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**Prachi Varshney**  
Research Scholar, Department of  
Home Science, Dayalbagh  
Educational Institute (Deemed  
University), Agra, Uttar  
Pradesh, India

**Charu Swami**  
Assistant Professor, Department  
of Home Science, Dayalbagh  
Educational Institute (Deemed  
University), Agra, Uttar  
Pradesh, India

## Development of innovative pockets for women's workwear

**Prachi Varshney and Charu Swami**

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### Abstract

Pockets in apparels are sensitive to fashion changes and provide a multitude of social and cultural data, despite their apparent anonymity and utilitarian character. Pockets are an alternative to luggage, purses, and pouches for carrying and securing personal belongings. There is also a thorough gender-specific relationship between pockets and the bodily gestures and postures they permit. Although traditionally pockets are integral part of men's attire. Women's pants began to be completely devoid of pockets as fashion became fascinated with shrinking women's shapes.

With changing roles of women over the decades, they have experienced challenges in their everyday chores due to shortage of pockets. Lately, this problem is being gradually identified by the designers and pockets are making a comeback in women's apparel, although they're usually very small or sometimes even fake. The study is based on developing innovative pockets and evaluating the problems faced by women in their workwear clothing due to lack of appropriate pockets. The researcher reviewed the history of pockets and tried to analyse different types of pockets on various categories of apparel. Additionally, and anatomy of pockets in contemporary men's and women's wear was done in order to create the functional pockets in women's workwear.

**Keywords:** Women, workwear, pockets, innovative, sustainability

### 1. Introduction

Apparel is a term that refers to a variety of items that are worn on the body. Apparel is an intriguing aspect of everyone's life, and it is primarily utilized to cover and protect our bodies, as well as to add modesty, elegance, and ornament to our personalities. Additionally, it reflects the person's socio-economic and employment standing.

Different types of clothing are developed to meet social and occasional needs. Apparels also give aesthetics and usefulness by adding various components such as collars, cuffs, fabric, and pockets into the garment creation process. Fashion and designs change with the seasons and market demands, but the fundamental components of apparel remain the same and are incorporated into apparel according to current trends and fashions.

Pockets are sensitive to fashion changes and will provide a multitude of social and cultural data, despite their apparent obscurity and utilitarian character. Pockets are an alternative or supplement to luggage, purses, and pouches for carrying and securing personal belongings. There has also been a thorough gender-specific relationship between pockets and the bodily gestures and postures they permit.

#### 1.1 Definition of Pockets

A pocket is a pouch with a closed-end that is usually sewn on or into a garment. A bag or envelope-shaped component that is connected or positioned in clothes to be able to transmit tiny things for functional utility is another definition of a pocket. Pockets are how, a component of a garment is attached to apparel with variations in sizes, forms, and types, and they are also one of the most significant practical and decorative characteristics.

Apart from its decorative and aesthetic worth, the pockets' utilitarian qualities include offering enough room and depth to accommodate various articles of his or her requirement, as well as safety without rifling.

#### Corresponding Author:

**Prachi Varshney**  
Research Scholar, Department of  
Home Science, Dayalbagh  
Educational Institute (Deemed  
University), Agra, Uttar  
Pradesh, India

As a result, based on their intended use, the pockets are categorized into various shapes, sizes, and locations.

**1.2 History of Pockets**


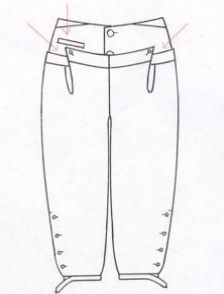


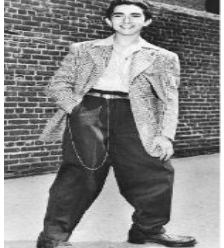
Ancient civilizations have been known to have pockets. People in ancient Egypt carried necessities like cash and small tools in little bags or pouches that were fastened to their waistbands. The subligaculum; a type of loincloth containing a small pocket to carry treasures, was used by the ancient Romans.

The more ornate and flowing clothing styles of the mediaeval and Renaissance periods made it difficult to insert pockets

into the garments. Instead, people used belt-attached purses or pouches that were external. These pouches, which denoted wealth and prestige, were frequently ornamental and fashioned of expensive fabrics.

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**Table 1:** History of Pockets in Men’s clothing

Year	Specific features in the pockets	Pictorial Description
15 <sup>th</sup> century to the mid-16 <sup>th</sup> century	Men used little pouches hung from their belts or knotted around their waists to carry money and other things.	
17 <sup>th</sup> century	Pocket-pouches were sewed into clothes in the 17th century. Instead, it was customary to carry money in an external purse or tie-on bag, commonly in the form of a belt. However, as crime increased in the 17th century, many people began to cut slits in their pants.	
18 <sup>th</sup> century	Waistcoats were embellished with pockets to match the colour and decoration of trendy clothing.	
19 <sup>th</sup> century	Men's clothes had a wide variety of pocket types by the 1900s, including watch pockets, inside and outside breast pockets, side/hip pants pockets, ticket pockets, and so on.	
20 <sup>th</sup> century	Men's pants had pockets sewed into them, which grew in size to become the ubiquitous cargo pocket.	

