

RESEARCH PAPER

Clothing consumption practices of conservative societies inhabited in northern Karnataka

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Abstract: The origin of Indian conservative societies is evident from ancient times, in the epics of Ramayana and the Mahabharata as literature. Conservative societies have been traced to such races as the Proto-Australoids, who at one time practically covered the whole of India; secondly, the Mongoloids who are still located mostly in Assam and North East India and finally to a limited extent to the Negrito's strain as indicated by frizzy hair, among the Andamanese and the Siddis of the South India. The survey was conducted among five selected conservative societies to elicit information regarding factors considered while preplanning, clothing and household textiles preference for ready-mades, tailor made and homemade clothing and many more. Thus the result reveals that is very poor because of lower socio-economic status and no exposure to urban locale and societies.

Key words: Clothing, Conservative societies, Home made, Household textiles

Introduction

India is known for its unity and deep rooted culture at global level reflected diversified communities. Every community is known for its rich heritage, culture, tradition as well as costume; India occupies second position next to Africa in tribe's percentage. According to 2001 census, there are about 573 tribes with 84.3 million population constituting 8.2 per cent of the country's population. The conservative societies reside in about 15 per cent of the country's areas, viz., North-east India, Eastern India, Central and Western Ghats of India and Southern India. In the Southern India the conservative societies generally seen in Hilly regions of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Western and Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (Devi and Hemasrikumar, 2011). Adivasi culture is intrinsically linked to the economic, social and environmental aspects of Adivasi life. There is a clear evidence of changing trends in Adivasi art forms. Some have retained the purity of the originality, mainly because of isolated existence, but however there was an influence of urban culture was evident in the costumes, dance and social comments of many others (Vijayalakshmi, 2003).

Conservative societies in Karnataka are amazingly enormous in number, with the count exceeding a base minimum. Karnataka itself being a state of literacy, the conservative societies of Karnataka are also not lagging far behind (Varghese, 2010). Though Kannada is the regional language even, Malayalam and Hindi are found to be spoken by conservative societies. Cultural performances in the form of theatrical representations, dances, dramas, art and music are quite popular among Karnataka conservative societies. (Ababu, 2004) In all, the conservative societies in the state have markedly lower literacy rates than other groups. They neither have 12 month employment nor regular employment in the dwelling area; thus migration to cities in search of jobs for livelihood is inevitable among conservative societies. Like any other second man even tribal people wished to get recognized by the contemporary society thus, wants to be one among urban community.

They are also been influenced by other societies in the urban areas. Education is the important element in development of any community; Need for the social identity, psychological acceptance among others, to acquire better jobs to earn wages shifting of primitive occupation and many more. Some of the learned sections of the conservative societies are slowly influenced by the fashion trends especially the younger generation and eventually shown inclination towards adaptation of trendy clothes leaving behind their traditional gorgeous costume and jewellery. Thus, it is found necessary to conserve the rich heritage of tribal costume through documentation on tribal indigenous costumes and folklore. The scholar is focusing, highlighting and conducting the research in the state of Karnataka. Five different conservative society's viz., *Gouli*, *Halakki*, *Kunbi*, *Lambani* and *Siddi* of Dharwad, Haveri and Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. The author made an effort to study the clothing purchasing practices of conservative societies.

Material and methods

To achieve this aim, descriptive cum exploratory study comprised of field study and literature survey was carried out in the year 2011-14. Methods and techniques of data collection and its execution were planned, keeping in mind the nature of investigation chosen, purpose and objectives formulated. The selection of the locale for data collection in the present study is based on the density of the conservative societies, population and accessibility by the investigator in terms of mobility and safety. Accordingly Dharwad, Haveri and Uttara Kannada districts of Karnataka were selected for the present study, following the purposive sampling method.

The respondents in this study are drawn from five different conservative society's viz., *Goulis*, *Halakkis*, *Kunbis*, *Lambanis* and *Siddis*. A total of 250 conservative (tribal) families, 50 families from each conservative societies were selected following randomly sampling method. However, two

villages from each Taluk of Dharwad, Haveri and Uttara Kannada district were selected through lottery method. Clothing purchasing practices involves the clothing consumption pattern of families of each conservative society. Under this heading information on income, budgeting, mode of purchase, frequency of purchase, knowledge regarding fibre content, seasonal clothes, reasons and factors considered while selection, preference for readymade, tailor made, self made clothes, types of shop preferred along with the care and maintenance of clothing is generated.

