

**DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION OF  
CLOTH IN INDIA**

**WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO POONA CITY**

By

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## INTRODUCTION

The broad features of India's economic life have been outlined during last two decades by reports of official committees and commissions and some All India enquiries. Detailed surveys of particular problems have not received equal attention. For example data relating to total expenditure on certain groups of items of consumption such as food, clothing, fuel, etc. are available in the reports of different enquiries (e.g. Agricultural Labour Enquiry) or family budget Studies (e.g. Enquiry into the family budgets of industrial workers). Such information is also available in certain local surveys. However, all these data are presented in terms of average expenditure on different groups of items of consumption. Further detailed analysis of the data collected during these surveys is ordinarily not attempted.

The purpose of the present Survey was to collect detailed information, as far as possible, in relation to distribution and consumption of a single group of consumption goods viz. clothing, and to make a full analysis of the data collected. The field of investigation had to be confined to a comparatively small area, owing to limitations of time and individual coverage. It was decided

to study problems relating to clothing of the inhabitants of Poona City area. None of the surveys conducted so far in India present a detailed analysis of the consumption of any single group of consumption items for any particular section of the Indian population and the consumption data are not combined in any case with information relating to distribution and marketing. Some studies like nutrition and diet/ surveys have been carried out in India for studying consumption of food etc., but no studies in relation to clothing appear to have been undertaken. Thus the field of investigation chosen for the present study has not, so far, been tackled in India. The technique of investigation, that suited Indian conditions best, had also to be determined during the course of investigation.

The data collected in the course of the enquiry were analysed as fully as the data permitted. The data are presented from quantitative as well as from qualitative points of view. Statistical techniques used in the analysis of the data on consumption, in the studies in European and other countries, have been applied as far as possible, to the analysis of the data collected during the Cloth Consumption Survey.

For the sake of convenience the subject has been presented in four parts. The first part relates to the production of cloth in India. It describes historical

development of different types of producers such as hand-looms and mills. Reasons for the differences in the growth-pattern of these various types are given and the present position of these producers in the Indian market is summarised. It is believed that this information will serve as a background against which the picture of the distribution and consumption of cloth in Poona can be appreciated.

The study of the distribution and consumption of cloth in Poona covers the next two parts. The first of these relates to the distribution of cloth, and the second is devoted to the study of the consumption of cloth in the City.

The study of the distribution of cloth in Poona City (Chapter II) begins with a historical review of the development of the cloth market in Poona and describes subsequently the changes in the types of distributors handling textile products; the types of goods supplied and the methods of purchase and sale. Shifts in the location of the important cloth marketing areas in the City over the last century are also brought out.

Chapter III describes the methods used for the collection of the data regarding the present structure and working of the cloth market in Poona City and gives information about the

selection of sample, composition of the questionnaire and the collection of data. Since there is no organisation of cloth merchants in the City through which different merchants could be approached, it was necessary to contact and interview each merchant independently.

Chapter IV describes separately the wholesale and retail markets with respect to the number of different types of distributive agencies that deal in cloth, their volume of business and their relative positions in the marketing of cloth in the City. A special study of the working of cloth consumers' co-operatives is also made.

The methods of purchases and sales of the merchants from Poona dealing in textiles are described in Chapter V. As the methods of purchases of products of mill and non-mill sector differ markedly, these are presented separately. The effects of display and advertisement, the role of creative salesmanship in the marketing of textiles, seasonality in sales, etc., are studied in the second section of this chapter.

The last chapter in this part (Chapter VI) is devoted to the study of pricing policies and practices, of the cloth merchants. The chapter is based on a special investigation planned with a view to studying the actual

working of the pricing system in the cloth market in Poona City.

Part III is devoted to the study of consumption of cloth in Poona City. This is based chiefly on information collected from sample of households (546 families). The details about selection of the sample families, the composition of questionnaire, the methods of collection of data are described in the introductory sections of Chapter VII. Because of the magnitude of the work outside help had to be taken in the collection of primary data from the sample families. Such help was not taken in any other part or aspect of the work of the thesis. Additional detailed information about purchases of cloth was collected from 50 households, that were induced to keep actual records of the cloth purchases for the year 1955-56. The problems of conduct of the Survey, reliability of the data, etc., are discussed in the subsequent sections. The general characteristics of the sample families are described in the concluding sections of the chapter.

