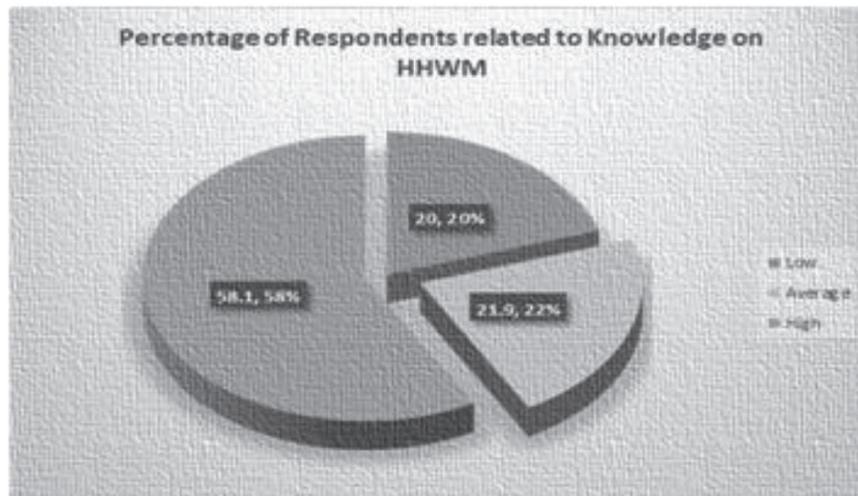


Fig. 1.

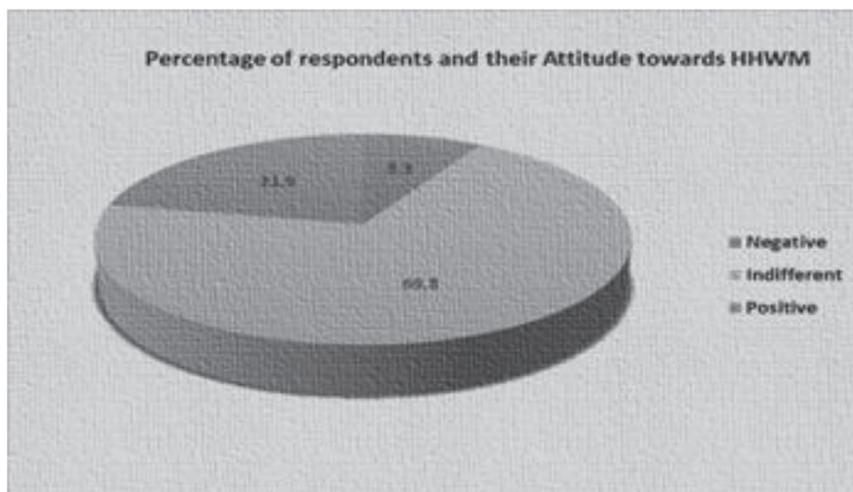


Fig. 2.

study that respondents believed, segregation of household waste is very time-consuming job and it should be done at the collection centers or at landfills itself (Ref. Fig. 2).

HHWM Practices of the respondents

The household waste management practices of the respondents were analysed and it was found that very few respondents follow the good practices for managing their household waste. Majority of the respondents were found with average practices in managing their household waste. Barely 5.1 percent respondents were found with good practices of managing their household waste. One fourth of the re-

spondents were following poor waste management practices in their household. It shows that majority of the respondents were not very cognizant regarding appropriate household waste management practices. The study of Twumasi (2017) support this finding, as he mentioned in his study of Ghana, that respondents were well aware of impact of suitable waste management however, their practices were not so satisfactory (Ref. Fig. 3).

