A Review

Clothing preference for children among rural and urban mothers

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■**ABSTRACT :** Clothing is an integral inseparable part of mankind that meets the basic necessity along with food and shelter and even denotes wealth, power, position and mode of adornment. Clothing has become a preferred means of individual expression and economic concerns. The survey was conducted to find out the clothing preference for children among rural and urban mothers. The result reviled that readymade garments were preferred by both rural and urban mothers always, but sometimes option was open for tailor-made too. Friends and relatives had influenced the purchasing practices of mother of both the localities. Before clothing purchases, the mothers preplanned for amount to be spent, fibre content and garment style. Mothers did have some knowledge on reversible attires and made ups like sweater, rainy jackets, winter jackets, pull over, jersey and shawls. Thus, it can be said that the rural and urban clothing preferences are similar to some extent, expenditure is based on the income of the families in the over view of this study.

■**KEY WORDS :** Garment style, Trendy garments, Purchasing practices, Reversible garments

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Clothing is an important area of personal satisfaction. Due to our interest in clothing, we choose a particular garment. The effect of clothing on behaviour and the way in which we perceive clothing depends upon personal, social and cultural factors. There was a time in India, when women wave only traditional Indian dresses but today the outlook towards clothing has changed remarkably. Consumers have become more fashion conscious, which drags them to impulsive shopping. But, if consumers clothes are purchased according to actual needs following good buying habits, then it is possible to raise the standard of dressing with new advances in designers wears. Immense varieties and designs are available for children in domestic market where making an intelligent clothing selection becomes a complex process. It is reasonably difficult to make a judicious choice from a multitude varieties and designs.

Young children, more particularly of school age period from six to thirteen years of age are influenced to a greater extent by the clothes they wear. Appropriate clothes make the childhood a most delightful period contributing towards his or her physical, social, emotional development as well as self-confidence. In view of the significant role that clothing plays in developing overall personality of the child, a thoughtful planning and selection of clothing for the young ones is considered necessary. Reversible clothes are an outfit that can be worn two ways. There is no true 'inside out' to a reversible garments, since either way it gives a fashionable appearance. These garments have some features unlike other types of garments but are chosen to provide warmth and comfort to the wearer. It is further emphasized that clothing selection for the school age children should be such that it provides comfort, since mothers are primarily responsible for clothing their children.

The present study was conducted in the integrated rural and urban area of Hubli-Dharwad district of Karnataka. The sample comprised of 60 mothers, 30 each from rural and urban back ground, selected purposively, on the basis of having school going daughters of 6-13 years of age, and collected by personal interview method using a self-structured and pre-tested schedule. The data were statistically analysed by

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calculating frequency and percentages.

The information elicited was regarding mothers' preference for different style and type of garments, sources of information about new style of garments, clothing purchasing practice and annual clothing expenditure. However, it was equally important to know the demographic back ground of the respondents thus this information is presented in diffent tables.

The demographic information reveals about the family background *i.e.* family type, number of family members, their education level, family income and occupation of the rural and urban mothers who are the respondents in the present investigation. This information is useful to know the impact of demographic information on preferences and clothing purchasing practices for school going girls.

Majority of the mothers irrespective of the category belonged to middle age group of more than 32 years. Cent per cent mothers were literates but the level of education of rural and urban mothers varied. Greater per cent of rural families belonged to middle income group with around income of Rs. 61,918 – Rs. 1, 03,262/-. However, the status of middle income group of rural families was relatively lower than the low income group (Rs. 1, 59,522/-) of urban families. The special features related to clothing selection and purchasing studied were:
 – Garment styles for school going girls.
 – Garment types for school going girls.
 – Source of information on trendy garments.
 – Clothing purchasing practices.
 – Factors considered prior to clothing purchase.
 – Annual clothing expenditure per child .
 – Awareness on reversible garments.

Garment styles for school going girls :

Several styles of readymades and tailormades are available for the girls in the market and ultimately it is either mother or both the parents decide about the styles to be purchased. Some of the dresses are exclusively meant for girls where as some attires suitable for both genders.