Results and discussion

Factors considered while preplanning the purchase of family clothing by conservative societies

Sometimes it is observed that the families plan to purchase before actual buying and the factors usually thought of are amount to be spent, pattern/style, fibre content, quality and quantity, place and location of purchase, climate and brand are the factors considered while pre planning the purchase of family clothing by conservative societies. It is clear that irrespective of conservative societies families give prime importance and first rank for 'amount to be spent', in fact a good plan of budgeting, fibre content, climate and place of purchase as I, II, III and IV respectively. On the other hand the least preference is given to factors like brand (VIII), quality (VII) and quantity (VI), (Table 1). The cost of the clothes or textiles material varies mainly because of fibre content, texture, style, weave, finish *etc.*, applied to it. Thus, when budget is planned fibre content of the material is always taken into consideration. Climatic condition was another factor considered because the clothes purchased are mainly to protect against climatic severity and the locality where they dwell (*i.e.*, costal area or forest) was considered keeping in mind the pattern, quality, quantity, nearby the area quick reach, avoid transportation and many more. However, no preference was given for brand because they never wear branded clothes, cannot afford and it is not their priority. The community wears clothes mainly for modesty not for adornment. Venkatesh, 2011, explained and highlighted on the same clothing purchasing practices followed by the *Gamokkalu Budakattu* community.

Clothing and household textile purchasing practices by conservative societies

Clothing purchasing practice is a obscure task, which entirely depends on consumer behavior, among the conservative society it mainly depend on socio-economic aspects and socio psychological aspects is considered very least, the trunk or wardrobe may/may not consists of categories of clothes and household textiles and there are purchased at a same time but throughout the year at different times. An attempt is made to find out how often there categories are purchased.

Table 2 disclosed the clothing and household textile purchasing practices by conservative society. It is evident from this table that none of the family purchase clothes and household textiles either monthly or quarterly. More than 60.00 per cent of families belonging to conservative societies, purchase clothes and household textiles whenever necessary, meager per cent of the family preferred to purchase clothes and household textiles, half year and yearly, irrespective of the conservative societies. Table represents the results on the clothing and house hold textiles purchasing practices by the conservative societies. Most of the clothes and household textile material were purchased either half yearly, yearly or whenever needed. This is true with the household textiles which do not undergo any wear and tear easily but it is not so with the clothing as they are used regularly, need to be laundered every day thus, the consumption of clothing is high than household textiles, irrespective of purchasing frequency and conservative societies. The result highlights of Sarkar and Sil, (2007 and 2009); Nadaf and Naik, 2015 are in parallel line of the results of the present study.

Consumption pattern of common textiles by conservative societies

The purchasing power of the families ultimately depends on the annual income of the family. Therefore, the expenditure or consumption of common textiles varies between conservative society as well among the families of conservative societies with respect to low, middle and high income groups. It is evident from Table 3 that cent per cent families very commonly consume bed sheet, pillow cases and towels followed by quilt (70.80%), blanket (55.20%), napkins (27.00%) and table mat (22.00) whereas, very meager per cent families use table cover (17.60%) dwin set (08.00%) and floor mat (04.00%). It is clear that cent per cent of families irrespective of conservative societies

Table 1. Factors considered while pre planning the purchase of family clothing by conservative societies

Factors considered	No. of families										Average	Rank
	Gouli (n ₁ =50)		Halakki (n ₂ =50)		Kunbi (n ₃ =50)		Lambani (n ₄ =50)		Siddi (n ₅ =50)			
	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank		
Amount to be spent	0.56	1	1.10	1	0.96	1	1.11	1	1.15	1	0.98	I
Pattern	3.72	3	2.76	2	6.89	7	6.90	6	2.64	2	4.58	V
Fibre content	4.38	6	5.48	5	3.64	3	3.86	4	3.33	3	4.14	II
Quality	6.68	7	6.95	7	5.72	6	4.74	5	6.11	6	6.04	VII
Quantity	4.30	5	3.40	3	2.23	2	5.40	7	7.63	7	4.60	VI
Place of purchase	3.68	2	6.28	6	4.63	5	2.40	2	4.63	4	4.33	IV
Climate	4.06	4	4.56	4	3.97	4	2.99	3	5.84	5	4.29	III
Brand	7.88	8	7.63	8	7.90	8	7.72	8	8.00	8	7.83	VIII

WAR – Weighted Average Ranking

Lower the WAR greater is the preference

Table 2. Clothing and household textiles purchasing practices by conservative societies

