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Changing Perspective of Clothing and Textiles in Home Science

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Abstract

Clothing and Textiles, one of the five branches of Home Science subject, faced changes in the course content over the last few years. Apart from focusing on traditional areas, new subjects have also been given due consideration. Recent advances in different fields like fibre science, spinning, garment constructions, value addition of garments, dyeing and printing techniques etc. and also introduction of new fields like Technical textiles, marketing, retail and resource management, visual merchandising, designing softwares in textiles and clothing etc. make the subject more technical and interesting. This article covers different factors which acted as a catalyst in altering the course content of Clothing and Textiles.

Keywords: Home Science, Clothing & Textiles, Women empowerment, Technological advancement, Globalization, Career opportunities.

1. Introduction

The earth is round so is the movement of civilization that dwells upon it. In ancient India women enjoyed the same social status and rights as men as is evident from various 'seals' and 'scriptures' dating back to Harappan civilization. However with the development of society the status of women suffered considerable set back and was reduced to that of second class citizen by the end of Mughal rule. Undoubtedly time and again there were some exceptional women but they only constituted the exceptions and not the rule. It was for these reasons that even at International level women fall among the group of "vulnerable classes", classified by United Nation Organizations.

It is an old adage that night is darkest before the dawn and same was the case with status of women which rise by leaps and bounds in the second half of the 20th century. For the past 30 years "Women Empowerment" has been an integral element of our national policies. Women constitute almost half the population and nearly perform 50% of work in commodities produced yet earn only 1/3 of the remuneration and own only 10% of property. Improving the status of women and empowering them would go a long way in accomplishing egalitarian gender relation in society and empowerment is dependent upon various variables that include 'educational status'. Women have started playing the role of both breadwinner and homemaker. The participation of women in Indian economy has also increased by manifolds although it is far below its potential and in order to bridge this gap social, educational and cultural empowerment of women is essential. Keeping in view these fundamental objectives a separate branch of studies catering especially to the needs of women is drafted.

The stream of clothing and textiles inducted as a separate branch in a subject of Home Science. Aspects such as garment constructions, value addition with different embroideries, printing techniques, stain removal, laundry, care-maintenance & storage of textiles, etc. form the core of the subject. The key objective being production of better techniques by amalgamation of ancestors' knowledge and current scientific studies.

Change is inevitable and with the changing scenario the expectations from and aspirations of a women are no longer confined to the realm of house and family. The factors which acted as a catalyst in altering the course content of Clothing and Textiles can be broadly be classified as:

- **Empowerment of Women**

Empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors is essential to build a stronger economy, achieve agreed goals for development and sustainability, and improve the

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quality of life for women, families and communities. In broad terms, women are said to be empowered when they have sense of self-worth, right to determine their choices, right to access opportunities and resources, and most pertinent is right to control their own lives. Thus in an urge to make Indian women empowered changes are been made in the course content of Clothing and Textiles in Home Science.

- **Technological advancements**

Technological advancements made an important impact on the course content of Clothing and Textiles. Currently, the word textiles incorporates the study of materials having basic component as fiber. The detailed study of natural and manmade fibers, their production using ecofriendly methods/chemicals, their physical and chemical properties and uses in various fields of textiles are the major focused area. The Technical textiles and composites are the new face in this field having more functional than decorative aspects. Technical textiles is an emerging sector which is steadily gaining ground in India. Technical textiles have applications across various industries including automobiles, civil engineering and construction, agriculture, healthcare, personal protection, etc. There are 12 segments of Technical textiles based on usage: Agrotech, Meditech, Buildtech, Mobiltech, Clothtech, Oekotech, Geotech, Packtech, Hometech, Protech, Indutech and Sportech. In India Technical textile sectors have registered compounded annual rate of growth of 11% during 11th Five Year Plan and as per the 12th Five Year Plan estimates by the sub-group on technical textiles, its market size is expected to grow at CAGR of 20% and reach Rs. 1,58,540 crore by 2016-17 from the market size of Rs 70,151 Crore in 2012-13. The composites are established as an alternate material system to traditional materials like steel, wood, aluminium and also concrete. In 2013 the Indian composite industry was of Rs 15,000 crore which is expected to grow 15% per annum over the next five years.