It had been discovered that two third of the women possess good knowledge whereas, few of them possess poor knowledge related to household waste management. Moreover, it had been found that more than two third of the women had indifferent attitude and merely 8.3 percent homemakers

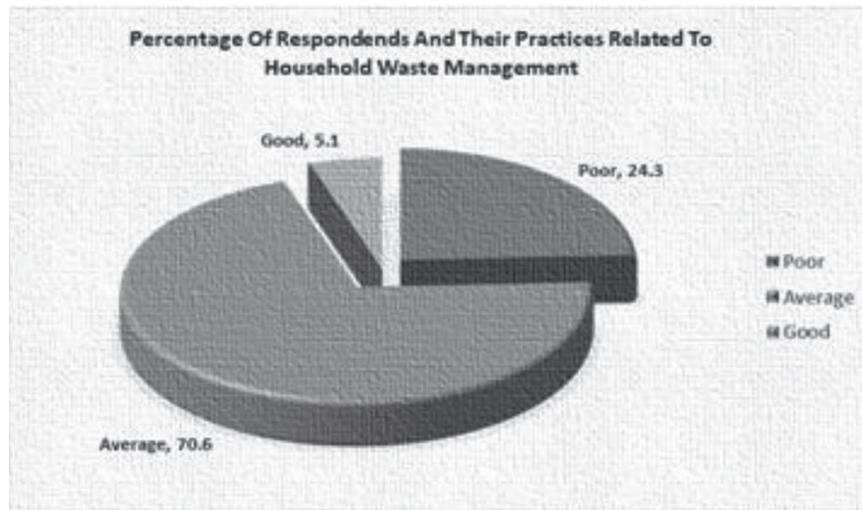


Fig. 3.

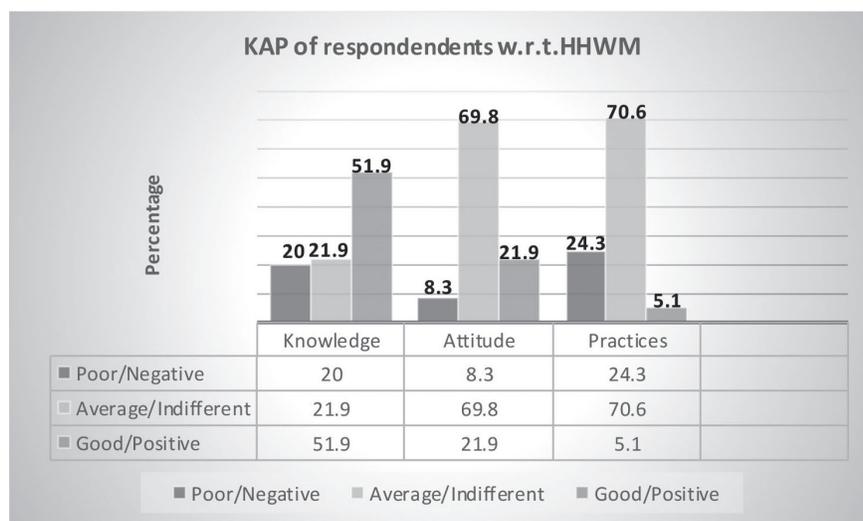


Fig. 4.

were found with negative attitude towards managing their household waste, which was matter of concern. Regarding practice of managing the waste in their household it had been revealed that more than two third of the women were found to be following marginal practice in managing their household waste. Whereas less than one third of the homemakers were found with poor practices in managing waste at household level (Ref. Fig 4). The research study of Kiran *et al.* (2015) supports the findings of the current study as it revealed that most of the respondents had good knowledge regarding improper solid waste disposal and its consequences. Although, in their study, household waste disposal practices were found unsatisfactory as two third of households used to dispose - off their household wastes just by throwing away outside the house. Nearly 91% households comprehended that they are responsible for their waste and have substantial role in solid waste management. The study in rural Lahore depicted that the respondents possess good knowledge and positive attitude related to disposal of waste still, they were not following appropriate practices for their waste disposal (Shahzadi *et al.*, 2018).

Conclusion

From the above findings and discussions, it could be concluded that though the respondents possess good knowledge regarding management of household waste but, most of them have indifferent attitude when it comes to managing their household waste. It had been realized that they were not apprehensive towards managing their household waste very competently besides their practices regarding household waste management were also average.

This reflects that they require some motivational and awareness training to change their attitude, only then it could be assumed that the practices to manage the household waste could be elevated. To sustain healthy living conditions in any environment proper waste disposal management is indispensable.

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