Form Table 1 it is clearly understood that bermudas, jeans - top and slacks - top were not at all preferred by rural mothers because probably bermudas and jeans are still considered as dresses for boys where as slacks being skin tight not accepted in the rural society. Moreover, this society believes in tradition, heritage and culture where majority of the families being conformists. This indicates that the rural families till today follow the traditional norms and values set by their ancestors. In fact, these families did not mind the dresses which are feminine and meant exclusively for girls whether covered upto ankle or not, *i.e.* frock (73.33%), chudidar/salwar – kameez (66.66%) and skirt – top (66.66%).

Similarly, even the urban mothers did prefer skirt – top (90.00%) and frocks (70.00%) for their daughters. It is true that these two attires are most suitable for school going girls. Therefore in many schools the uniform for primary school is pinafore and skirt - top at middle school. Moreover, this is the age when children look and appear smart, cute, dynamic and active; the personality indicated by the dress what children wear. Jeans preperred by 66.66%, since ages is not considered as dress for boys alone because 'ladies jeans' is a separate segment of apparel industry.

Garment types for school going girls:

Today the market is flooded with varieties of readymade garments for all the age group with trendy styles, patterns, colour, embellishments and so on. Sometimes tailor-made garments do satisfy the demand of consumers with different patterns and styles.

Majority of the consumers purchased readymades, especially when time is the constraints as well when urgently plan to purchase an exclusive occasional wear. Consumer

Table 1: Preference of garment styles for school going girls						
		Mothers preference				
		Always		Sometimes		Never
Sr. No.	Garment style	Rural (n= 30)	Urban (n= 30)	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n = 30)	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n= 30)
1.	Bermuda	--	8 (26.66)	--	13 (43.33)	30 (100.00)	9 (30.00)
2.	Chudidar / salwar kameez	20 (66.66)	8 (26.66)	10 (33.33)	21 (70.00)	--	1 (03.33)
3.	Frock	22 (73.33)	21 (70.00)	7 (23.33)	9 (30.00)	1 (03.33)	--
4.	Jeans and top	--	20 (66.66)	1 (03.33)	7 (23.33)	29 (96.66)	3 (10.00)
5.	Slacks and top	--	10 (33.33)	--	13 (43.33)	30 (100.00)	7 (23.33)
6.	Skirt and top	20 (66.66)	27 (90.00)	8 (26.66)	3 (10.00)	2 (06.66)	--
7.	Any traditional dress	22 (73.33)	--	5 (16.66)	2 (06.66)	3 (10.00)	28 (93.33)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

behaviour is a complex phenomenon that differs among rural and urban population and is indicated through percentage of inclination for readymades. From Table 2, it is evident that, cent per cent of the urban mothers purchased readymades always probably both the parents are employed; who have little time to spare on bespoke clothes mean while they have better purchasing power too. On the other hand, 56.66 per cent rural families purchased readymades always. Whereas about 43.33 per cent of rural families always got clothes stitched and rest purchased readymades sometimes. It indicates clearly that rural families do get some of the dresses for their daughter stitched by the tailors *viz.,* school uniforms, frocks, skirts etc., which are very much accepted and appreciated.

Source of information about new style of garments :

Advertisement is the most effective and widely spread mass media for disseminating information to the public. There are several prints and telecast media that reach the public and spread the information much faster than any other media. As both rural and urban mothers prefer readymades it becomes imperative to findout the sources where the information on fashionable readymades in obtained.

When consumers purchase readymades, it is a common practice that they usually consult their friends, neighbours, relatives, colleagues or try to get fresh information from one or the other media may be print, audio and video. Table 3

reveals about the sources that gave information about new styles of garments available in the market. Friends and relatives are the best source of information for mothers of both the categories. Rural families used to get information form radio advertisement (70.00%), which indicates that in rural areas radio are still popular media of entertainment as well information. On the contrary, TV is the main source of information (90.00%) for urban families as they spend much of their time in watching TV. The urban people also get to know about the new styles from window display (90.00%) and movies (83.33%) because, in urban market window display is one of the important ways of promotion where display showcases the entire dress design along with accessory by 2D or 3D effects on line size mannequins and dummies, sometimes ½ size or front profile dress forms.

Clothing purchasing practices :

Clothing purchasing practice is a complex task, which entirely depends on consumer behaviour and is a product of sociological, psychological and economical aspects. The wardrobes usually consists of categories of dresses like daily, school, casual, night and occasional wears and are not purchased at a same time but throughout the year at different times. Hence, an attempt was made to findout how often and when these categories of the dresses are purchased by the respondents.

