

## **Clothing problems of elderly women and their preferences**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The present investigation was undertaken to assess Clothing Problems of Elderly Women and Their Preferences. Random selection of 40 elderly women in the age range of 65 to 70 years from *Mathushree mahila club* and *Varishth Mahila Prakoshth* of Vigyan samiti, Udaipur formed the sample. The data was personally collected by the researcher through developed structured interview schedule. Findings revealed that majority of the respondents faced several clothing problems related with material, size and shape of sleeve, neckline, length of the garment, fitting, etc. and showed their preferences in clothing based on which special clothing for this particular age group be designed to overcome their problems.

**Key Words :** Clothing, Problems, Elderly, Women, Preferences

### **INTRODUCTION**

Clothing has been recognized as a primary need of mankind throughout the world. It is one of the most personal components of daily life. Clothes render on individual a distinct identity. These give a feeling of self confidence and comfort and the wearer feels physically, psychologically and socially at ease. The clothing need of the elderly women are very different from those people of other age groups due to occurrence of physiological and psychological changes. As people grow older, their body structure changes (eg. Thickened waist, enlarged hips, protruding abdomen and dropping bust line). Physiological condition deteriorates (eg. Greying or loosing hairs, wrinkling of skin, less effective metabolism and tendency towards hypothermia) and self-perception becomes generally negative.

With growing age, it becomes more difficult to move, stretch, bend and twist, making the process of dressing a bit of a challenge at times. Clothing for seniors should look good; feel good, and most of all, to keep the wearer as independent as possible. Loss of independence in the daily task of dressing can be very difficult for aging people. Clothing for the Elderly must be based upon the woman's abilities and limitations to dress with or without assistance.

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Sometimes adding adaptive features in elderly clothing helps them a lot in Self-dressing. Selection of elderly clothing be based on the person's need for clothing that he or she enjoys. In Indian culture, women give preference to sari- blouse to wear after marriage till death. They face many problems in wearing this type of dress in old age due to physical weakness, disease and many of the physical problems. Many times fabric is not suitable for them and many times pattern of dress becomes a big problem for them. Many times they feel bounded, uncomfortable and congested in this type of dress due to many physical problems. They face some problem in washing, drying and caring of the saris. Synthetic fabric used in clothing is also not comfortable for them. Blouse which contain four darts are fully fitted, hence not comfortable.

Present paper is part of the study based on 'Assessment of existing clothing pattern, problems faced and preferences of elderly women'.

## METHODOLOGY

The present exploratory study was based on assessment of clothing problems of elderly women and their preferences in clothing. The study was conducted in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. Based on the objectives of the study, the survey method was used to gather desired information from the selected respondents.

### **Selection of sample :**

A sample of 40 elderly women in the age range of 60 to 65 years was selected purposively from *Matushree Mahila Club*, and *Varishth Mahila Prakoshth* of Vigyan Samiti, Udaipur which were having more than 150 elderly women members. These clubs are actively engaged for the welfare of elderly women of the society in Udaipur.

### **Development of tool :**

A pre- structured interview schedule was formulated in order to explore information about clothing needs of elderly women and problems faced by them during dressing and undressing by the researcher. The tool was comprised of the close ended questions based on the sample group.

### **Data collection:**

Based on the objectives of the study, the researcher has formulated the conceptual frame work of the research design. The data was collected using interview schedule through personal contact with the selected sample subjects to gather the required information.

### **Analysis of data :**

The collected data of survey was coded, tabulated and appropriate statistical measures were applied for its analysis. Frequency and percentage was used to analysis the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part contains the outcomes of the analysis done on socio-personal profiles of the

respondents. The socio-personal profile of the respondents included age, educational status, occupations of the respondents, type of the family and monthly income of the family.

The details of the information related to this have been furnished in Table 1.

