
An Exploratory study on the variables that affect the female choice of clothing in India based on their working status.

Dr. Deepali Bhatnagar

Assistant Professor, Amity University, Rajasthan

ABSTRACT:

The objective of this paper is to identify the changing perception and comparison of buying behaviour related to clothing for working and non-working Indian women. To achieve the objectives of the study total 100 women respondents have been selected. A well structured questionnaire has been drafted to get the information regarding the factors affecting clothing buying behaviour of Indian women. The study reveals that women are price, quality and brand conscious and highly influenced by the others in shopping.

INTRODUCTION:

The working women segment has significantly influenced the modern marketing concept. The objective of this paper is to identify the changing perception and comparison of buying behaviour of clothing for working and non-working women in India.

Now-a-days women are not only playing role of hardcore 'housewives', they are also playing a different role of 'chief purchasing officer' & controlling 85% of buying decisions. In today's world, they are working as multi-tasker by playing a role of house maker as well as professional women with their hard work.

It suggests that their multiple roles influence their own and of their family members' buying behaviour. The study also reveals that working women are price, quality and brand conscious and highly influenced by the others in shopping.

Over the years, Indian economy is undergoing through certain changes. Competition has ushered in an altogether new marketing environment in the country. Marketing has become a necessity for survival of business firms. Price, competitiveness, quality assurance and customer service has become vital components of marketing and most business firms are realizing that if they do not have competitive strength, they cannot survive. A business cannot succeed by supplying products and services that are not properly designed to serve the needs of the customers. The term consumer behaviour refers to the behaviour that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. The consumer preference change rapidly and are affected by multiplicity of factors at a given point of time which are difficult to analyze. To understand the consumer behaviour into consumer motivations, beliefs, attitudes, learning's, perceptions, emotions and opinion is essential. Demographic variables such as age, occupation and annual income does play an important factor responsible for shopping decision. Woman's role as the family purchasing agent, however, seems to be changing, due primarily to the large increase in the number of working women in recent decades. Therefore, working women has developed as an important segment for the marketers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A lot of study has been done on the clothing choice of working and non-working Indian women. Keeping in mind the views of each and every person; we will try to understand factors that govern the clothing choice of working and non-working Indian women.

Clothing is a factor in everyday human lives and interactions with others (**Horn & Gurel, 1981**). It can transmit a vast array of meanings such as identity, value, mood, and attitude (**Stone, 1962**).

From the consumers' perspective, brand is a guaranty of reliability and quality in consumer products (**Roman et al., 2005**). Added to this, consumers would like to buy and use brand-name products with a view to highlight their personality in different situational contexts (**Aaker, 1999; Fennis and Pruyn, 2006**).

Nowadays, consumers have a wide range of choice to choose from when they enter a shopping mall. It is found that consumers' emotions are one of the major determinants which affect their buying behavior (**Berry, 2000**).

Demographics & household structures, desires, emotions, ethics and personality, group influences, information processing are considered some of the key factors responsible for buying cloths. Consumer's (working and non-working women) purchases are sturdily influenced by the factors like cultural, social, personal and psychological characteristics were reported by **Thomson, & Locander (1994)**.

There is a significant difference in buying behaviour of working women depending on what type of organization they work. Women are apt to be more involved with purchasing than men, since women have traditionally been the family purchasing agents (**Davis 1971, Wilkes 1975**) and perceive purchasing as being associated with their role in the family.

In 1985, Zaichkowsky developed the Personal Involvement Inventory (PII) scale to measure product involvement. Tests of construct validity over three products demonstrated the scores were positively related to perceptions of brand differences, brand preferences, interest in gathering information about the product category, and comparison of product attributes among brands (**Zaichkowsky, 1985**).

Park and Lennon (2004) concluded that television advertisements can highly influence women buying behaviors along with information received from their friends, as females in comparison to males are highly knowledgeable about price and types of stores, and hence this knowledge can influence the retailer management strategies.

From the above review of literature we can easily conclude that there are various studies which only focus on females buying behaviour in particular. This study is a modest attempt in this direction and aims to focus on female buying behaviour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In view of these potentialities the proposed study will be designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To study the factors influencing choice of buying clothes for working and non-working Indian women.
- To unearth the women buying behavior for branded and non-branded apparels.
- To analyze the clothing selection preferences of women with respect to the age, occupation, Annual income, etc.
- To identify the most preferred attributes responsible for decision making.
- To understand the reasons responsible for switching of behavior towards clothing selection.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Various aspects of consumer's buying behaviour are an important area of study for researchers around the world. Literatures are gradually developing capturing various aspects and problems of buying behaviour of consumers, possible factors behind the consumption pattern etc. In addition to the existing literature, the present study tries to focus on the aspect from a different angle, where the buying behaviour of working and non-working women in India has been captured.

