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Consumer buying and clothing behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

The present study dealt with “Consumer buying and clothing behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh” which involved the buying practices of Hindu working women. The study was taken up with the following objectives:-

- To study consumer behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh.
- To study the costumes worn by Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh.
- To study the buying behaviour of clothing and accessories among Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh.

To conduct this study, the related literature on clothing practices, culture of Hindu women and Consumer behaviour was reviewed. The survey method was adopted for collection of Data. This Data was collected from Hindu working women in the age of 25 to 55 years who fell in middle income group.

A set of questions was prepared for survey. Questionnaire was developed in two sections: Buying Practices and clothing practices. It was distributed to respondents at their respective working place, i.e. schools, colleges, hospitals, offices etc. The respondents were 500 of Hindu working women. The collected data was subjected to statistical analysis.

The study revealed that there were partial differences in the clothing practices of Hindu working women. Hindu women were more adopting western culture. There were many colours, texture and print choices of Hindu working women. They further use of accessories, jewellery and cosmetics. Aspects of wardrobe planning and frequency of buying clothes also made a difference.

Keywords: Consumer buying behaviour, clothing, religion, gender

1. Introduction

Clothing is a constantly repeated aspect of human life, which meets the human requirements like modesty and protection. Proper clothing also add up charm and personal seductiveness, so it serves two fold purposes, on one hand it hides our shame, on the other hand it displays our seductiveness.

As the important function of clothing is that of defining a person’s status and position in the society, so it makes the wearer to walk with high notions in the society and also enable person to play various roles in the society appropriate to his self-concept and to the situation. Clothing can be a means of self-expression, a manifestation of aesthetic qualities and our outlet for creative ability. The force of personality of as individual and his success or failure in life influenced to a large extent by clothing.

1.1 Psychology of clothing

“If human beings were not reacting to the other human beings in social situations, there would be no felt need for clothing beyond perhaps the protection it offers from cold.” Ryan (1926), at every stage of development, clothing helps to establish the identity of the individual to himself and to others with whom he interacts. Clothing is visual but non-verbal symbol and such symbols are ‘cues’ which select the status that is to be imputed to an individual and define the way others are to treat him. Clothing has the power to arouse feelings, thoughts and emotions in the mind of an observer that are not easily described.

In the recent times, the concept and functions of clothing has widened, due to the psychological and sociological factors attached to it. With the change in the concepts and functions clothing, interests have also changed. Clothing is found to be an important factor in the development of an individual’s personality.

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Clothing contributes to the attainment of certain desires: physical comfort, social participation, conformity, prestige, self-expression, attracting the opposite sex, and aesthetic expression. The needs to satisfy these desires vary from one person to another, but each affects to some degree the individual's attitudes towards clothing.

Physical comfort, a relatively simple, satisfaction mean protection from heat, cold, rain and sharp objects. Concept of physical comfort also requires that body movement is unhampered, that is clothing is light weight and pliable, that it feel smooth to the skin, and that it permits sufficient passage of air to allow evaporation of moisture from the skin. The desire for companionship and for participation in the activities of some social groups is strong in most people. To be accepted by the group the individuals must be approved, that means he/she must meet set standards of clothing and behaviour. His/her clothing must be appropriate. As outfit that is too dressy, a colour that expresses poor taste, may delay or prevent admission into the group. Often, small details determine success or failure in human relationships. Conformity to the ways of group provides enormous protection for its members. No one is criticised for customary activities; each member finds his/her confidence strengthened through following group practices. Whether the conformity is voluntary or involuntary, the effect is almost the same. But everyone does not have the desire for conformity in dress. It varies from one group to another. Those who feel the least secure in their social group inevitably place the greatest importance on conformity. The desire to command admiration from a group may overshadow other desires. It is particularly strong among those who are moving up in the social scale. Clothing is one of the areas of consumption that show the extent of this desire for prestige. People sometimes neglect the necessities of life for clothes that will attract attention. Some people gain prestige by wearing "correct dress", by faithfully following fashion, by owning an extensive wardrobe, or by displaying beautiful and expensive clothing. The identification of self with clothing is inevitable. Clothing virtually becomes one's body surface, so that any criticism of one's dress is likely to be constructed as criticism of the wearer. The clothes that a person chooses are to a great extent an expression of the concept he/she has of him/herself. They reflect their personality. Clothing is perhaps one of the most important, means of attracting the opposite sex. Undoubtedly, clothing distinguishes one sex from the other. In fact, dress serves as secondary sex characteristics. When women wear women's clothing and men wear typically masculine attire, each can be promptly identified as to sex.

Before clothing was worn, primitives decorated their bodies with elaborate designs, sometimes painted, sometimes tattooed or created from scars in the flesh. The adornment of the human bodies along with music, poetry, and dancing marks the beginning of the most exquisite arts in civilisation. Clothing offers many opportunities for aesthetic expression whether it is desired from the assembling of a dress and its appropriate accessories by the women or the creating of beautiful costume that calls for all the imagination and skill of a famed designer, dress can be a satisfying means of expressing the self. Clothing is an aid towards understanding a person. It expresses the values that are important to him. To same material, things are of primary importance; to others less tangible matters are desirable, as friendship respect from associates, and the values that the individual holds important are the ruling forces in his life. Values are defined as the fundamental beliefs and feelings for which a person or a

group has affective regard; that is towards which he/she has an emotional response.

1.2 Theoretical Premise

When considering fashion, let's start by looking at fundamental reasons why people wear clothes. That may seem obvious, but there are many reasons. Early theories put forth by anthropologists and psychologists of why people wear clothing are related to the functions of clothing. These have been much discussed and outlined by fashion and apparel researchers. Early theorists met with little agreement as to the motivation for our first beginning to wear clothes, but most agree on the following four main functions, many of which are motivations for buying fashion today.