<b>Table 1 : Socio-personal traits of the respondents</b>		
		<b>(n = 40)</b>
Socio-personal traits	Number of respondents	Percentage
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
65-67 years	21	52.5
68-70 years	19	47.5
<b>Education</b>		
Middle level	3	7.5
High school	8	20
Graduate	10	25
Post graduate	12	30
Doctorate	7	17.5
<b>Occupation</b>		
Business	11	27.5
Service	29	72.5
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear	14	35
Joint	26	65
<b>Monthly family income (Rs.)</b>		
10,000-50,000	25	62.5
50,001-90,000	15	37.5

Data given in the table indicates that the majority of the respondents (52.5%) belongs to the age group of 65-67 years, followed by the age groups 68-70 years (47.5%). The educational status of the respondents was categorized into secondary, Senior secondary, graduation, Post-Graduate and Doctorate. The data pertaining to education revealed that more than one fourth of the respondents (30%) were post graduate, exact one fourth 25 per cent respondents were graduate, 17.5 per cent respondents were educated up to doctorate, 20 per cent respondents were educated up to high school. It was observed that the 65 per cent respondents belonged to joint families. Regarding occupation, the data revealed that majority of the respondents (72.5%) belonged to service class and less than half of the respondents (27.5%) were engaged in family business. The monthly income of the respondents was categorized into two groups. The findings of the study revealed that family income of majority of respondents (62.5%) was found in the range of Rs. 10,000-50,000/- per month and remaining respondent's (37.5%) family income was in the range of Rs. 50,001-90,000/- month.

#### **Clothing problems and their related preferences :**

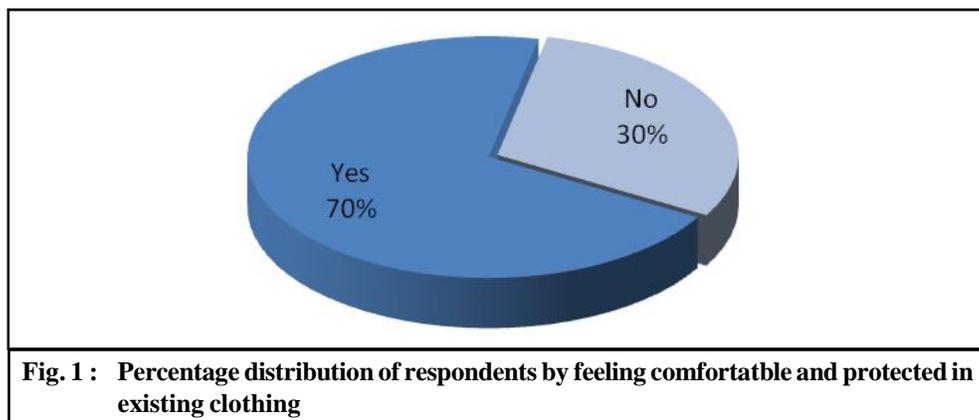
The researcher explored the clothing problems in existing clothing wardrobe of elderly women and made an attempt to find out their related preferences comfort ease in dressing and undressing, fitting of the garment, length of the garment, arm-hole fitting, neckline size and finish and fastener related problem. The data gathered has been analyzed and presented

below :

**Comfort and protection in their existing wardrobe :**

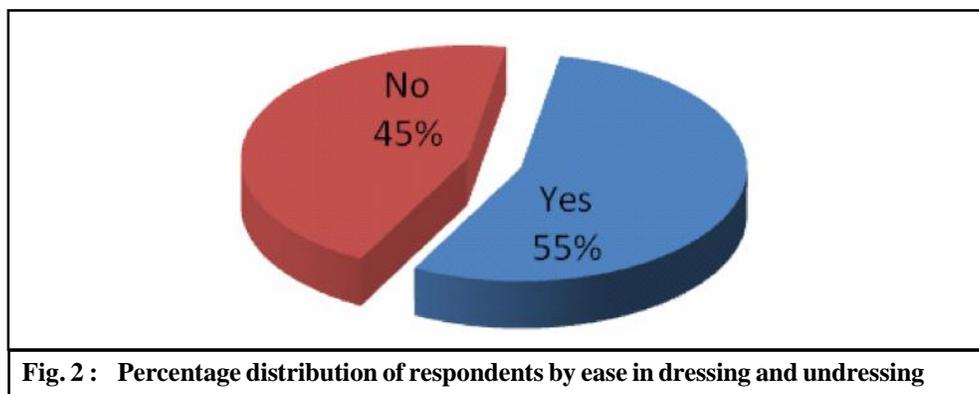
The data pertaining to comfort and protection in their existing wardrobe by respondents have been presented in Fig.1.

