SAVE BY BEING WISER AND NOT A MISER

by D.P. Sabharwal

There are several "leaks" in our life-style through which money is lost. But identifying them and plugging them up will mean saving—without tears. Why not start the OPERATION SAVE right away?

FROM THE moment one gets up in the morning, till one hits the bed at night, one goes through hundreds of acts. Now, if one were to make a list of these, a quick glance will reveal many areas where "wastage" takes place. A further thorough scrutiny of the list will bring out many more areas where "savings" could be effected by just being watchful and a little more careful. Then, there are certain areas where some effort would be required to bring about savings—mainly because in such activities, formed habits have to be overcome.



Save electricity bill by periodic cleaning and defrosting of the refrigerator. Never take out a cooked dish from the fridge and put it straight on the stove.

Switching off the light and fan, as and when you come out of the room, is one such activity where you have to change your habit to save electricity, as well as money. Needless to say, it is a wise method of saving, without any discomfort being caused to anyone. On the other hand, you would be giving a helping hand in nation-building, indirectly, of course, because the electricity units you save would be used elsewhere in producing something for you, me and the country.

Well, avenues for savings by identifying and eliminating wasteful areas are many. To start your think-tank rolling, a few such areas are listed below:

Gas or kerosene consumption can be reduced by as much as 20% by remembering a few simple things. As far as possible, use pressure cookers. Secondly, as soon as the cooker whistles or the contents of the utensil start boiling, reduce the flame.

Then again, before you start cooking or frying anything, keep all the ingredients and required items at hand. Often, it is noticed that while a *chapatti* is being rolled, the *tawa* remains empty on the fire. Never allow this to happen.

Similarly, never take out a cooked dish from the fridge and put it straight on the stove. It will consume more gas for heating. Always keep it out for at least two hours to allow it to come to room temperature—and then heat.

It is a common sight to see the lady of the house working in the kitchen, in broad daylight, with a bulb or tube-light on! Well, the reason is not that kitchen is without a window or ventilator, but is that the glass or wire-mesh has turned black due to soot and smoke and does not permit enough light to enter. A periodic cleaning of these will reduce your electricity bill considerably. Also, remember to clean the bulb or tubelight as well. Then, for the same wattage, it will give you more light.

Another area where electricity can be saved is the periodic cleaning or defrosting of the refrigerator. Next time you do so, note the quantity of water that you throw out. Well, the fridge compressor has been working overtime to keep all this water in the frozen



Cover and decorate metallic tins to make pencil stands.

state! Your additional effort, in cleaning it often, will reduce the load on the refrigerator, thereby increasing its life, besides keeping the electricity bill low.

I have heard women often complain that servants use too much cleaning powder while washing the utensils. Well, this could be true, but you can definitely cut down its consumption and that too without uttering a single word of rebuke to the maidservant. The method is simple. As soon as you put any used utensil in the sink, fill it up with water and leave it. This way, oily or greasy stuff will not dry up and it will require less effort and cleaning material to get clean.

Many times, milk, bread, cooked vegetables, dough, etc. have to be discarded and thrown because it has gone bad. Invariably, such occasions arise due to carelessness in either not keeping them in the refrigerator, or keeping them in there for an inordinately long period. This too is habit-forming.

Make it a habit to check that nothing that can go bad, is left on the kitchen counter, before you retire for the night. Similarly, get into the habit of looking into the fridge every second or third day with a critical eye and take out all that had been shoved in, subsequent to your last such inspection.

Children are normally in the habit of leaving soap-cake in water. This area of wastage can be totally eliminated through proper training. Similarly, the soap, after usage, becomes thin and crumbles into pieces, which are normally thrown away. These can be put into a bottle instead, with some water and the resultant soap solution can be used for different purposes.

Towels normally wear out from the centre. These can be cut into two and then by discarding the worn out portion, and putting a piping around the sides, can be used as hand towels.

School-going children consume a large number of notebooks for rough work. Money can be saved on many of these. At the end of school session, before the old notebooks are given to the *kabari*, go through these and tear out the blank pages. You will see that the pages so recovered amount to 15-20 notebooks!

Pencil and eraser consumption for primary-class kids is generally phenomenal, and often beyond comprehension. At times, it almost reaches the peak limit of one-per-day. Be strict with the child and ask him to show it to you daily after returning from the school. Within a short time, you will notice a remarkable reduction in the consumption of these items.

There is no need to buy comb, tooth-brush or pencil stands. Metallic jam-tins or empty plastic bottles can be used after covering and decorating them with paper or cloth pieces.

Washed clothes should be folded properly. This will remove almost all the wrinkles; ironing would be much easier, thereby saving both effort as well as electricity.

Shoes, particularly of children, must be polished daily. This provides a coating of wax, so leather will not crack easily even when used roughly. The additional life of shoes so obtained will more than compensate the expenditure on shoe polish.

What has been listed above is by no means an exhaustive list. These are *some* of the areas, that too common ones, where savings can be achieved without much effort and hiccups. There are, and can be, many more areas that can be added to this list. But that will depend, to a large extent, upon individuals, their thinking and life-styles.

To give an example, I do not allow my children to walk in the house with socks on. Instead, they have to use chappals or slippers. Even in winter, when they use socks from morning till night, footwear is a must. This has saved us about 6 pairs of socks per child per year.

As far as savings are concerned, the sky is the limit! But in trying to save a lot, life is bound to become miserable. One can, however, save by being wiser. And for this, all that is required is the identification of those areas which contain elements of wastage.

And probably here lies the biggest problem and paradox, because what is considered "wastage" by one, may not be considered so by another person. And if you try to do exactly what the others are trying to do, you may turn out to be a miser rather than wiser in saving money.

Thus get moving. List out and identify such danger areas in your household. Involve all the members of the family. Sooner than you think, you will realize that with the same pay-packet you can have your cake and eat it too! ■■

WOMAN'S ERA