Varieties of yarn, different instruments/techniques used in yarn spinning, their applications, production of fabrics using different techniques of weaving, knitting, nonwovens etc. and various other techniques were introduced to enhance carrier opportunities in various sectors of organized and unorganized sectors of textiles. The unorganized sector involves handloom, handicrafts and sericulture, operated on a small scale and through traditional tools and methods. The organized sector comprises spinning, apparel and garments segment and use modern machinery and techniques. The Indian textiles industry, currently estimated at around US\$ 108 billion, is expected to reach US\$ 223 billion by 2021. The industry is the second largest employer after agriculture, providing employment to over 45 million people directly and 60 million people indirectly. The Indian Textile Industry contributes

approximately 5 per cent to India's gross domestic product (GDP). Increased penetration of organized retail, favorable demographics and rising income levels are likely to drive demand for textiles. Globally garment industry is the third largest employer of women, after Agriculture and Fishing. Indian garment industry has carved out a niche in the global markets and is one of the leading exporters of readymade garments in the world. Main markets for Indian textile and apparel exports are US, European Union, Parts of Asia and Middle East. Indian garment industry is closely associated to the fashion industry which grows hand in hand and an increased fashion consciousness leads to demands of creative students with sound technical knowledge.

- **New courses**

To satisfy the needs and demands of society various courses have been introduced in this subject. Introduction of computer-based technology like computer-aided designing (CAD) make the subject technology oriented. CAD software are used in different fields like weaving, draping, fashion designing, garment construction, etc. This software improves technical skills and knowledge helping students to utilize a systematic approach to design and solve problem effectively in fashion and textile enterprises.



In-depth knowledge is provided in the field of traditional embroidery- their adaptations and varied applications, dyeing and printing technology, application of various finishing techniques using different applications like microencapsulation, padding, etc., color concepts, fundamentals and principles of designs, judgement of fabric quality, textile testing, working of different machines used in fabric processing, meaning and importance of specifications and care labelling, information on surface embellishment, advance weaving and printing technology. Marketing, retail and resource management, visual merchandising and fashion shows help students to think beyond classroom activities. Extensive information in these areas complement the basic acquired skills of students thereby enabling them to develop innovative design solutions catering to the needs of both market and industry. Emphasis has been laid on visit to field, textile fairs, industry and mills which make the students better acquainted with the recent advancement in these arenas. Short term courses and trainings have also been introduced to facilitate up-gradation of knowledge and skills.

- **Globalization**

In the modern times where there has been globalization of trade and industry, the scientific growth in communication system and faster computing has turned the world into a very well knit community. Globalization has enabled people to take

charge of their decisions and make better choices on the basis of freely available information. This free flow of information and ideas has altered the course of Clothing and Textiles to a great extent.

- **Career opportunities**

The changes in the course content are made to widen the spectrum of job for Clothing and Textile students. It is so framed that the youth pursuing this field as a carrier get easily absorbed in the various government or public sectors. The graduates and post graduates get an opportunity to explore the fields of fashion, textiles, interiors and crafts. Career opportunities include textile and fashion designer, visual merchandiser, retail merchandiser, merchandiser in buying and export houses, retail heads, retail buyers, operation manager, weave/print designers, garment technologist, quality controller, textile testing technician, independent designers, fashion buyers, and entrepreneurs, researcher in R & D department of various firms and colleges.

The changing perspective of textile helps in empowering women as it deals with the studies of applied and advance courses, prepared them to face the challenges of changing world. The study of textiles encompasses theoretical as well as practical knowledge which helps them to get placed in different sectors. As the focus is now shifted from home to outer world the widen areas of textile increases the empowered women percentage in society. Wide spectrum of textiles starting from single strand of fibers to complex structures are not only for women but men are also applicable for this. The previous concept of home science that it's only for women and for house has changed drastically because of the widen areas of subjects which are now more carrier oriented irrespective of gender.

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