The first theory suggests that people wore clothing to conceal the private parts of their bodies. Moralists believe that one's innate feelings of guilt and shame from being naked led to clothing themselves. This theory, called the Biblical theory, stems from the story of Adam and Eve and the fig leaf. However, modesty is not universal, that is, the same in all cultures. A part of body covered in one culture is left exposed in another culture without shame. Modesty is Muslim cultures is dictated; the chador, which completely envelops the women in black, is to protect women's virtue. Also consider little children who love to run around with the freedom of no clothes, and no shame. The definition of modesty changes over time. For e.g.:- the swimsuit of the 1920's is quite different from today's in terms of acceptable exposure.

Second theory indeed, clothes have been worn to draw attention to certain parts of the body. We use the words decent and proper to refer to the appropriateness of the amount of the body exposure through selection of clothing. A tight sweater and jeans cover the body, but they also draw attention at the same time. Sex appeal is not solely what fashion is about, but women's sexuality and dress throughout the ages have been inexplicable intertwined.

In third theory suggests, some theorists feel that clothing was first used to protect us from the elements such as the cold, or from insects and animals. Still others argue that clothing was used as protection against enemies or from the harm of supernatural forces. Clothing functions as a barrier between the body and the environment. We wear clothes to protect our bodies from sun, wind, rain, and cold by wearing parkas, gloves, hats, and so on. Some wear clothing or accessories as amulets to buying good luck or protection from harmful spiritual powers; they might be called psychological protection as opposed to physical protection. Superstitions, fear of unseen, belief in evil spirits, and luck have all been responsible for the use of certain garments, jewellery, and other adornment. Consider the following examples:-

- Cowries' shells protect women from sterility in many pacific cultures.
- Bridal veils protect the bride from evil spirits.
- Evil-eye beads protect children and animals from unseen powers in Southeast Asia.
- Lucky charms, jewellery, coins, clothing, shoes and hats bring good luck.

Fourth theory perhaps the most universal function of clothing and accessories is adornment, Personal decoration, or aesthetic expression. Adornment shows status and identity, and also raises one's self-esteem. Adornment is achieved through clothing (external adornment) or through making permanent changes to the body (bodily adornment). One author outlined external adornment as wrapped around the

body (shawls), suspended from the body (necklaces), reshaped to fit the body (jackets), clipped to the body (earrings), applied to the body (false eyelashes), and hand-held (purses). Bodily adornment includes such things as tattooing, piercing, scarification, or plastic surgery. Temporary bodily adornment that we all do includes changing our hair, wearing makeup, shaving body hair, or using lotions to change skin texture. Through the ages, women have reshaped their bodies to conform to the current definition of beauty by "paring down" through the use of tight corsets, or "adding on" height or width to the silhouette through the use of padding or other means, such as petticoats. These original functions of clothing may be through of intrinsic reasons or motivations for clothing choices. Social-psychological or hedonic bases, also primary reasons for today's fashion choices.

1.3 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the study of the individuals, groups or organizations and the processes they use to select, use and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society.

Consumer behaviour study is based on the consumer buying behaviour, with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer. Research has shown that consumer behaviour is difficult to predict, even for experts in the field. Understanding the buying behaviour of the target market is the essential task of marketing managers in marketing concept. The term consumer behaviour refers to the consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. Consumer behaviour is the most complex aspect of marketing, as it is the most dynamic of all the marketing time which are difficult to analyse. To understand the consumer behaviour motivates, believes, attitudes, learning, perceptions, emotions, and opinion is essential.

1.3.1 Factors affecting consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour refers to the selection, purchase and consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of they wants. There are different processes involved in the consumer behaviour. Initially the consumer tries to find what commodities he would like to consume, then he selects only those commodities that promise greater utility. After selecting the commodities, the consumer makes an estimate of the available money which he can spend. Lastly, the consumer analyzes the prevailing prices of commodities and takes the decision about the commodities he should consume. Meanwhile, there are various other factors influencing the purchases of consumer such as social, cultural, personal and psychological. The explained below.

Cultural Factors

Consumer behaviour is deeply influenced by cultural factors such as: buyer culture, subculture, and social class.

Culture

Basically, culture is the part of every society and is the important cause of person wants and behaviour. The influence of culture on buying behaviour varies from country to country therefore marketers have to be very careful in analyzing the culture of different groups, regions or even countries.

Subculture

Each culture contains different subcultures such as religions, nationalities, geographic regions, racial groups etc. Marketers can use these groups by segmenting the market into various small portions. For example marketers can design products according to the needs of a particular geographic group.

Social Class

Every society possesses some form of social class which is important to the marketers because the buying behaviour of people in a given social class is similar. In this way marketing activities could be tailored according to different social classes. Here we should note that social class is not only determined by income but there are various other factors as well such as: wealth, education, occupation etc.

Social Factors

Social factors also impact the buying behaviour of consumers. The important social factors are: reference groups, family, role and status.

Reference Groups

Reference groups have potential in forming a person attitude or behaviour. The impact of reference groups varies across products and brands. For example if the product is visible such as dress, shoes, car etc then the influence of reference groups will be high. Reference groups also include opinion leader (a person who influences other because of his special skill, knowledge or other characteristics).

Family

Buyer behaviour is strongly influenced by the member of a family. Therefore marketers are trying to find the roles and influence of the husband, wife and children. If the buying decision of a particular product is influenced by wife then the marketers will try to target the women in their advertisement. Here we should note that buying roles change with change in consumer lifestyles.

Roles and Status

Each person possesses different roles and status in the society depending upon the groups, clubs, family, organization etc. to which he belongs. For example a woman is working in an organization as finance manager. Now she is playing two roles, one of finance manager and other of mother. Therefore her buying decisions will be influenced by her role and status.

Personal Factors

Personal factors can also affect the consumer behaviour. Some of the important personal factors that influence the buying behaviour are: lifestyle, economic situation, occupation, age, personality and self-concept.

