

Research Paper :

Aspects related to household practices of stiffening clothes

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ABSTRACT

Stiffening is the last finishing done by the housewives to their family clothes after washing them at home. Stiffening helps to restore body to the limp clothes. A survey was conducted among five hundred housewives of Parbhani town for studying different aspects of clothes stiffening practices who used to stiffen their family clothes at home. The findings revealed that cent per cent housewives stiffened cotton clothes followed by synthetic clothes and then silk clothes at home. Housewives mostly stiffened white and light coloured Sari, Punjabi suits, Dupatta, gent's Kurta- Pajama and shirts using sago, commercial starches and aerosol stiffeners by adopting boiling and instant methods. Clothes were stiffened in summer, spring or whenever required and were worn for three to six times prior to next stiffening.

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Starches added during home laundering help to make the clothes stiff. It also helps to keep fabric cleaner as dust and dirt tends to slide off the smooth finish produced by starching or dust and dirt tend to cling to the starch particles and thus easy for removal. 'Starch is added in the rinse cycle of laundering in the last stage before drying. An aerosol spray also does starching to the clothes at the time of ironing.' (Tortora, 1978). Apart from whitening and ironing of clothes, starching them properly makes the texture look better and crisp. (D'Souza Noemia, 1998) 'Individual differ in their tastes because some like quite stiff clothes, while others prefer crisp while many go in for mild starched clothes for studying different aspects of clothes stiffening practices' (Pandit, 1981).

Starching of clothes at home for making them stiff is considered to be eco-friendly method of stiffening clothes. Hence, it was felt necessary to study the different aspects of clothes stiffening practices followed by the housewives at home. The study was undertaken with the objective to ascertain different conditions of stiffening clothes at home.

METHODOLOGY

Survey was conducted among housewives of Parbhani town in the year 2005. The location for the survey was selected keeping in view the families whose family members wear stiffened clothes and the housewives of those families stiffened their family clothes at home. A purposive sample of five hundred housewives formed the universe of the study and the method of data collection was personal interview method. Door-to-door visits were made to the housewives for collecting the data. The

information regarding socio- economic status of the families of the housewives and about the different aspects of clothes stiffening practices *i.e.* types of fabrics stiffened at home, different stiffening agents used, types of garments stiffened at home, methods adopted for preparing stiffening solution and additives used in stiffening solution, stiffness desired according to type of fabric, stiffening season, frequency of using stiffened clothes prior to next stiffening were collected. The collected information was then tabulated. The tabulated data were analyzed applying Line Chi-Square test in order to find out the significance of analyzed data statistically.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The general studies of the housewives who stiffened clothes at home and of their families was evident enough that most the housewives were of 21-30 years age, graduates and were from nuclear families having monthly income from Rs.10,001 to 20,000. Cent per cent housewives stiffened cotton clothes at home followed by 70 per cent housewives stiffened synthetic clothes, while 58.2 per cent housewives stiffened silk clothes at home.

Table 1 illustrates the type of stiffening agents used by the housewives for stiffening clothes at home. Sago was used for stiffening cotton clothes by 60 per cent housewives followed by 53.5 per cent housewives used it for stiffening synthetic clothes and 38.4 per cent housewives for stiffening silk clothes. There was no significant difference between numbers of housewives using sago starch for stiffening clothes at home. A very meagre per cent (0.8 to 2%) housewives used Maida for stiffening cotton and synthetic clothes. Below ten per cent