It was found that majority of the respondents (70%) were feeling comfortable and protected in their present clothing and rest of the 30 per cent respondents were not feeling comfortable and protected in their present clothing.



**Ease in dressing and undressing :**

The data pertaining ease in dressing and undressing by respondents have been presented in Fig.2.



Data depicts that more than half of the respondents (55%) were facing problem in dressing and undressing of garment while remaining 45 per cent of the respondents didn't have any problem in *put on* and *taking off* of upper garment.

**Clothing problems related to fabric grain line:**

The data pertaining to problems faced with garment grain line by respondents have

been presented in Table 2.

Data reveals that majority of the respondents (65%) didn't have any problem with fabric grain line while remaining 35 per cent respondents were facing problem with grain line.

Problem with fabric grain line	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	14	35
No	26	65

#### **Preferences of grain line in clothing :**

The data pertaining to preference of respondents with regard to fabric grain line was also explored by the researcher and data obtained have been presented in Table 3 which reveals that majority of the respondents (72.5%) showed their liking towards those garments which were made on straight grain and remaining 27.5 respondents always preferred garment having bias grain. The reasons given by the respondents for giving preference to those garment made on bias grain, were good fitting and easy stretch ability during dressing and undressing.

Preference in grain line	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Off grain	-	-
On grain	29	72.5
Bias grain	11	27.5

#### **Clothing problems related to neckline of the garment and related preferences:**

The data pertaining to clothing problems of respondents related to neckline and their related preferences regarding neckline size, neckline shape, neckline finishing and type of collar have been presented in Table 4.

Table depicts that majority of the respondents (82.5%) did not have any problem with neckline while 17.5 percent respondents were having problem with neckline.

The researcher made an effort to collect information about their preferences in shape of neckline and found that 37.5 per cent respondents preferred round and U-shaped neckline followed by 30 percent respondents who preferred all shape of neckline. Some of the respondents (20%) preferred only round shape of neckline while only 10 per cent respondents were giving preference to only V-shape neck line. Majority of the respondents (85%) were giving preference to medium size of neckline while remaining 15 per cent respondent's preferred small size of neck line. Regarding neck line finish, it was found that more than half of the respondents (52.5%) preferred neckline finished with piping followed by 40 per cent respondents who gave their preference to neckline finished with facing. Few of the respondents (5%) preferred bound neckline.

#### **Clothing problems related to arm- hole/sleeve and related preferences :**

Table 5 furnishes the data related to clothing problems with arm hole / sleeve by the

Aspect	Description	Frequency * (f)	Percentage * (%)
Problem with neck line	Yes	7	17.5
	No	33	82.5
Preferences in shape of neckline	Round shape	8	20
	V- shape	4	10
	U-shape	-	-
	Square shape	6	15
	Round and U-shape	15	37.5
	All	12	30
	Small	6	15
Preference in size of neckline	Medium	34	85
	Broad	-	-
	Piping	21	52.5
Preferences in neckline finish	Bounding	2	5
	Facing	16	40
	All type	1	2.5