Age

Age and life-cycle have potential impact on the consumer buying behaviour. It is obvious that the consumers change the purchase of goods and services with the passage of time. Family life-cycle consists of different stages such young singles, married couples, unmarried couples etc. which help marketers to develop appropriate products for each stage.

Occupation

The occupation of a person has significant impact on his buying behaviour. For example a marketing manager of an organization will try to purchase business suits, whereas a low level worker in the same organization will purchase rugged work clothes.

Economic Situation

Consumer economic situation has great influence on his buying behaviour. If the income and savings of a customer is high then he will purchase more expensive products. On the other hand, a person with low income and savings will purchase inexpensive products.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle of customers is another import factor affecting the consumer buying behaviour. Lifestyle refers to the way a person lives in a society and is expressed by the things in his/her surroundings. It is determined by customer interests, opinions, activities etc. and shapes his whole pattern of acting and interacting in the world.

Personality

Personality changes from person to person, time to time and place to place. Therefore it can greatly influence the buying behaviour of customers. Actually, Personality is not what one wears; rather it is the totality of behaviour of a man in different circumstances. It has different characteristics such as: dominance, aggressiveness, self-confidence etc which can be useful to determine the consumer behaviour for particular product or service.

Psychological Factors

There are four important psychological factors affecting the consumer buying behaviour. These are: perception, motivation, learning, beliefs and attitudes.

Motivation

The level of motivation also affects the buying behaviour of customers. Every person has different needs such as physiological needs, biological needs, social needs etc. The nature of the needs is that, some of them are most pressing while others are least pressing. Therefore a need becomes a motive when it is more pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction.

Perception

Selecting, organizing and interpreting information in a way to produce a meaningful experience of the world is called perception. There are three different perceptual processes which are selective attention, selective distortion and selective retention. In case of selective attention, marketers try to attract the customer attention. Whereas, in case of selective distortion, customers try to interpret the information in a way that will support what the customers already believe. Similarly, in case of selective retention, marketers try to retain information that supports their beliefs.

Beliefs and Attitudes

Customer possesses specific belief and attitude towards various products. Since such beliefs and attitudes make up brand image and affect consumer buying behaviour therefore marketers are interested in them. Marketers can change the beliefs and attitudes of customers by launching special campaigns in this regard.

2. Methodology

Methodology is the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It is the general research strategy that outlines the way in which a research project is to be undertaken and, identifies the method to be used in it. For this study propositions were formulated keeping in mind the Aims and Objectives of the study.

Research was designed in following steps

- 2.1 Locale of the study
- 2.2 Selection of sample
- 2.3 Selection of method
- 2.4 Formation of questionnaire
- 2.5 Pre-testing
- 2.6 Collection of the data
- 2.7 Analysis of data
 - 2.7.1 Coding
 - 2.7.2 Tabulation
 - 2.7.3 Statistical analysis



Source: <http://www.india-travelinfo.com/india-maps/india-maps.htm>, Retrieved: 27-April-2017

Fig 2.1: Map of India



Source: <http://www.india-travelinfo.com/india-maps/uttar-pradesh-map.htm>, Retrieved: 27-April-2017

Fig 2.2: Map of Uttar Pradesh

3. Results and Discussion

Clothing helps to establish the identity of the individual to himself and to others with whom he interacts. Clothing is visual but non-verbal symbol and such symbols are ‘cues’ which select the status that is to be imputed to an individual and define the way others are to treat him

Clothing contributes to the attainment of certain desires:- physical comfort, social participation, conformity, prestige, self-expression, attracting the opposite sex, and aesthetic expression. The needs to satisfy these desires vary from one person to another, but each affects to some degree the individual’s attitudes towards clothing.

The result of the study conducted by investigator consumer behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh has been discussed in this chapter with the respect of the objectives of the study and was carried out. The questions were asked on various aspects which included frequency of buying clothes, wardrobe size, money spend on clothing and preferences of stores for buying garments and fabric.

Section A: Consumer buying behaviour

Table 3.1: Frequency of purchasing clothes

Frequency of purchasing		Hindu	Chi Square	p-Value
Annually	No	77	16.499	0.006
	Yes	23		
Half-yearly	No	81		
	Yes	19		
Monthly	No	82		
	Yes	18		
Throughout Year	No	77		
	Yes	23		
On Festivals	No	85		
	Yes	15		

The above table no.3.1 depicts that most of the Hindu working women preferred to buy clothes throughout the year (23%) and annually (23%).

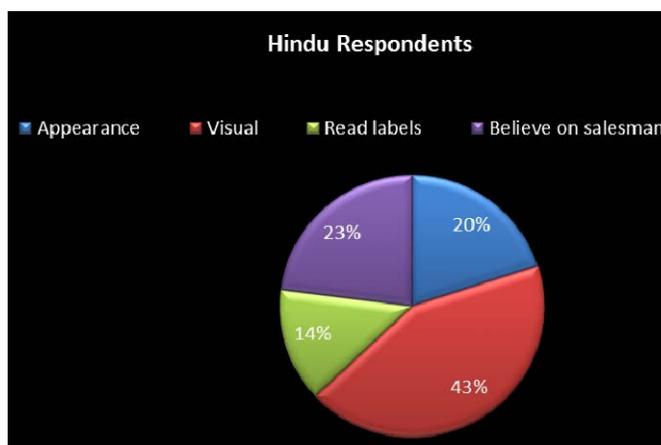


Chart 3.1: Judgment the quality of material

The above pie chart no.3.1 depicts that maximum number of Hindu respondents judge the quality of material visually (43%).