On the other hand, the study "TO EXPLORE THE FACTORS THAT GOVERN THE CLOTHING CHOICE OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING INDIAN WOMEN" analyzes women behaviour on the basis of primary data. Primary data for the study is collected through questionnaire and personal comments from the respondents. The buying behaviour of working and non-working women have been measured through certain indicators, measured in categorical scale. The probable socio-economic variables are measured in both nominal and categorical scale. Buying behaviour of the consumer has been shown through their price consciousness, understanding about the quality of the product, fashion consciousness, brand loyalty, liking of particular store and the convenience. The target population of the study was working women both from private and public sectors.

The primary data have collected at Amity University Rajasthan and other public areas of the Jaipur city in order to study the buying behaviour of the Indian women. A sample size of 100 women consumers of various age groups is taken from the distinct geographical areas of the Jaipur.

RESULT ANALYSIS

The research has been carried out with the objective to examine the clothing choice of working and non-working Indian women in their purchase decisions & to know which area of purchase has more influence to women behavior & how much they buy as in the frequency. To achieve the objectives of the study a sample of 100 working and non working Indian women from the few distinct geographical areas of Jaipur city has been collected with the help of structured questionnaire. With the help of the data collected the results are analyzed. Analysis of the study provides mixed results. Now Indian women are more aware about the

market as compare few days earlier because they also prefer shopping from Malls as compare to Kirana store.

1) Approximately, how many times do you buy your clothes?

TABLE 1

	Working women	Non-working women
a) 1 – 5 times per year	8%	14%
b) 5 – 10 times per year	26%	24%
c) 2-3 times a month	14%	4%
d) 4-7 times per month	16%	2%
e) 8+ per month	4%	4%
f) Occasionally	22%	30%
g) Rarely	10%	22%

TABLE 1 indicates that when the respondents were asked about how many times they buy clothes 26% working women answered that they buy 5–10 times per year and 30% non-working answered that they buy occasionally. Apparel market is exponentially growing but still is in its nascent stage where there are more challenges than opportunities which have to be handled tactically for the desired results.

2) From where do you usually buy clothes?

TABLE 2

	Working women	Non-working women
a) Factory Outlets	0%	0%
b) Retail Shops (unbranded)	10%	36%
c) Brand's Showrooms	24%	12%
d) Malls	36%	10%
e) Online Shopping	18%	18%
f) Discount Store	12%	24%
g) Other	0%	0%

On asking this question relating to place from where they shop in case of working women about 36% said from mall, followed by brand's showrooms as answered by 24%, where as 18% and 12% from online shopping and discount store etc see table 2.

In case of non-working women 36% said from retail shops, followed by discount store as answered by 24%. Discounts on the cloths influence them very much, where as 18% and 12% from online shopping and brand's showroom etc.

The answer gives us the insights relating to buying behaviour of working women regarding mall mania and non-working women's related to retails shops and craze for shopping there because they get variety, style, fit, brands, reasonable price etc at one place.

3) With whom do you usually buy your clothes or who is your inspiration for new purchases?