N = 250

Frequency	Number of families										Total	
	<i>Gouli</i> (n ₁ =50)		<i>Halakki</i> (n ₂ =50)		<i>Kunbi</i> (n ₃ =50)		<i>Lambani</i> (n ₄ =50)		<i>Siddi</i> (n ₅ =50)			
	C	HT	C	HT	C	HT	C	HT	C	HT	C	HT
Monthly	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Quarterly	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Half yearly	05	08	09	09	07	-	12	07	05	-	38	24
	(10.00)	(16.00)	(18.00)	(18.00)	(14.00)		(24.00)	(14.00)	(10.00)		(15.20)	(09.60)
Yearly	11	15	15	12	10	09	08	06	04	13	48	55
	(22.00)	(30.00)	(30.00)	(24.00)	(20.00)	(18.00)	(16.00)	(12.00)	(08.00)	(26.00)	(19.20)	(22.00)
Whenever needed	34	27	26	29	33	21	30	37	41	37	164	151
	(68.00)	(54.00)	(52.00)	(58.00)	(66.00)	(42.00)	(60.00)	(74.00)	(82.00)	(74.00)	(65.60)	(60.40)

C - Clothing HT - Household textile

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 3. Consumption pattern of common household textiles among conservative societies

N=250

Home textiles	No. of families					Total
	<i>Gouli</i> (n ₁ =50)	<i>Halakki</i> (n ₂ =50)	<i>Kunbi</i> (n ₃ =50)	<i>Lambani</i> (n ₄ =50)	<i>Siddi</i> (n ₅ =50)	
Bed sheet	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	250 (100.00)
Pillow cases	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	250 (100.00)
Blanket	36 (72.00)	23 (46.00)	17 (34.00)	42 (84.00)	20 (40.00)	138 (55.20)
Quilt	19 (38.00)	50 (100.00)	32 (64.00)	26 (52.00)	50 (100.00)	177 (70.80)
Table cover	—	13 (26.00)	04 (08.00)	18 (36.00)	09 (18.00)	44 (17.60)
Table mat	12 (24.00)	11 (22.00)	—	24 (48.00)	08 (16.00)	55 (22.00)
Napkins	11 (22.00)	16 (32.00)	14 (28.00)	16 (32.00)	11 (22.00)	68 (27.20)
Towels	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	50 (100.00)	250 (100.00)
Dwin set	—	—	—	16 (32.00)	—	20 (08.00)
Floor mat	—	—	—	10 (20.00)	—	10 (04.00)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Multiple responses possible

consumed common textile like bed sheet, pillow cases and towels as there are the basic need of an individual. Quilt and blanket was consumed more during the raining and winter seasons, quilt making is one of the leisure time utilization practices of *Halakki* and *Siddi* women which intern reduce money spent on blanket. Meanwhile table cover, table mat, napkins, dwin set, floor mat were used less because of low socio-economic status of the conservative societies and their family annual income did not give any freedom for decorative house and luxurious life style with the variety of furnishings.

Preference for readymade, tailor made and homemade clothing among conservative societies

Several garment style of readymade and tailor-mades are available for everyone in the market and ultimately, it is either individual choice or a family choice influence the purchase of readymade, tailor-made or homemade garments. Table 4 depicts the preference for ready-made, tailor-made and homemade garments by the families. Irrespective of conservative societies 58.00 per cent and 29.60 per cent families preferred readymade always and sometimes respectively. On the other hand about 24.60 per cent sometimes preferred tailor-made whereas 14.80 per cent, always. Mean while, 75.25 per cent and 61.60 per cent of the families never preferred homemade and tailor-made garments. In the mechanical busy world of today, majority of the consumer irrespective of their socio-economic status purchase ready-mades, especially when the time is the constraint as well when plan to purchase immediately festivals,

weddings, birthday and so on. This kind of purchasing behaviour is also observed with drape wears i.e., saree, however the percentage of inclination for ready-made does vary. From Table it is evident that, ready-mades were preferred by the majority family belonging to *Gouli*, *Halakki*, *Kunbi* and *Siddi* who are always draped saree. Readymade garments were preferred by their children during fairs and festivals. The preference/results for ready-made garments for their children by conservative societies are on par with the study Mariyappanavar and Naik, 2013. The daily and casual wears were sometimes got stitched. Home-made garments were preferred only by *Lambanis* since the traditional costume is hand stitched and hand embroidered. On the contrary none of the other conservative societies opted for home-made because of lack of knowledge in stitching. The results of the present study are on par with the study conducted by Sarkar and Sil, 2007.

Factors considered while purchasing family clothing by conservative societies

There is a gap between what one 'prefers' and what 'actual purchase'. 'Preference' gives an idea about the opinion of conservative families towards 'what' clothes they want. But purchasing is an action oriented task where the clothes are actually bought, in other words it depicts the 'practical approach'. The factors influencing 'preference' and 'purchasing' clothes may sometimes be same, but not always. Hence, an effect is made to understand the factors actually influenced the purchase of family clothing.