Table 3.2: Stores for buying clothes

Type of stores		Hindu	Chi Square	p-Value
Branded Shops	No	67	11.29	0.00
	Yes	33		
Retail Outlets	No	61	3.85	0.07
	Yes	39		
Factory Outlets	No	98	11.97	0.00
	Yes	2		

Franchise Stores	No	96	2.77	0.16
	Yes	4		
Departmental Stores	No	77	1.13	0.38
	Yes	23		
Exhibition	No	96	10.01	0.00
	Yes	4		

The above table 3.2 depicts that maximum number of Hindu respondents preferred to buy clothes from retail outlets (39%) and 33% Hindu working women liked to buy clothes from branded shops. Significantly, Hindus bought form branded shops

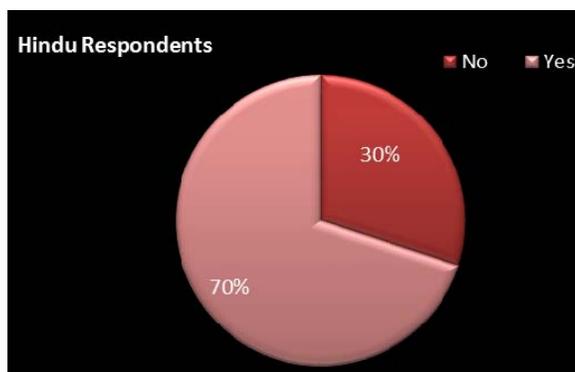


Chart 3.2: Information sought on Labels

The above chart no.3.2 depicts that maximum number of Hindu respondents sought information on labels (70%) It may

be concluded that most of the Hindu working women sought information on labels at the time of buying clothes.

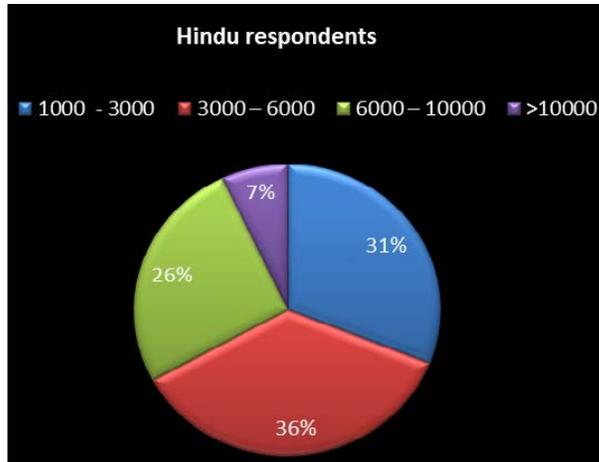


Chart 3.3: Money (in Rs.) spends on clothing per month

The above pie chart no. 3.3 depicts that the maximum number of respondents (36%) spend Rs. 3000-6000 per month on

clothing.

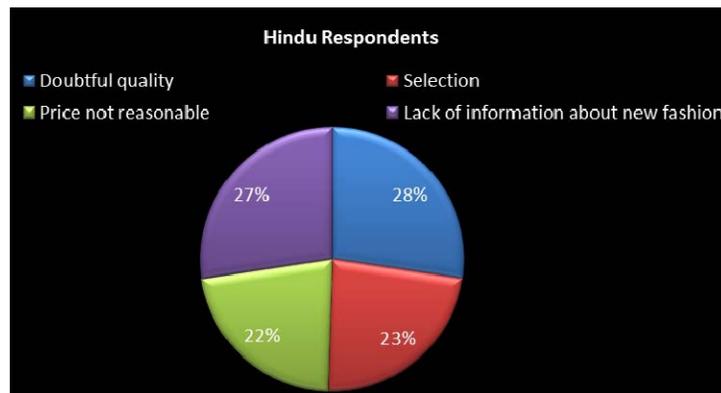


Chart 3.4: Problems during buying clothes

The above chart no.3.4 depicts that most of the Hindu respondents had doubt in quality (28%), confusion in variety (22%), reasonability of the price. (21%), and lack of information about new fashion (26%). It may be concluded

that Hindu respondents had mostly all problems.

Section B: Clothing Practices

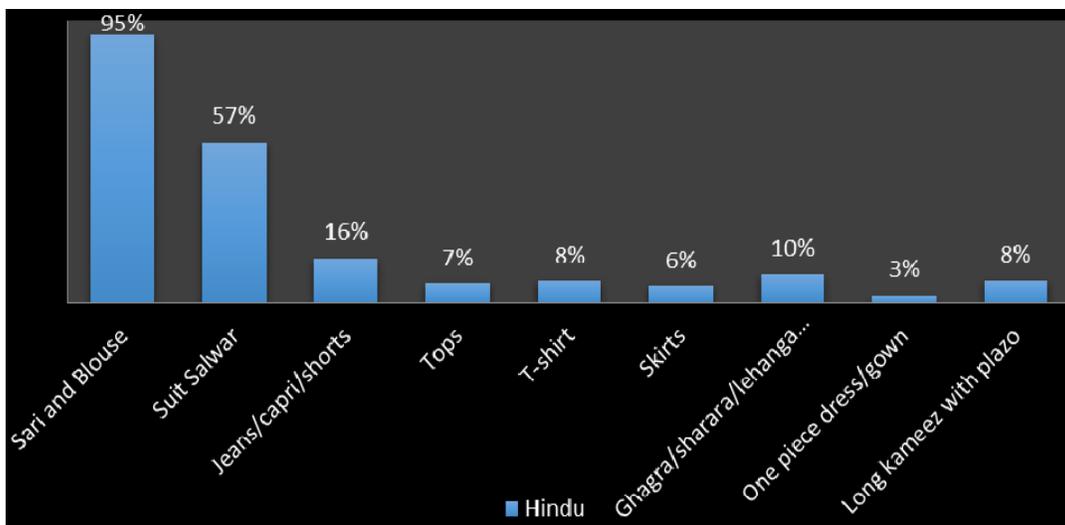


Chart 3.5: Preference for Garments

The above bar chart no. 3.5 depicts that maximum number of Hindu working women preferred Sarees and blouse (95%) and salwar suit (57%), significantly some of the Hindu respondents were preferred jeans/Capri/shorts (6%), tops (7%), t-shirts (8%), skirts (6%), one piece dress/gowns (3%) in their wardrobe.