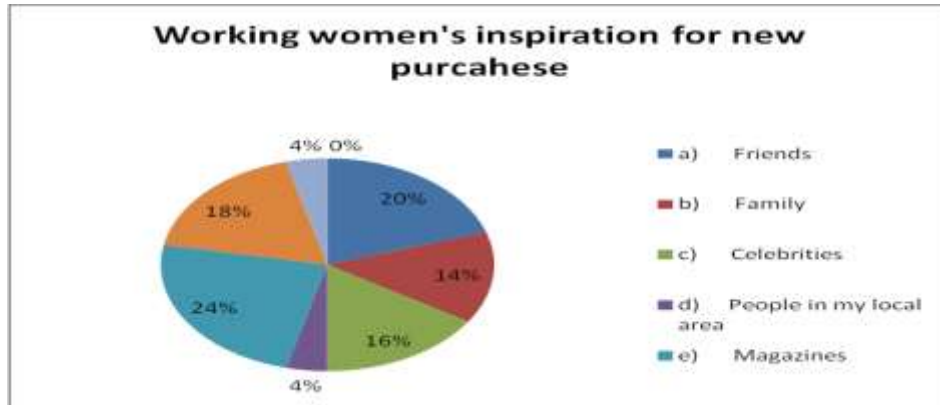


Fig.1

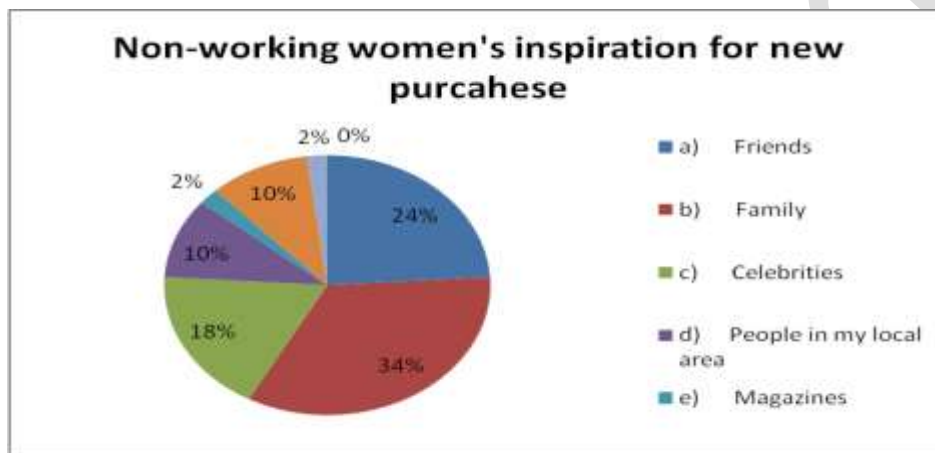


Fig.2

For buying the cloths in case of working women 24% women take decision on magazines, 20% women consult with friends & 14% women involve their family in their buying decision only etc.in fig.1

On the other hand for buying cloths in case of non-working women 34% women take decision on family, 24% women consult with friends & 18% women involve celebrities in their buying decision etc.in fig.2 Celebrity endorsement plays an important role in buying decisions.

That's why most of Indian women take time for buying the cloths. They are not able to make prompt decision for buying the cloths.

4) How much importance do you give to each of the following factors before you buy your clothes?

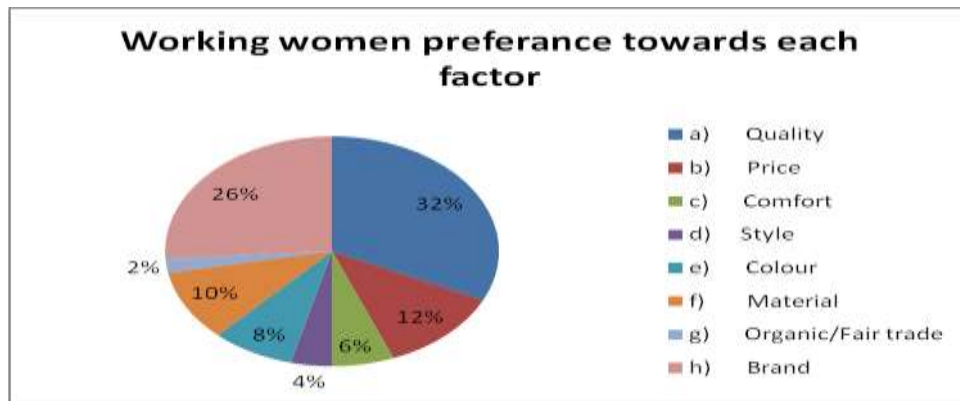


Fig.3

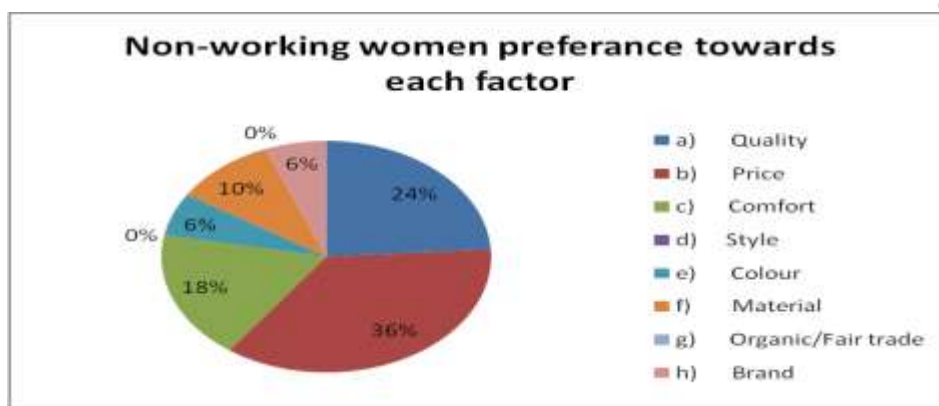


Fig.4

Fig. 3 and Fig 4. Shows Price, brand, quality, style, and colour and print, comfort and fit consciousness has been identified as the significant dimensions on clothing choice of Indian women. The section tries to capture the differences in the respective dimensions between the working and non-working women.