**1.3 History of Pockets in women’s clothing**

The introduction of pockets for women in their clothing did

not occur until the middle of the 1800s, when women started to demand their liberation. Many women started wearing






trousers as a statement to show their worthiness in comparison to males, and pockets became a sign of independence. When the fashion industry and society gender norms attempted to produce a thinner and more feminine silhouette, pockets fell out of favour.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, women preferred spacious and practical attachable pockets. These pockets may not have been extravagant or glamorous, but they held great significance and were filled with useful items. The way these

pockets were made, decorated, used, and even stolen provides insights into the daily life of those times.

It is remarkable that the basic concept of pockets has remained largely unchanged for nearly 200 years. In the past, there was a belief that women clothing should prioritize beauty, while men clothing should prioritize functionality. The details are presented in table below-

**Table 2:** History of Pockets in Women’s clothing

Year	Specific features in the pockets	Pictorial Description
17th Century	Women's clothing included decorative pockets. It was also used to store personal items and had a functional purpose.	
18th and 19th Century	Women's pockets, which used to be exquisite, embroidered pockets from the eighteenth century, shrunk and sometimes vanished.	
Late 19th Century	Pockets began to be stitched into skirts, giving a feeling of independence to women	
20th Century	This was the age of skin-tight silhouettes and narrow, straight shapes. As a result, pockets began to disappear from women's clothing.	
21st Century	The silhouettes and necessities of women's clothes altered in this century, and pockets reappeared in their garments, but they were very little and artificial.	

**1.4 Evolution of Pockets in Women’s Wear**

Famous fashion designer Christian Dior highlighted the sexism in pockets in 1954 when he said, “Men have pockets to keep things in, and women for decoration”. Unfortunately,

modern women clothing still reflects this mind-set. The fashion business has not evolved to meet the requirements of women as they have entered the workforce and pursued different lives. Women clothes still lacks pockets, which is

problematic in an age of practicality and technological improvements.

There exists a disparity between the sizes and functionality of pockets in men and women's jeans, a fact that many women may not be aware of. Men's jeans typically feature larger and functional pockets, providing ample space to carry essentials such as phones, wallets, money, headphones, and other small items. In contrast, women's jeans often have small pockets that can barely accommodate a phone, and even then, the phone may not fit entirely.

Studies have revealed the stark differences in pocket sizes between men's and women's jeans. On average, women's front pockets are 48% smaller and 3% narrower than men's, making them roughly half the size. Straight-leg jeans exacerbate the problem, with women's front pockets being 46% shorter and 10% smaller compared to men's pockets. In another study, researchers examined the pockets of 80 jeans from key fashion companies, including Calvin Klein, H&M, Levi's, Wrangler, and Ralph Lauren, and discovered that women's pockets were considerably smaller and thus solely ornamental. They investigated whether traditional pocket-fitting items such as keys, phones, and wallets could fit into men's and women's pockets, and discovered that just 40% of women's pants could accommodate a smartphone. The average woman's pant pocket is 5.6 inches deep, which is shorter and narrower than the norm. Jan Diehm (Jan Diehm, 2018). As a result of the difficulties women suffer as a result of the lack of pockets in their clothing, the popular press has backed their cause and published various pieces detailing their dissatisfaction with the lack of practical pockets in women's apparel.

Women's clothing designers face the challenge of finding innovative ways to incorporate functional pockets into their workwear. Determining the appropriate size, placement, and closures of pockets is crucial to ensure their full functional value. While some brands have made efforts to prioritize pocket development over the years, there is still a significant gap to bridge. The present study aims to address the Problem of Pockets in women wear, striving to find solutions that will provide women with the functional and adequate pockets they deserve.

Therefore, current research aims to develop innovative pockets that serve the purpose of Women's workwear, catering to their practical needs without compromising on style. The quest for equality in functional fashion necessitates the creation of pockets that combine form and function seamlessly, empowering women to work with efficiency and confidence.

### 1.5 Objectives of the research

The research was carried out with the objectives to analyze and compare the pockets in men's and women's wear concerning their placement and size in available apparel brands and to identify the various issues of pockets in women's workwear by designing innovative and functional pockets with requisite design features for women's work wear additionally, checked the acceptability of developed designs for pockets in women's workwear.

## 2. Research Methodology

The research methodology employed in this study involved a

### 3. Developed Innovative Pocket Designs

combination of survey and experimental research, conducted in three distinct phases.