Aspect	Description	Frequency (f)	Per cent (%)	
Problem with arm-hole	Yes	16	40	
	No	24	60	
Size of arm- hole (Short /half sleeve )	Large	20	50	
	Normal	14	35	
	Fitted	6	15	
	Always	35	87.5	
	Some time	4	10	
	Never	1	2.5	
	(Full sleeve)	always	1	2.5
Length of sleeve (three fourth sleeve )	Some time	14	35	
	never	25	62.5	
	Always	-	-	
	Some time	7	17.5	
	Never	33	82.5	
	Sleeveless	Always	-	-
		Some time	-	-
Never		40	100	
Always		-	-	
Type of sleeve	Some time	35	87.5	
	Never	5	12.5	
	Always	40	100	
	Some time	-	-	
	Never	-	-	
Raglan/kimono/any sleeve with fullness at armhole	Always	40	100	
	Some time	-	-	
	Never	-	-	

respondents and related preferences like armhole size, length of sleeve and type of sleeve.

Data reveals that majority of the respondents (60%) didn't have any problem with arm-hole and remaining 40 per cent respondents were having problem with arm-hole.

Regarding preference in size of armhole, it was found that majority of the respondents (50%) gave their preference to large size arm-hole followed by 35 per cent respondents who preferred normal size of armhole. The table further shows the data about length of the sleeves, it was found that majority of respondents (87.5%) always preferred short/half sleeve followed by 10 per cent respondents who preferred half sleeve for some time. Majority of the respondents (62.5%) never preferred full sleeve followed by 35 percent respondents who preferred full sleeve for some time. Very few respondents (2.5%) always preferred full sleeves in their garment. None of the respondents reported their preference towards sleeveless dresses.

With regards to preference of sleeve type, data revealed that cent percent respondents always want to have comfort and ease at armhole and sleeve portion and gave their preference towards raglan/kimono or any type of sleeve that will provide fullness and comfort, as most of the respondents were not technically aware of the terms used in sleeve types.

#### **Ease in *Slipping hand* in the sleeve :**

The data pertaining to problems faced in ease in *slipping hand* easily in sleeve of the garment by respondents has been presented in Table 6.

<b>Table 6 : Percentage distribution of respondents by ease in <i>slipping hand</i> in the sleeve (n=40)</b>		
Ease in <i>slipping hand</i> in sleeve	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	75
No	10	25

Majority of respondents(75%) didn't face any problem in *slipping hand* easily in sleeve and remaining 25 per cent respondents could not slip hand easily in sleeve.

#### **Garment slip easily over head :**

The data pertaining to facing problem with garment *slip easily over head* by respondents has been presented in Table 7.

<b>Table 7 : Percentage distribution of respondents by garment slipped easily over the head (n=40)</b>		
Easily slipped over head	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	15	37.5
No	25	72.5

Perusal of data indicate that majority of respondents (72.5%) could not slip upper garment easily over the head while remaining 37.5 per cent respondents did not face any problem in slip upper garment over the head.

#### **Clothing problem in upper garment length and its opening :**

The data pertaining to facing problems with upper garment length, use of fastener and

its opening by respondents has been presented in Table 8.

Aspect	Description	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Problem in garment length	Yes	16	40
	No	24	60
Preference in type of fastener	Button and button -hole	10	25
	Press-button	5	12.5
	Velcro	-	-
	Hook –eye	23	57.5
	Zip	2	5
Type of opening	Front opening	34	85
	Back opening	6	15
	Side opening	-	-

The data shows that more than half of the respondents (60%) were facing problem with garment length and remaining 40 per cent respondents did not have any problem with garment length.

The researcher tried to collect information about their preference in type of fastener to be used in the garment by the respondents and found that majority of the respondents (57.5%) were giving preference to use of *hook-eye* in their garment while 25 per cent respondents were preferring only *button and button-hole*, 12.5 per cent respondents preferred *press-button*. Few of the respondents (5%) were giving preference to use of zipper for easy holding and ease in operation.

None of the respondents preferred use of *Velcro* in their garment. The reason of not preferring *Velcro* was prevalence of uncertainty in their mind about its effectiveness in use of upper garments.