Table 4 discloses the clothing purchasing practices by

Table 2 : Mothers preference for readymade and tailormade garments for school going girls						
		Mothers preferences				
		Always		Sometimes		Never	
Sr. No.	Garments types	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n= 30)	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n = 30)	Rural (n= 30)	Urban (n = 30)
1.	Readymade	17 (56.66)	30 (100.00)	13 (43.33)	--	--	--
2.	Tailormade	13 (43.33)	--	17 (56.66)	--	--	30 (100.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 3 : Source of information on new style of garments			
Sr. No.	Source of information	Rural mothers (n=30)	Urban mothers (n=30)
1.	Banners	--	3 (10.00)
2.	Door to door advertisements	--	2 (06.66)
3.	Friends and relatives	27 (90.00)	30 (100.00)
4.	Movies	--	25 (83.33)
5.	News paper bills	1 (03.33)	1 (03.33)
6.	Pamphlets	6 (20.00)	2 (06.66)
7.	Radio advertisements	21 (70.00)	--
8.	Sales	14 (46.66)	17 (56.66)
9.	Television advertisements	--	27 (90.00)
10.	Window display	--	27 (90.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages,   Multiple responses possible

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Table 4 : Clothing purchasing practices by mothers for school girls

Sr. No.	Type of clothes	Purchasing practices							
		Quarterly		Half yearly		Yearly		As and when required	
		Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n = 30)	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n = 30)	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n = 30)	Rural (n = 30)	Urban (n = 30)
1.	Daily wear	--	2 (06.66)	--	15 (50.00)	19 (63.33)	--	11 (36.66)	13 (43.33)
2.	School wear	--	--	--	--	21 (70.00)	28 (93.33)	9 (30.00)	2 (06.66)
3.	Casual wear	--	--	--	19 (63.33)	--	--	--	11 (36.66)
4.	Night wear	--	--	--	5 (16.66)	--	18 (60.00)	--	7 (23.33)
5.	Occasional wear	--	--	--	2 (06.66)	11 (36.66)	1 (03.33)	19 (63.33)	27 (90.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

mothers for their school going girls. It is evident from this table that none of the mothers, except meagre per cent (06.66%) of urban mothers purchased daily wear quarterly. The school wears were purchased yearly by maximum mothers (93.33% urban and 70.00% rural). Majority of the urban mothers purchased daily wears half yearly (50.00%), whereas, rural mothers yearly (63.33%). The occasional wears were purchased as and when required by mothers of both the categories. Casual wear were purchased only by urban mothers either half yearly (63.33%) or as and when required (36.66%). None of the rural families purchased casual wear and night wear because the daily wears probably formed the night wear as well casual wear for the children. It is observed that, the wardrobe of the urban children do encompass all the categories of clothes which is not the case with rural children.

Factors considered prior to clothing purchase :

Pre-planning is an important activity prior to purchase any thing, for that matter. It is a best tool to keep hold on the budget, makes the process of purchasing simpler and easier.

Sometimes it is observed that a handful of families plan to purchase clothes before actual buying and the factors usually thought of are how much to spent, which pattern (style), what should be the fibre content, which colour combination, and shop to be visited, which accessories to be looked for and many more. Keeping in view 'plan to purchase', mothers were interviewed to find out the factors considered before actual purchase of clothes for their daughters. The results revealed from Table 5 that, cent per cent of the mothers of both the categories mentioned that 'amount to be spent' was the main factor considered, in fact a good plan of budgeting. The cost of readymades vary mainly because of fibre content like cotton, silk, polyester and so on. Thus, when budget is planned, fibre content of the material is always taken into consideration. Mean while the cost of garments do vary with pattern or styles like frocks, skirt – top, jeans – top, traditional costumes and chudidar / salwar – kameez. Hence, both the mothers indicated that pattern / style were one of the factors considered while planning the clothing purchase (60.00% rural and 66.66% urban mothers). None of the rural

mothers pre-planned for neither accessories nor colour combination. It is evident that, urban and rural mothers did give importance for fibre content (96.66% and 40.00%, respectively).