#### 2.1 Phase 1 - Exploratory

In this initial phase, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the historical perspective, development timeline, and adaptation of pockets. A detailed analysis and comparison of pockets in men's and women's wear, focusing on their placement and size across various apparel brands, were undertaken. Additionally, various issues related to pockets in women's workwear were identified.

##### 2.1.1 Market Survey of Different Types of Pockets

The survey was conducted in Agra, encompassing popular showrooms such as Pantaloons, Shoppers Stop, Max, and Lifestyle. The researcher examined diverse apparel items like jeans, tops, kurtas, shirts, salwar, and leggings, comparing men's and women's garments from reputable national and international brands. The collected data informed the development of a survey tool. Pockets in different categories of apparel were measured and analyzed, revealing disparities in size, shape, design, and functionality. It was observed that pockets in women's wear were often either fake or insufficiently sized.

##### 2.1.2 Identification of Issues in Women's Workwear Pockets:

The researcher identified several issues in women's workwear pockets, such as fake pockets, incorrect placement, and small dimensions. A self-constructed questionnaire was designed to collect information about problems faced by women in their work attire, exploring their preferences, and gathering suggestions.

**2.2 Experimental Phase:** In this phase, the research progressed to the experimental stage, where innovative and functional pockets were designed for three specific categories of apparel commonly worn by Indian women at their workplaces.

**2.2.1 Pocket Construction Steps:** For draped garments (Stoles/Saree), two distinct pockets were designed, considering factors such as length, width, and closure mechanisms. The same approach was applied to upper garments (Kurtis) and lower garments (Trousers), resulting in a total of six constructed pockets incorporating different shapes, closures, functionalities and decorative elements.

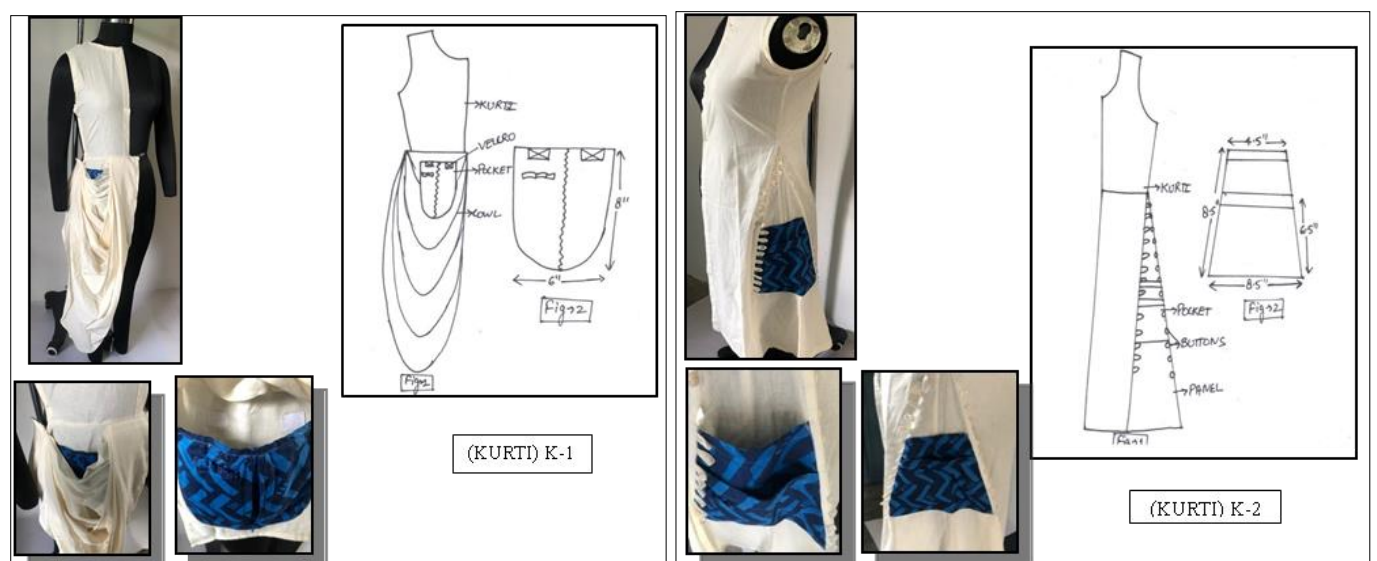
These constructed pockets aimed to address the identified issues and provide functional solutions based on the needs and preferences expressed by women in the survey. The research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the practicality and design of pockets in women's clothing.

**2.3 Evaluation Phase:** The evaluation of the designed pockets centered on their acceptability by consumers. To gauge this, a self-constructed questionnaire was administered to 50 respondents, comprising 25 students and 25 experts. The questionnaire aimed to assess the acceptability and suitability of the pockets created by the researcher for women's workwear garments. A rating scale was employed in the questionnaire to quantify the respondents' opinions.