Price Consciousness: Price consciousness is one of the important dimensions of buying behaviour. Most of the women are agreed with the price consciousness statements. Out of total, for 12% working women price doesn't matters, matters only quality and buys expensive clothes, while for 36% non-working women price matters and think twice while purchasing and usually buy "on sale" clothes.

Brand and material Consciousness: Out of total, we found that 26% working women are more brand loyal and conscious as compared to 6% non-working women, which are interested to switch over for other clothing choice which is true for the entire family income group. For non-working women brand does not affect them.

Quality: Out of total, we found that 24% non-working women prefer quality as compared to 32% working women.

Colour and print: Out of total, we found that 6% non-working women prefer colour as compared to 8% working women. Working women usually use lighter colours like white, cream yellow that adds to their frame. When one wants to project a confident and assertive

image, he/she tries to wear bright colours. Non-working women use darker shades of colours like blue, purple and brown.

Style: Out of total, we found that 0% non-working women prefer style as compared to 4% working women.

Comfort and fit: Out of total, we found that 18% non-working women prefer colour as compared to 6% working women. As for the fit, the right clothes flatter body and boost confidence. They most of wear clothes that suit body type and gives classy looks. Fit of a branded garment is prime and their looks are enhanced after wearing that. This gives important signal to the marketer that due importance must be given to the fit factor as this is the most significant factor which is considered in their buying decision. Females will go extra miles to out shop for better quality of the product (branded apparel).

5) While shopping what do you look for?

TABLE 3

	Working women	Non-working women
a) Value for money	30%	44%
b) Good quality	26%	26%
c) Customer services	8%	10%
d) Product image	14%	6%
e) Others	10%	4%
f) All above	12%	10%

6) Which clothes do you prefer?

TABLE 4

	Working women	Non-working women
a) Unbranded clothes	6%	72%
b) Branded	58%	16%
c) Designer	36%	12%

Out of total working women respondents 58% women prefer expensive/branded cloths but 6% women consumers buy cheap cloths and others buy 36% designer clothes.

On the other hand in case of non-working women out of total women respondents 72% women prefer to buy cheap cloths & they know the value of money but 16% prefer expensive/branded cloths and others buy 12% designer clothes.

7) Wearing branded clothes shows?

TABLE 5

	Working women	Non-working women
a) Confidence	48%	18%
b) Exclusivity	20%	28%
c) Superior image	32%	54%

CONCLUSION

From findings of the study indicates that the Indian Women, with her increasing financial power, has a greater discretionary income and utilizes it to satisfy their wants. Her criteria for family purchases have been modified by her increased exposure to new ideas and information. Now she is playing a new role as a facilitator. Previously, the Indian women concentrated on purchases that based on family needs and wants. Her only personal indulgences were items of clothing and adornment. But now she regularly moving to Malls for shopping & take her decision herself, she has full freedom to buy & make bargaining. She also takes interest in advertisement on TV, magazines & newspaper for discount offers & new schemes on the commodity.

Women, particularly women workforce are vital part of buying behaviour. Working women go for the issues of brand image, brand loyalty and product quality. Buy expensive clothes. Price doesn't matters, matters only quality. It has been found that working women are more store loyal than non working married women. In case working women is more quality conscious than non working married women. But non-working women are also quality conscious. This study also prevails that there is a significant difference in buying behaviour of working women depending on what type of organization they work.

Women are apt to be more involved with purchasing than men, since women have traditionally been the family purchasing agents and perceive purchasing as being associated with their role in the family. Woman's role as the family purchasing agent, however, seems to be changing, due primarily to the large increase in the number of working women in recent decades. Therefore, working women has developed as an important segment for the marketers. Therefore, marketers should consider them with utmost importance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books/Journals

- i **Dr. Sriparna Guha (2013)**, *“The changing perception and buying behaviour of women consumer in Urban India”*
- ii **Ms. Jaya Nema, Ms. Neha Bhopatkar**, *“A study of Women's Buying Behaviour in Urban Areas with respect to Branded and non-Branded Apparels.”*
- iii **Ma.Monica R. Escano**, *“family decision making patterns and how they relate to the members clothing preferences”*
- iv **Namita Rajput, Subodh Kesharwani & Akanksha Khanna** , *“Dynamics of Female Buying Behaviour:A Study of Branded Apparels in India”*
- v **Martha Barlett, CEO of Trendsight Group**, a marketing Consultancy firm *“Marketing to Women”* –Advertising express – ICAFI
- vi **Dr.Mu.Subrahmanian**, *“buying behavior of the new aged Indian women”* Indian Journal of Commerce & Management Studies, Vol.–II, Issue -1 January 2011.