It may be concluded that most of the Hindu respondents preferred saree blouse and suits. But some of the Hindu respondents also preferred jeans top, Capri, shorts, one piece dress, and other dresses

Costumes of Hindu working women of Meerut District



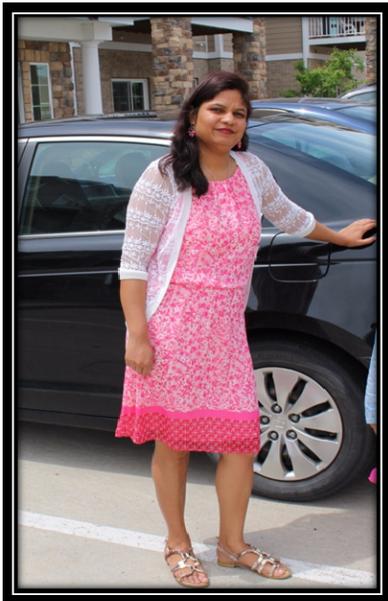
Photograph 1: Salwar Suits



Photograph 2: Different type of Sarees



Photograph 3: Jeans and Top



Photograph 4: One piece dress and flat foot wear



Photograph 5: Short dress and heels



Photograph 6: Hand bag and wrist watch

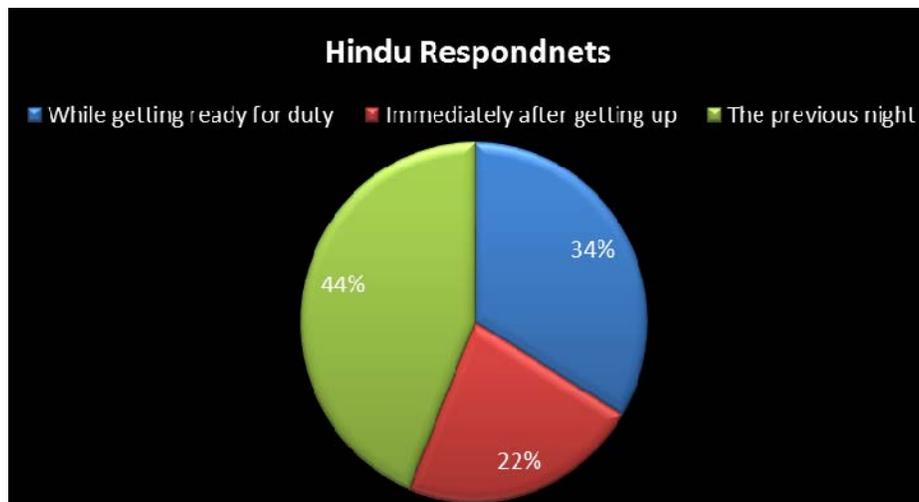


Chart 3.6: Decision of dresses to get ready for job

The above chart no. 3.6 depicts that most of the Hindu respondents decided their dress a previous night (44%). But

33% of working women decided their dresses while getting ready for duty.

Table 3.3: Factors affecting the clothes during duty hours

Factors affecting clothes		Hindu	Chi Square	p-Value
Fashion	No	83	1.01	0.42
	Yes	17		
Comfort	No	57	8.10	0.01
	Yes	43		
Conformity To Group	No	79	0.26	0.74
	Yes	21		
Demand of Job	No	76	0.11	0.87
	Yes	24		
Look different	No	95	4.71	0.05
	Yes	5		

The above table no.3.3 depicts that most of the respondents 43% preferred comfort in clothing, 21% Hindu thought about

conformity of group and 24% Hindu had clothing according to demand of job.

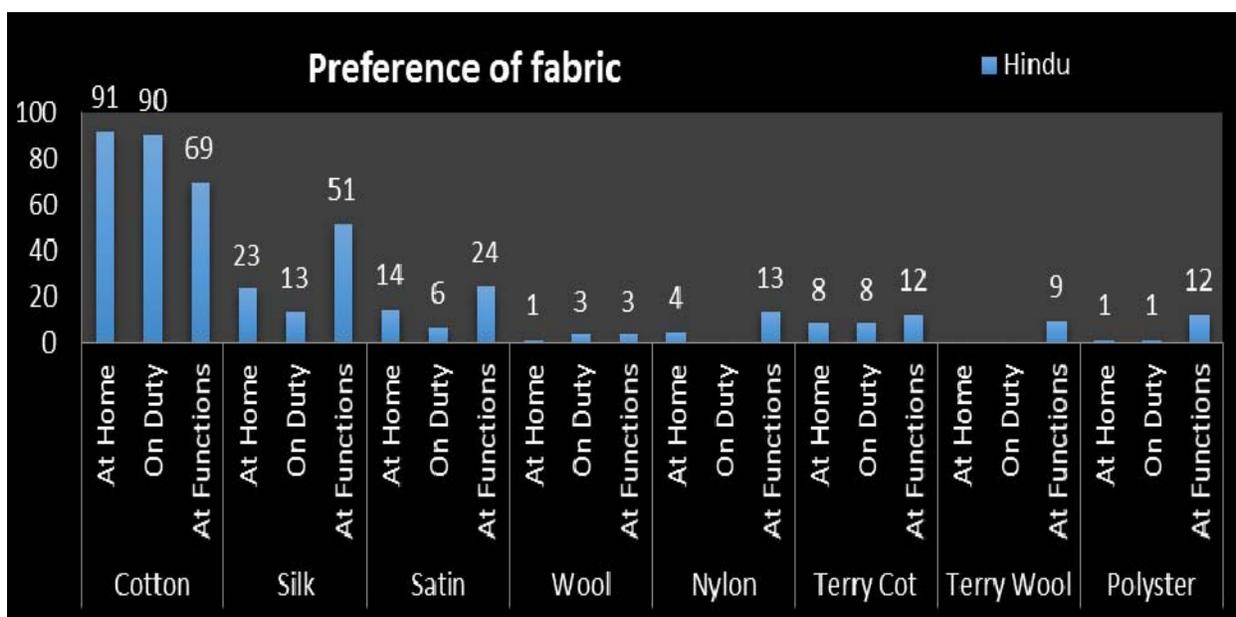


Chart 3.7: Preferences of fabric

The above chart no.3.7 depicts that maximum number of working women of both religions at home, on duty, and at functions preferred Cotton fabric (Hindu 91% (H)¹, 90% (D)², 69% (F)³ But few of them at functions preferred Silk and Satin (Hindu 51%, 24% respectively).