Table 4. Preference for readymade, tailor-made and home made clothing among conservative societies

N = 250

Types of garments	Number of families																	
	<i>Gouli</i> (n ₁ =50)			<i>Halakki</i> (n ₂ =50)			<i>Kunbi</i> (n ₃ =50)			<i>Lambani</i> (n ₄ =50)			<i>Siddi</i> (n ₅ =50)			Total		
	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N	A	S	N
Ready made	23	16	11	43	07	-	27	21	02	20	12	18	32	18	-	145	74	31
	(46.0)	(32.0)	(22.0)	(86.0)	(14.0)		(54.0)	(42.0)	(04.0)	(40.0)	(24.0)	(36.0)	(64.0)	(36.0)		(58.0)	(29.6)	(12.4)
Tailor made	17	14	19	03	08	39	11	14	25	-	12	38	06	11	33	37	59	154
	(34.0)	(28.0)	(38.0)	(06.0)	(16.0)	(78.0)	(22.0)	(28.0)	(50.0)		(24.0)	(76.0)	(12.0)	(22.0)	(66.0)	(14.8)	(23.6)	(61.6)
Home made	-	06	44	-	-	50	02	-	48	45	05	-	04	-	46	51	11	188
		(12.0)	(88.0)			(100.0)	(04.0)		(96.0)	(90.0)	(10.0)		(08.0)		(92.0)	(20.4)	(04.4)	(75.2)

A – Always S – Sometimes N – Never

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

Table 5. Factors considered while purchasing family clothing by conservative societies

N = 250

Factors considered	No. of families										Average	Rank
	<i>Gouli</i> (n ₁ =50)		<i>Halakki</i> (n ₂ =50)		<i>Kunbi</i> (n ₃ =50)		<i>Lambani</i> (n ₄ =50)		<i>Siddi</i> (n ₅ =50)			
	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank	WAR	Rank		
Colour combination	5.70	5	4.11	4	6.23	7	5.63	5	6.91	7	5.57	VI
Comfort	3.95	4	4.90	5	5.83	6	2.68	2	4.42	6	4.37	IV
Cost	1.45	1	1.63	1	1.30	1	1.92	1	2.40	2	1.74	I
Design / print	6.27	7	6.16	7	7.03	8	6.93	8	7.10	8	6.70	VIII
Durability	2.34	2	3.41	3	3.42	3	3.54	3	1.07	1	2.76	II
Easy to care	3.04	3	2.92	2	4.12	4	4.28	4	3.20	3	3.51	III
Family conformity	6.23	6	5.56	6	2.56	2	7.20	7	6.43	6	5.35	V
Fibre content	6.85	8	6.93	8	4.98	5	6.28	6	5.20	5	6.05	VII

Lesser the value higher the rank

Lower the WAR greater is the preference

It is evident from Table 5 that irrespective of conservative societies do purchase clothes for their families and the descending order of factors that influenced the purchasing practice, are cost (1), durability (2), easy to care (3), comfort (4) and family conformity, where as the factors least influence much were design/print (8), fibre content (7) and colour combination (6). The evidences indicated by Singh and Mehta, 2012; Mariyappanavar and Naik, 2014 in their studies depict the same follow of factors in purchase of clothes by the youth of Bhil and Siddi tribe of India.

Since it is clear from Table that, families of conservative societies prefer ready-mades to that of tailor-mades, which indicates it is nevertheless to state that, irrespective of families who purchased ready-mades and mainly because of affordable prices, easy to care, comfortable and confine to family conformity. If durability and ease to care depend on quality of cloth, the family conformity refers to the traditional norms and values, which do not permit them to purchase clothing of

fashionable and trendy outfits. This clearly indicates that, the conservative societies were greatly influenced by cost, comfort, durability and family conformity than colours combination, fibre content and design print.

Conclusion

Irrespective of conservative societies the clothing consumption pattern is lower because of lower socio-economic status. Even though with this the basic necessities are met with respect to family clothing and household textiles. Clothing is felt as one of the important aspect while planning the budget by the conservative societies. Ready-made are most preferred by *Gouli*, *Halakki*, *Kunbi* and *Siddi* conservative societies as their traditional costume is draping style of saree and *Lambani* women prefer homemade clothes i.e., 3 component costume, ghagra, choli and chunni. Though with no exposure and least knowledge the preference is given to the factors like cost, durability, easy to care, comfort and family conformity.

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