Table 5 : Factors considered prior to clothing purchase

Sr. No.	Factors	Rural mothers (n=30)	Urban mothers (n=30)
1.	Accessories	--	--
2.	Amount	30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)
3.	Colour	--	3 (10.00)
4.	Fibre content	12 (40.00)	29 (96.66)
5.	Pattern	18 (60.00)	29 (66.66)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages, Multiple responses possible

Annual clothing expenditure :

The purchasing power of the families ultimately depends on the annual income of the family. Therefore, the clothing expenditure of the families varied between the rural and urban families as well among the rural and urban families with respective to low, middle and high income groups.

Further, the money spent on categories of the clothing does differ to a greater extent. This is supported from Table 6, where the urban families spend almost double the amount on daily, school and occasional wears in comparison to the amount spent by rural families. It is evident form Table 6 that urban families purchased all categories of clothes and the amount spent on daily, school and casual wears ranged between Rs. 500-Rs.1000, night wear Rs. 300-500 and occasional wears Rs. 1000-2000. Further, more, it is clear that a provision is made for casual and night wear for urban children, simply an additional budget, which is found only in urban families. This is mainly because of purchasing power of these families that directly depends on capacity to spend *i.e.,* availability of budget. On the contrary, rural families do not have distinct clothes as casual and night wears hence, no provision is made in the annual clothing expenditure. Maximum amount is spent on occasional wear Rs. 500-Rs.1000, followed by school wear (Rs. 400-Rs.5000) and least on daily wear (Rs. 200- Rs.500) by

rural families. The socio-economic condition of the urban families is undoubtedly better than the rural families.

Table 6 :	Annual clothing expenditure of the rural and urban families		
Sr. No.	Categories of clothes	Amount spent (Rs) / child	
		Rural families (n=30)	Urban families (n=30)
1.	Daily wear	200 – 500	500 – 1000
2.	School wear	400 – 500	500 – 1000
3.	Casual wear	--	500 – 1000
4.	Night wear	--	300 – 500
5.	Occasional wear	500 – 1000	1000 – 2000

Awareness on reversible clothes :

Reversible clothing is the simple plans of turning the garments 'inside out' accomplishes the reversal and allow it to be worn as a second garment alone or in combination. Making a garment reversible was a way to double its use and / or provide the possibility of a different look without a corresponding increase in cost.

The mothers of both categories were aware about reversible garments available in the market. The rural mothers were familiar with rainy jacket, shawls, and sweaters whereas urban mothers were aware about pullover, jersey and capes, in addition. However, none of them were aware about winter jacket, in most cases which are reversible (Table 7).

Table 7 : Mothers' awareness on reversible clothes			
Sr. No.	Reversible clothes	Mothers awareness	
		Rural (n$_1$=30)	Urban (n$_2$=30)
1.	Cape	--	6 (20.00)
2.	Jacket (garment accessory)	--	--
3.	Jersey	--	9 (30.00)
4.	Pull over	--	18 (60.00)
5.	Rainy jacket	5 (16.66)	1 (03.33)
6.	Shawl	6 (20.00)	30 (100.00)
7.	Sweater	10 (33.33)	29 (96.66)
8.	Winter jacket	--	--

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages, Multiple responses possible

Choudhury and Buruah (2001) and Gahlot and Kaur (2000) made some contributions on garments/chothing for pre-school and elementary school children. Prasad and Mazumdar (2006) worked on the mother's knowledge on pre-school children clothing. Vimala and Ramalakshmi (2008) made information on designing of comfort garments for children.

Conclusion :

It can be concluded from this study that rural mothers preferred frock, salwar-kameez, skirt-top and traditional dresses; where as skirt-top, frock and jeans-top by urban mothers for their school going girls. Readymade garments were preferred by both rural and urban mothers always, but sometimes option was open for tailor-mades too. Friends, relatives and radio advertisements were the sources of information of new styles for rural mothers whereas friends, relatives, television advertisements, window display were the source for urban mothers. Before clothing purchases, the mothers preplanned for amount to be spent, fibre content and garment style. The annual expenditure on clothing for each school going girl of rural families ranged from Rs.200 to Rs.1000 irrespective of daily, casually and occasionally wears; where as it was almost double *i.e.* Rs.400 to Rs.2000 for urban girl. Mothers did have some knowledge on reversible attires and made ups like sweater, rainy jackets, pull over, jersey and shawls.

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