It may be concluded that most of the Hindu working women preferred Cotton fabric at duty time, at home and at festival also. But few of the respondents preferred silk and satin at the time of festivals.

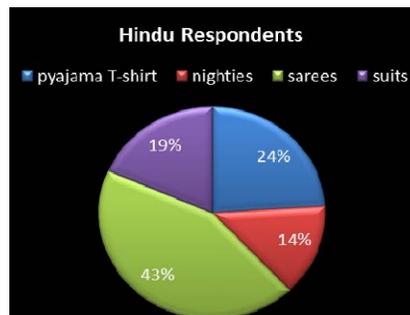


Chart 3.8: Type of Dresses preferred for night wear

¹ H shows at home
² D shows during duty hours
³ F shows at functions

The above pie chart no 3.8 depicts that maximum number of Hindu respondents wore sarees (49%) at night significantly

some of the Hindu working women wore pyajama and t-shirt (24%), nighties (14%), and suits (18%).

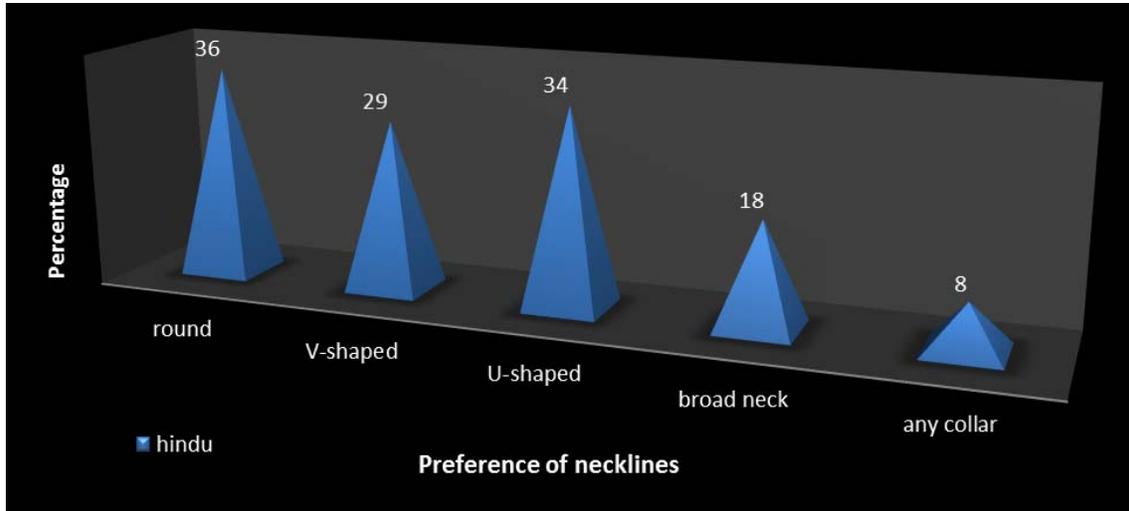


Chart 3.9: Shapes of necklines preferred

The above chart no.3.9 depicts that most of the Hindu working women preferred round shaped neck lines (36%) Few respondents belonging to Hindu preferred V-shaped

necklines (Hindu 29%). Very few respondents preferred collars on their garments.

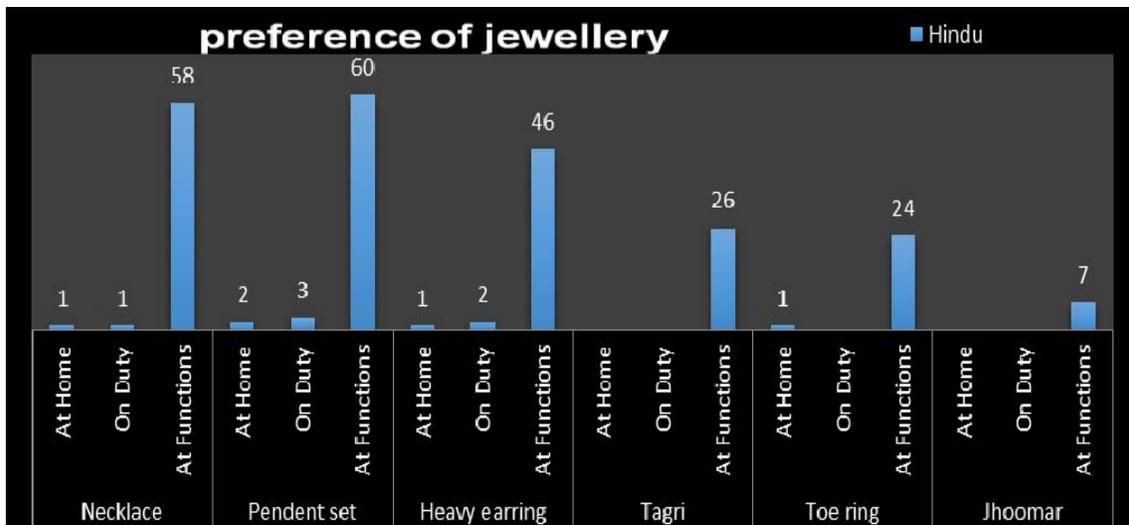
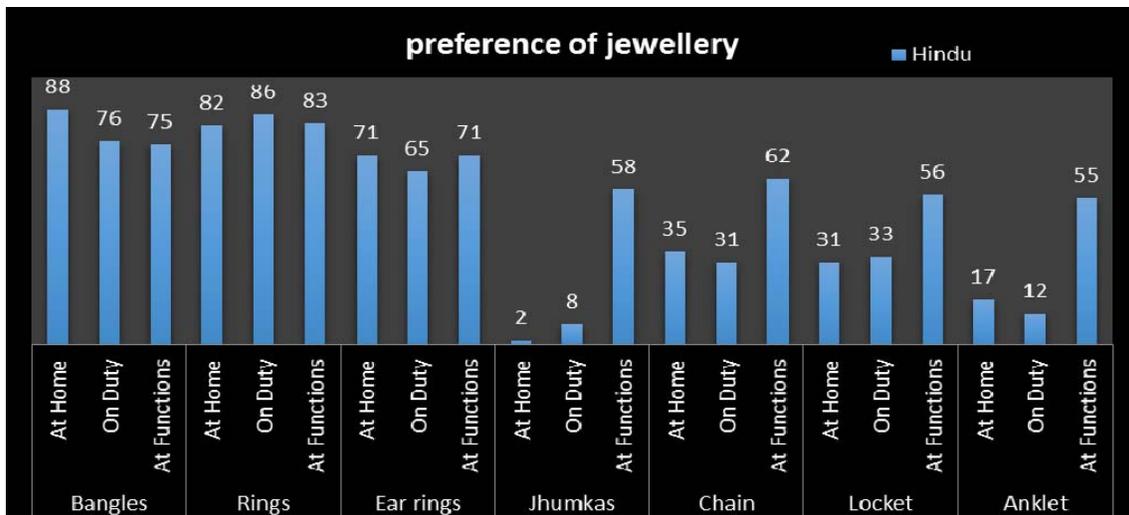