The data shows that majority of the respondents (85%) preferred front opening in their garment because it was easy to operate for respondents and they can open and close it independently and remaining (15%) respondents preferred back opening in their garment.

#### **Clothing problem related to care and maintenance of the garment:**

The data pertaining to facing problem with care and maintenance of the garment has been presented in Table 9.

Data regarding problems faced in care and maintenance of the garment depicts that majority of respondents had common problem of garments being *soiled easily* (75%), garment needed *daily wash* (90%) because of the reasons of cleanliness and maintaining hygiene.

It was also revealed by respondents that their garments become *badly wrinkled* on use and require frequent ironing while the remaining 10 per cent respondent's garments did not wrinkle and did not need frequent ironing.

Majority of the respondents (90%) responded that their garments were *easy to wash and care* while remaining 10 per cent respondents did not find their garments *easy to wash and care*.

**Table 9 : Percentage distribution of respondents by facing problem with care and maintenance of the garment (n=40)**

Problem with care and maintenance	Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Soiled easily	Yes	30	75
	No	10	25
Require daily wash	Yes	36	90
	No	4	10
Wrinkle badly	Yes	28	70
	No	12	30
Need ironing	Yes	28	70
	No	10	30
Easy to care	Yes	36	90
	No	4	10
Easy to wash	Yes	36	90
	No	4	10

#### **Clothing problems related to fitting and their preference:**

The data pertaining to respondents facing problem with fitting of the garment and their preferences have been presented in Table 10.

**Table 10 : Percentage distribution of the respondents by clothing problem related to fitting of garment and their preference (n=40)**

Aspect	Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Problem with Fitting of the garment	Yes	30	75
	No	10	25
	Tight	-	-
Preference according to fitting	Semi-fitted	30	75
	Fitted	5	12.5
	Loose	5	12.5

The data reveals that majority of the respondents (90%) were having problem related to fitting of the garment while few of the respondents (10%) didn't have any problem related to fitting.

Majority of the respondents (75%) were giving preference to semi-fitted garment while an equal number of respondents (12.5%) each preferred fitted and loose garment respectively.

#### **Material related problem :**

The data pertaining to material related problem has been presented in Table 11.

The researcher made an effort to find out the existence of material related problem among respondents and it was found that majority of the respondents (87.5%) were not facing problem related to weight of the garment while few of the respondent (12.5%) were facing problem with the weight of the material.

Half of the respondents were facing problem with fabric absorbency because 50 per cent respondents were using synthetic fabric and the synthetic fabric did not have absorbent

Material related problem	Response	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Fabric weight	Yes	5	12.5
	No	35	87.5
Absorbency	Yes	20	50
	No	20	50
Shrinkage	Yes	28	70
	No	12	30
Colour fastness	Yes	-	-
	No	40	100
Pilling	Yes	28	70
	No	12	30

property.

Majority of the respondents (70%) were facing problem related to *shrinkage* property and pilling at the surface of fabric, because they were using cotton fabric and cotton fabric generally shrinks on laundering. The reason of facing problem of pilling formation was related to fabric quality which depends on the quality of yarn used in fabric construction. It is interested to note that cent per cent respondents didn't have any problem related to colour fastness.

### **Conclusion :**

Findings revealed that majority of the respondents (52.5%) belonged to the age group of 65-67 years, 65 per cent respondents belonged to joint families, 72.5 per cent belonged to service class and (62.5%) respondents were found in the income range of Rs. 10,000-50,000/- per month. Regarding clothing problems, it was found that common problems faced by elderly women were related to garment length, size and shape and length of sleeves, size of armhole, difficulty in hand slipping, fitting, material related problem, care and maintenance related problem, etc. Based on the data, it can be concluded that special functional clothing should be designed for elderly women keeping in mind their problems and preferences in clothing to make them more confident, social and independent in clothing aspect.

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