

Female consumers buying behaviour for fashion apparels: an exploratory study

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Apparel is billion-dollar industry employing millions of the people around the world. Over the last one decade, apparel industry has gone through the drastic change in the world market. Indian garment industry is very diverse in size, manufacturing facility, type of apparel produced, quantity and quality of output, cost and requirement for fabric etc. It comprises suppliers of ready-made garments for both, domestic or exports markets. This study is targeted on females buying behaviour for the purchase of their apparel. Women in age range of 16-45 year were selected for the study. Structured questionnaire and personal interview method was used for data collection data were coded and analyzed. Results revealed that availability of fund is major factor for purchase for middle age women, they occasionally purchase clothes, and usually purchase formal wear *i.e.* tights and kurties. College girls' apparel buying behaviour revealed that they usually purchase clothes monthly and availability of funds is least important factor for them. Apparel buying behaviour of girls is affected by friends while of middle age women decision to buy is affected by husband.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Apparel Industry, Buying behaviour, Female preference in design, Fashion apparel, Apparel preference

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The Textile Sector in India ranks next to Agriculture. Textile is one of India's oldest industries. The textile industry occupies a unique place in our country. Indian textiles and apparels have a history of fine craftsmanship and global appeal. Cotton, silk and denim from India are highly popular abroad, and with the upsurge in Indian design talent, Indian apparel too has found success in the fashion centers of the world. India is the world's second-largest exporter of textiles and apparels, with a massive raw material and

manufacturing base. The textile industry is a significant contributor to the economy, both in terms of its domestic share and exports.

In this study, concepts such as influences, preference, and buying behaviour are classified and discussed in detail. The preference and buying behaviour changes from individual to individual due to various factors such as personal preference, culture, tradition, occasion and other factors like economic, influence of reference group. As a result, the female buying behaviour

has changed from individual to individual. Present study is undertaken with objectives to know the female buying behavior of women, their preference in design, types of fabric and fashion and to find out the factors affecting female buying behaviour during purchasing women's worn.

The study will focus on different factors affecting buying behaviour and preference of women during a purchase of their garment in Udaipur. It will also helpful to new entrepreneurs who are willing to start the business in women's garment. This will provide them to know about the existing customers as well as the future expectations in same segment. The study will provide a base for future reference for women's garment related studies. It would contribute to know more about the women's current needs and preference in fashion trends. This will guide to entrepreneur for making a strategy to enhance the product and customer values to retain the existing ones and attract the new customer for getting consistent business in long run. The sample for the proposed women's buying behaviour study has the limitation only to Udaipur. The other areas apart from Udaipur are not included for the study. Time is also one of the impediments for the study.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The structured questionnaire has been used to collect the sample of 150 female customers in different category of women's age group between 16-45 years. The study is based only to Udaipur urban area through the respondents *i.e.* College girls (16-25yr), working women (26-35yr), and middle age women (36-45yr). Researchers approach is a combination of an exploratory and a descriptive study. The exploratory approach was initially used in order to obtain a fundamental knowledge and understanding of the chosen problem area, with the help of primary and secondary information. In the analysis researcher used percentage analysis method which helps to gain highest percentage of response and make an attempt at explaining the situation with the help from the theoretical framework and empirical results.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

These questions have been asked through the questionnaire and personal meet for collecting the information from the different women's age category which helps to find out the different buying behaviour in

each category. A: College girls (16-25yr), B: working women (26-35yr), and C: middle age women (36-45yr) It has given the clear idea about their needs and preference in women's cloths.

According to the table, there are different categories for different attributes. For each category, researcher have three different groups named A, B and C. Group A is for the age group between 16- 25, group B is for the age group between 26- 35 and group C has respondents between 36- 45 years of age. Each group has fifty respondents. When researcher talk about reason for purchase, out of 50 respondents, 50 per cent females have purchased their cloths during festivals. In category B out of 50 respondents, 40 per cent females have selected festivals and 40 per cent respondents have selected the availability of funds. In the group C out of 50 respondents, 50 per cent females have selected the availability of funds because they purchase only when they have funds. From the above results, it can be assumed that women are purchasing the cloths only in festivals and on availability of funds.

When researcher look at the frequency of purchase, researcher found that 44 per cent respondents from group A purchased clothes monthly, 54 per cent respondents from group B purchased twice a year and 48 per cent from group C purchased occasionally. Preference of dress for casual wear was 48 per cent as well as 54 per cent in group A and B because in group A, respondents were mostly studying in college so they preferred casuals for their comfort and in the category B respondents were mostly housewives so they preferred casuals. 36 per cent liked formal wear from group C because this group is of working women. From the above results researcher can conclude that mostly women prefer casuals all the time. In group A, 40 per cent respondents preferred jeans and top from the range of casuals. In group B, 54 per cent respondents preferred kurtis and tights among casual wears. In case of group C, 48 per cent respondents preferred kurtis and tights among casual wears. It can be assumed that age groups reflect ones choice in apparel selection. Younger groups do not have a stable mind and they may prefer latest fashion trends and comfort. In the case above 26 yrs they prefer c. Researcher can conclude that in casual wear women's prefer mostly kurtis and tights.