Chart 3.10: Preference of Jewellery items

The above chart no.3.10 depicts that most of the Hindu working women preferred bangales, rings, and earrings at home, during working hours and at functions (bangales 88% (H), 76% (D), 75% (F), rings 82% (H), 86% (D), 83% (F) and

earrings 71% (H), 65% (D), 71% (F) respectively). But some of the Hindu working women preferred to wear anklet, heavy earrings and pendent set at functions (anklet 55% and heavy earrings 46% and pendent set 60%).

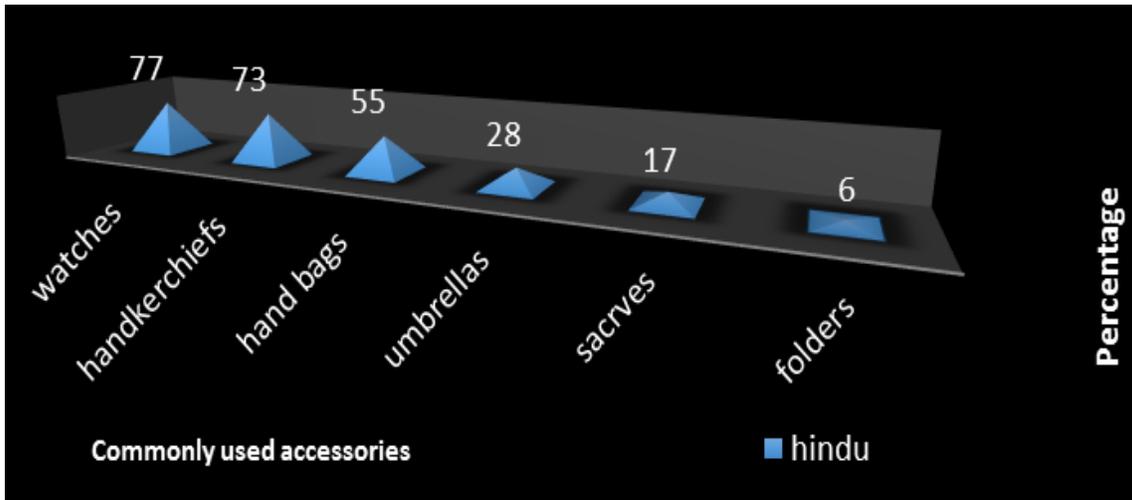


Chart 3.11: Preferences for Accessories

The above chart no.3.11 depicts that most of the Hindu respondents preferred watches (77%), handkerchiefs (73%) and hand nags (55%).

