Demand and production pattern of articles prepared in the boutiques run by women entrepreneurs in Punjab

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■ **ABSTRACT :** Clothes in the present times are a medium of expressing oneself and to present a better and more confident appearance to the society. People from upper and middle class society are availing services of boutiques as per their requirements. The present study was conducted on 200 respondents running boutiques from houses and shops in four cities of Punjab (Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Patiala). The respondents were selected purposively by using snowball sampling technique from selected cities. The relevant information regarding the demand pattern and product range of articles produced in boutiques run by women entrepreneurs was collected by an interview schedule. The information regarding the demand pattern and product range of articles produced in the boutiques was worked out. In boutiques operating from shops, demand of *Salwar Kameez, Pyjami Kameez, Designer suits, Kurtis/tops* and one piece dresses was at the highest level and at par, followed by *Parallel suits, Harrem pants, Lehngas* and *Cholies,* trousers and skirts the demand for which came out to be at the second level while *Sarees* and *blouses,* nighties/night suits was at the third position. In boutiques running from houses, the most demanded products came out to be *Salwar -Kameez* and *Pyjami -Kameez,* followed by *Designer suits, Parallel suits, Harrem pants, Sarees* and *blouses, Kurtis/ tops* and one piece dresses. The least demanded products came out to be *Lehngas* and *Cholies, trousers, skirts* and *nighties/night suits.* The demand of all types of article was collected by an interview schedule. The data were products, other than *Salwar Kameez* and *Pyjami Kameez* was significantly higher in shops than in houses.

■ **KEY WORDS :** Boutique, Entrepreneur, Demand, Processing, Product range

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In India, boutiques have mushroomed in the last few years, their locale varying from every nook and corner of small streets to big shopping complexes. People from upper and middle class societies are availing services of boutiques as per their requirements. A large number of women entrepreneurs feel that there is a good opportunity to make money and to provide employment in this sphere. The products prepared in Indian boutiques, especially in Punjab, are mainly ladies suits, dresses, trousers etc. They are usually classified into two categories : casuals and formals. Some boutiques specialize in one category while others deal with the both. Product price and consumer satisfaction are the significant factors that determine to a great extent, success of any enterprise. Boutique owners are concerned with product, price and consumer satisfaction. Hence the study was planned to know the demand pattern and product range of the articles prepared in the boutiques run by women entrepreneurs in Punjab.

■ **RESEARCH METHODS**

The present study was conducted on 200 respondents running boutiques from houses and shops in four cities of Punjab (Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Patiala). The respondents were selected purposively by using snowball sampling technique from selected cities. The relevant information regarding the demand pattern and product range

of articles produced in boutiques run by women entrepreneurs were tabulated and analysed by using frequencies, percentages, mean, t-value, Z- test and x2 value.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The prospects of any business depend upon the demand of its products. The information regarding this aspect has been given in Table 1. The analysis showed that in boutiques operating from shops, demand of *Salwar-Kameez, Pyjami- Kameez, Designer suits, Kurtis/tops* and one piece dresses was at the highest level and at par, followed by *Parallel - suits, Harrem pants, Lehngas and Cholies*, trousers and skirts the demand for which came out to be at the second level while sarees and blouses, nighties/night suits was at the third position. In boutiques running from houses, the most demanded products came out to be *Salwar- Kameez* and *Pyjami- Kameez*, followed by *Designer suits, Parallel suits, Harrem pants, Saree and blouses, Kurtis/tops* and one piece dresses. The least

demanded products came out to be *Lehngas* and *Cholies*, Trousers, skirts and nighties/night suits. The demand of all types of products, other than *Salwar- Kameez* and *Pyjami-Kameez* was significantly higher in shops than in house. Reddy (1991) also reported that women entrepreneurs in Goa were engaged in production of conventional items like embroidery, crochet, applique works, readymade garments, fabric painting, masalas, bakery and confectionery, artificial jewellery, silver and gold plated ornaments and these small business ventures by females contributed significantly toward the economic transformation process.

Type of the product range of the boutiques:
Data showed that all the boutiques (100%) in both the categories were preparing *Salwar-Kammez* and *Pyjami Kameez* followed by *Designer suits* (75.5%). *One piece dresses* (70%) *Kurtis (69%), Parallel suits* (68%), trousers (67.5%), *Sarees* and *blouses* (61%), *Harrem pants* (57%),

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to demand pattern of products prepared in the boutiques					
Type of products	Boutiques operating from shops (100) (mean)	Ranks	Boutiques operating from houses (100) (mean)	Ranks	t-value
Salwar- Kameez	2.00	I	2.00	I	-
Pyajami- Kameez	1.81	I	1.79	I	0.13[NS]
Designer suits	1.62	I	0.74	II	3.16***
Parallel suits	1.58	II	0.51	II	4.67***
Harrem pants	1.18	II	0.70	II	2.43**
Saree and blouses	1.12	III	0.63	II	3.09***
Lehnga and Cholies	1.18	II	0.41	III	6.39***
Trousers	1.46	II	0.39	III	5.54***
Kurtis/tops	1.68	I	0.52	II	6.14**
Skirts	1.40	II	0.39	III	7.43***
One piece dresses	1.76	I	0.82	II	1.99**
Nighties/night suits	1.14	III	0.29	III	6.91***
F-ratio	5.49***		9.67***		
C.D.	0.3967		0.3753		

Note : Overall ranking is based on the value of C.D., *,** and *** indicate significance of values at P=0.01, 0.05 and 0.1, respectively, NS = Non-significant

Table 2 : Distribution of respondents according to daily processing of articles in the boutiques			
Daily processing activity	Boutiques operating from shops (100) (mean)	Boutiques operating from houses (100) (mean)	t-value
Orders booked	3.90	3.12	6.30***
Cutting of pieces	3.00	1.97	7.52***
Stitching of pieces	2.22	1.43	6.05***
Hand embroidery of pieces	0.99	0.34	2.43**
Machine embroidery of pieces	1.80	1.65	2.18**
Sale of pieces	3.26	2.76	3.36***

*, ** and *** indicate significance of values at P=0.05, 0.01 and 0.1, respectively, NS = Non-significant

Lehngas and *Cholies* (48.5%), *Skirts* (47%) and nighties by 40 per cent of the respondents. All types of products except *Salwar-Kameez, Pyjami-Kameez* and nighties/night *suits* were prepared significantly in higher proportion in case of boutiques running from shops as compared to those running from houses. Seth (2002) also studied the marketing practices of various boutiques in Ludhiana city and found that most of the boutiques were owned by housewives who were having wide product range to offer to the customers of middle class families. women took up employment.

Processing of articles in the boutiques:

A glance at the data in Table 2 indicates that the average number of orders booked (3.90), cut (3.00), stitched (2.22), machine embroidered (1.80), hand embroidered (0.99) and sold (3.26) per day were significantly higher in case of boutiques operating from shops as compared to boutiques operating from houses. As indicated in the significant t-values *i.e.* 6.30, 7.52, 6.05, 2.43, 2.18 and 3.36, respectively. This showed that the scale of business was higher in boutiques operating from shops than those running from houses. Das (1996) studied that women engaged in applique craft of Orissa and found it a boon to women in domestic sector.

She also found that diversification of products and introduction of new design are required to promote export potential of the products.

Conclusion:

The information regarding the demand pattern and product range of boutiques run by the respondents will provide an insight to start a boutique as a successful enterprise as the prospects of any business depend upon the demand of its products.

Hence, these ventures by females were contributing significantly toward the family income and raising their standard of living.

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