In the preference among formal wears in group A, 60 per cent out of 50 respondents preferred salwar

| Table 1 : Percentage distribution of respondents by buying behaviour and preference of fashion apparel | | (n=150) | | |
|--|----------------------------|------------|----|----|
| Attributes | Category | Percentage | | |
| | | A | B | C |
| Reason for purchase | Festivals | 50 | 40 | 20 |
| | Discount sales | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| | as per the need | 20 | 10 | 20 |
| | Availability of funds | 10 | 40 | 50 |
| Frequency of purchase | Once in a year | 08 | 10 | 08 |
| | Twice in a year | 16 | 54 | 14 |
| | Monthly | 44 | 20 | 30 |
| | Occasionally | 32 | 16 | 48 |
| Preference of dress | Casual | 48 | 54 | 36 |
| | Formal | 20 | 20 | 44 |
| | Ethnic | 26 | 10 | 04 |
| | All | 06 | 16 | 16 |
| Preference among casual wear | <i>Jeans</i> and Top | 40 | 20 | 14 |
| | <i>Skirts</i> and Top | 32 | 10 | 08 |
| | <i>Kurties</i> and Tights | 12 | 54 | 48 |
| | All | 16 | 16 | 30 |
| Preference among formal wear | <i>Sarees</i> | 16 | 46 | 60 |
| | Formal Trousers and Shirts | 24 | 10 | 04 |
| | <i>Salwar Kameez</i> | 60 | 44 | 36 |
| Preference of shade | Light | 08 | 10 | 08 |
| | Medium | 16 | 54 | 14 |
| | Dark | 44 | 20 | 30 |
| | All | 32 | 16 | 48 |
| Type of garment preferred | Ready made | 50 | 40 | 30 |
| | Tailor made | 20 | 50 | 60 |
| | Both | 30 | 10 | 10 |
| Preference of design styles | Latest | 70 | 34 | 40 |
| | Ethnic | 10 | 20 | 20 |
| | Traditional | 20 | 46 | 40 |
| Influence on purchase | Parents/Husband | 30 | 40 | 60 |
| | Sibling | 10 | 04 | 16 |
| | Friends | 40 | 16 | 04 |
| | Own Preference | 20 | 40 | 20 |
| Prompting factors | Brand | 06 | 10 | 30 |
| | Price | 26 | 54 | 14 |
| | Quality | 20 | 20 | 48 |
| | Need | 48 | 16 | 08 |
| Excepted price range | Rs. 500-800 | 20 | 20 | 06 |
| | Rs. 800-1000 | 50 | 10 | 10 |
| | Rs. 1000-1500 | 20 | 60 | 24 |
| | Above Rs. 1500 | 10 | 10 | 60 |

kameez. In group B, 46 per cent respondents preferred saris, in group C, 60 per cent respondents preferred saris. From the above results researcher can conclude that *Salwars* are mostly preferred formal for group A and *Sarees* and *Salwars* are more or less equally preferred by group B and C. In the category of shade choice, 44 per cent respondents preferred dark shades from group

A. In group B, 54 per cent respondents preferred medium shade. In group C, 48 per cent respondents choose all (light, medium and dark) shades. It can be assumed that choice of shades can be generalized according to the age segment. The dark, medium and light shades are preferred shades among various age groups of women.

Type of garment preferred was asked, 50 per cent

from group A preferred readymade clothes. 50 per cent preferred tailor made and in group C, 60 preferred tailor made. Researcher can generalize that younger generation that is group A prefers readymade and group B and C older generation prefer tailor made clothes.

In the category of design preference from group A, 70 per cent respondents out of 50 preferred latest design styles and in group B, 46 per cent out of 50 respondents prefer traditional design to wear. In group C, 40 per cent out of 50 respondents preferred traditional as well as latest styles. It can be assumed that younger generation is more conscious about fashion trends than the other two categories.

In the category of person influence while buying, 40 per cent respondents out of 50 were influenced by their friends as they were from group A. In group B 40 per cent respondents out of 50 were influenced by parents/ husbands and their own preference. In group C, 60 per cent respondents were influenced by parents/ husband. It can be concluded that how society has influenced on the buying behaviour of individuals. Different categories are influenced by different people at various age levels in our society.

Brand, price, quality and need were the next attributes in our table which comes under the prompting factors. From group A, 48 per cent respondents preferred need as they belong to college. In the group B, 54 per cent people preferred price and from group C, 48 per cent people preferred quality. It can be assumed that group A women's were more interested, what they have in her mind during shopping for clothes. Group B and C women's were very conscious about price and quality.

When the expected price range was asked, out of 50 respondents 50 per cent selected the price ranging from Rs. 800-1000 from group A. While in group B, out of 50 respondents 60 per cent respondents selected the price ranging from Rs. 1000-1500. In group C, out of 50 respondents 60 per cent selected the price range from above Rs. 1500. It can be assumed that women's preference in an apparel ranges from Rs. 800-1000 and Rs. 1000- 1500. Thus, it can be surmise that the price factor plays an important role in apparel buying behaviour.

Similar work related to the present investigation was also carried out by Dholakia (1999); Jukariya and Singhvi (2018) and Singh and Sarvana (2013).

Conclusion:

Clothing is an important part of women's life and plays a major role in building the female identity and status. Cloths help the women to enhance their confidence and strengthen their self-esteem. Clothing is referred to as specialty good since consumers often make an effort for seeking out the garment that they require. Most of the female focus on product attributes, fashion trends and other factors related to social or psychological needs of the customer. These characteristics help them to choose their cloths according to their preference and it also suits with tradition and culture. This study was done to find out the buying behaviour of females of Udaipur in clothing buying. Many factors are there to motivate buying like type of clothing, requirement, need, design element, price, selection etc. This study contributes to academia by providing a conceptual framework to understand apparel buying behaviour of Indian consumers. The findings of this study will provide meaningful insights to the buying behaviour in apparel retailing for marketers. Practitioners may also utilize this model in the present study to improve their retailing strategies to increase their retail sales by offering well-maintained retail services, facilities, promotions and quality merchandise.

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