**Design 1: Draped garment (Stoles/Saree)**



**Design 2: Upper garments (Kurtis)**



**Design 3: Lower garments (Trousers)**



**3.1 Outcomes of the study**

In this study, the researcher conducted a comprehensive survey in different branded showrooms in Agra, focusing on various apparel categories such as jeans, tops, kurtas, and shirts. The survey revealed significant differences in the size

and availability of pockets between men's and women's clothing.

- **Pockets in Men's and Women's Clothing:** Men's pockets were consistently observed to be larger in size compared to women's clothing. While men's garments

generally featured functional pockets, women's wear, particularly in categories like kurta, saree, and stoles, faced a notable lack of practical pocket options.

- **Identified Problems in Women's Wear:** Several issues were identified in women's wear, including the prevalence of fake pockets, pockets of small sizes, and pockets placed at inappropriate locations. The survey results indicated that approximately 50% of pockets in women's wear were fake, 30% were small, and 20% were wrongly placed.

The outcomes of the study underscore the tangible demand for functional and well-designed pockets in women's workwear. Addressing issues related to pocket size, placement, and authenticity holds the potential to significantly impact consumer preferences and contribute to sustainability goals in the fashion industry. To achieve this, a consumer survey was conducted which highlighted the following salient features.

- **Need for Pockets:** Approximately 70% of women respondents expressed a clear need for pockets in their workwear, underscoring the practical significance of functional pockets in women's clothing.
- **Purchase Consideration:** Notably, 42% of respondents paid attention to the presence of pockets while purchasing clothes, indicating that pockets are a consideration in the decision-making process for a substantial portion of consumers.
- **Perception of Men's Wear:** A significant 85% of respondents believed that men's wear generally incorporates more pockets in their clothing, emphasizing a perceived disparity in pocket availability between men's and women's garments.
- **Hindrance of Bags:** About 83% of women felt that bags hindered their movement, especially in situations involving kids or going to the washroom, highlighting a practical challenge associated with the reliance on bags.
- **Preference for Pockets:** An overwhelming 90% of respondents expressed an openness to considering new pocket designs and concepts in their future clothing purchases, indicating a receptiveness to innovative solutions.
- **Designer Influence:** A considerable 72% of respondents believed that designers could play a crucial role in addressing the issue of lacking pockets in women's wear, highlighting the potential impact of design choices on pocket inclusion.
- **Functional Preference:** A majority (62%) of respondents expressed a preference for using pockets to carry regular office essentials rather than relying on bags, emphasizing the utility and convenience of well-designed pockets.
- **Bag Replacement:** A significant 80% of respondents agreed that they would be willing to give up or replace their bags if appropriate pockets were provided in their workwear, indicating a potential shift in reliance from bags to pockets.
- **Sustainability Perception:** A noteworthy 84% of respondents believed that innovative pocket designs in women's wear could contribute to sustainability by reducing the need to purchase various types of bags.

#### 4. Conclusion

Pockets play an indispensable role in our wardrobes, offering both comfort and convenience by providing a practical means to carry essential items such as cell phones, keys, and

cosmetics. They serve as a viable alternative or supplement to bags, purses, and pouches. However, a contemporary issue, particularly in women's apparel, is the scarcity of pockets, often characterized by fake or small pockets. This dearth compels women to resort to additional accessories like handbags, contributing to unnecessary waste and pollution.

In response to this challenge, the present study focused on designing innovative and functional pockets specifically tailored for women's workwear. The research prioritized the strategic placement, thoughtful design, and enhanced functionality of pockets to address the prevalent issues faced by women.

A crucial aspect of the study revolved around developing pockets with the right size and anatomy, incorporating special features to optimize their utility. The designed pockets adhered to specific dimensions, including lengths ranging from 8 to 9 inches and widths from 7 to 8 inches. Various closure mechanisms, such as snap buttons, Velcro, and zippers, were integrated to enhance versatility. The inclusion of multiple pockets, hidden compartments, and special fabrics tailored for slim silhouettes further enriched the innovative designs.

Feedback from women respondents indicated a positive reception, particularly praising the size of the pockets. Many believed that these designed pockets could potentially offer a solution to the challenges posed by the absence of or inadequate pocket sizes in women's apparel.

The implications of this research extend beyond academic domain, benefiting teachers, researchers, and fashion designers in the design sector. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the significance of pockets in women's clothing, emphasizing their role in waste reduction and increased sustainability. Positioned as a creative endeavor, this research serves as a valuable resource for concept generation and idea development, particularly in garment design and related design courses. Eventually, the study encourages a paradigm shift towards more thoughtful and functional designs, aligning with contemporary needs and sustainability goals in the fashion industry.

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