In Chapter VIII, detailed information about the purchases of different types of garments by persons belonging to different age and sex groups is given. Such detailed information about consumption of cloth is not

available in any of the family budget or other surveys carried out in India. The variation in the types of garments used by families belonging to different socio-economic groups is also described in this chapter.

Chapter IX gives qualitative information about the shop preferences and cloth preferences of the sample families. The shopping areas that the consumers frequently visit, the frequency and the occasion of purchases, etc., are described in the first section of this chapter. Use of different varieties of cloth in families belonging to different socio-economic groups is studied in the second section of this chapter. The relative fields of products of the mill and non-mill sector in the total consumption of cloth of the sample families are also studied.

Effects of different socio-economic factors such as income, caste, occupation, etc., on the expenditure on clothing are discussed in Chapter X.

Chapter XI presents the formal statistical treatment of the data relating to consumption of cloth collected during the present Survey. Income elasticity for the items of clothing is derived. The income elasticity is further decomposed into quality and quantity elasticity following Prais and Houthakker. The values of elasticities are studied for different community groups. Quality

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The last chapter deals with estimation of all-India consumption of cloth. No data relating to total consumption of cloth by the Indian population are available. But valuable information is available in this connection in certain enquiries viz. 'Agricultural Labour Enquiry', 'Rural Credit Survey' and in certain family budget studies. An attempt to estimate the consumption of cloth in India in 1950-51 is made by putting together the data available from different sources. Several approximating procedures had to be adopted as there were several gaps in the data. But an attempt is made to utilise the relevant data as fully as possible. On the basis of these data estimates of the requirements of cloth in 1955-56 and 1960-61 are also made.

The entire work, in all its stages, was carried out under the guidance of Prof. D. R. Gadgil, Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics. I cannot adequately express the deep debt that I owe to him for his encouragement and guidance. I tender my grateful thanks to Prof. V. M. Dandekar and Prof. P. N. Mathur - who kindly extended their valuable guidance, specially in connection with the statistical treatment of the data.

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The authorities of the Poona Municipal Corporation, the Sales Tax Office, Poona, and the like bodies have obliged me by making available all the relevant records. The authorities of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics have rendered invaluable help by allowing the use of their statistical laboratory.

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## GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS USED IN THE THESIS

### Articles of clothing :-

- Angarkha - Outer-garment of males, a sort of long coat.
- Choli - A sort of sleeved breast-coat of women.
- Chaddar - A sheet or large white cloth.
- Gadipat - Cloth used in making mattresses.
- Ghagra - A female garment, a sort of petticoat.
- Izar - A sort of pyjama.
- Karanda - A casket (of metal, wood, ivory).
- Karkhana - Workplace for manufacturing goods.
- Karkhandar - Owner of Karkhana
- Khadi - Thick, coarse, handwoven cloth prepared from handspun yarn.
- Khamis - A female garment - a sort of frock.
- Khana - A variegated cloth used particularly for making cholis.
- Kinkhab - Velvet worked with gold and silver threads.
- Kopari - Short-sleeved waist coat worn by males, normally from agricultural and labouring classes.
- Kurta - A loose shirt.
- Lungi - A cloth, usually in checks, 2 to 2½ yards in length, worn around the waist by males.
- Odhani - A cotton or silk shawl or an embroidered cloth thrown over the head and shoulders by women.
- Pagri - A turban, shaped and sewn fast.
- Paithani - Rich silk garment with jari border, used by women.
- Pancha - A piece of cloth worn around the waist by males.
- Peiran - A sort of shirt or frock especially for children.

Peth - A manufacturing or market town.

Pheta - A kind of turban, about 2 feet in width and 15-22 feet in length.

Pitambar - A silk dhoti usually of saffron colour.

Rumal - A kind of turban, about 12 feet in length.

Sadara - A shirt.

Salwar - A female garment - a sort of pyjama.

Shalu - A heavy silk sari with jari work.

Uparna - A small single cloth, worn loosely over the shoulder

#### Types of Borders :-

Chanderi, Gome, Induri, Jari (gold or silver thread), Jari butte (gold or silver thread designs), Kanti, Mugavi, Chowkat (small checks), Pahadi, Patti, Pharaspeti, Rasta (close strips), and Shobha are the names of various borders called after the particular type of design used.

#### Hindu Festivals :-

Dassera - Usually in the month of October.

Diwali - Usually in the month of October or November.

Padawa - (The new year day) usually in the month of April or May.

Sankranta - 14th of January.

Swadeshi :- The 'Buy Indian' movement.

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