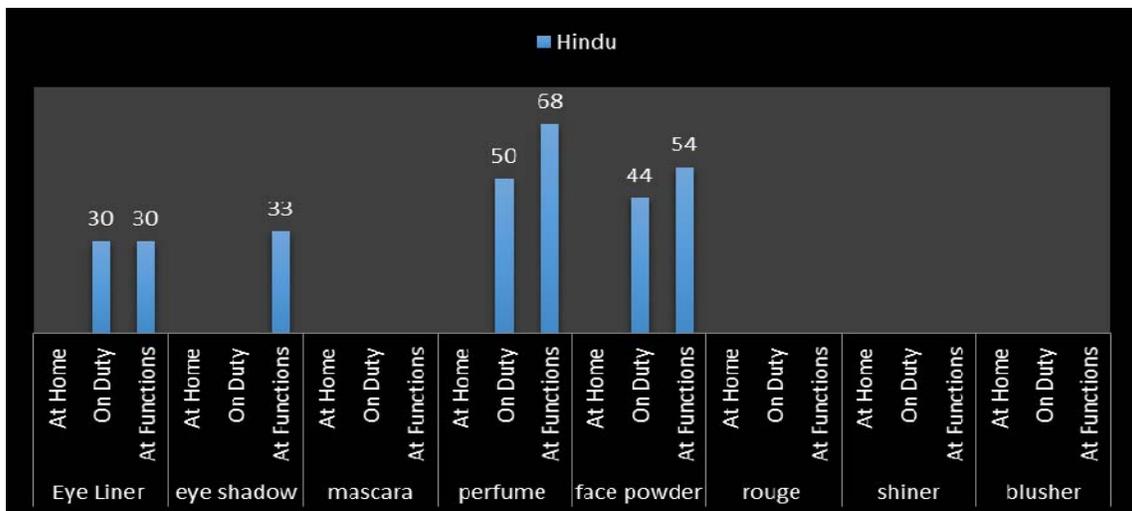
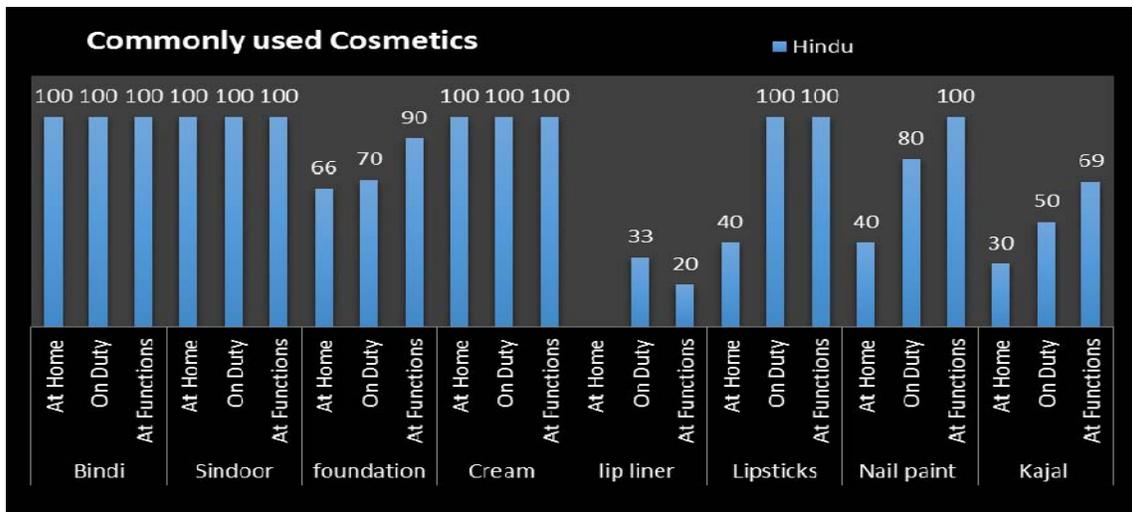


Chart 3.12: Commonly used Cosmetics

The above charts no.3.12 depicts that maximum number of respondents of both religions preferred to use foundation, cream, lipstick, nail paint and kajal at home, during duty hours, and at functions [Hindu (foundations 66% (H), 70% (D), 90% (F), cream 100% (H), 100% (D), 100% (F), lipstick 40% (H), 100% (D), 100% (F), nail paint 40% (H), 80% (D),

100% (F), and kajal 30% (H), 50% (D), 69% (F) But few of them preferred Eye liner, Perfume, and Face powder during duty hours and at functions [(Eye liner 30% (D), 30% (F), Perfume 50% (D), 68% (F) and Face powder 44% (D), 54% respectively]. All Hindu working women preferred bindi and sindur at home, during duty hours and at functions.

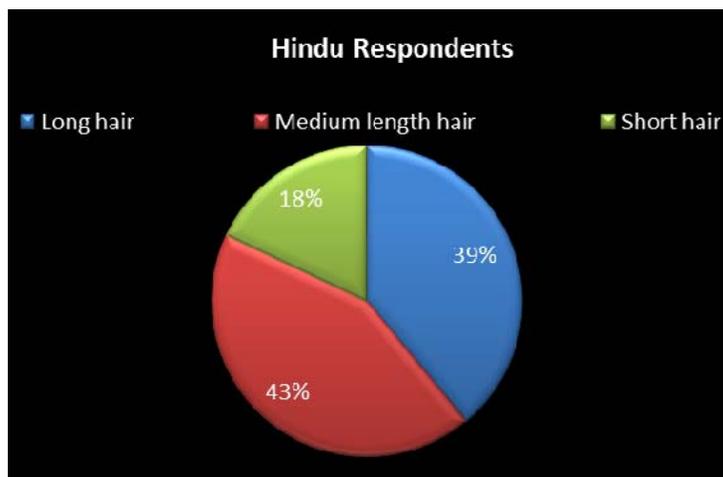


Chart 3.13: Preference of Hair Length

The above pie chart no.3.13 depicts that most of the Hindu respondents preferred medium length of hairs (43%) Very few Hindu working women preferred short hair.

This section may be concluded that maximum number of Hindu working women preferred to wear Sari, and salwar suits and on the other hand Muslim working women preferred to wear salwar suits and burqa also. Respondents of both of the religions preferred cosmetics equally but nature of the cosmetics were changed.

In, proposition 2 was that, there will be partial difference between costumes and accessories of Hindu and Muslim working women. It was verified in the present study. As in certain aspects there was some difference in clothing practices accessories but few of aspects the clothing practices of working women of both religions was the same.

4. Summary and conclusion

The concept and functions of clothing has widened, due to the psychological and sociological factors attached to it. With the change in the concepts and functions clothing, interests have also changed. Clothing is found to be an important factor in the development of an individual's personality. Clothing is a constantly repeated aspect of human life, which meets the human requirements like modesty and protection has a significant role in society. The researcher took up the study of the Consumer buying and clothing behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh. The study was taken up with the following objectives:-

- To study consumer behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh.
- To study the costumes worn by Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh.
- To study the buying behaviour of clothing and accessories among Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh.

The study revealed that the behaviour of Hindu working women of Uttar Pradesh towards their clothing and buying of clothes also. So, researcher found that they have many

varieties in their taste of clothing at the time of duty, functions and at the time of home also. And all clothing types and all clothing behaviours were acceptable in society as well.

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