



## SELECTION OF TEXTILES AND CLOTHING

*I*n the last four lessons you have been learning a lot about textiles. You know about fibres and their properties, fabric construction methods, and the different types of finishes applied to textiles. These finishes give fabric a specific look with the help of which we are able to recognise the fabric. What are some of the other indicators of fabric quality which can guide you? Similarly, some people wear only cottons as blends don't suit them. So, in that case, how do you get an assurance that what you are buying is according to your requirement? Most of the time the properties are dependent on the fibre content. So it is necessary for all of us to read the marking on the fabric/'Thaan' for making a right purchase.

This is about fabric, but what happens if you have to buy a ready-made dress? With every ready-made dress there is a 'label' which gives the necessary instructions. But most of us have the habit of not looking at these labels.

Let us go in to more details of these and sort out some of the problems related to selection of textiles and clothing.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the selection of fabrics for different end uses according to fabric properties;
- list and explain the factors influencing selection of clothing;
- state the importance of labels and markings as quality indicators;
- explain malpractices in trading of textiles and clothing;
- elaborate the points to be kept in mind while judging quality of textile products and ready-made garments.



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## 26.1 SELECTION OF FABRIC FOR DIFFERENT END USES

When you look around your house you will find that there are various types of fabrics used for different things. Like, fabric used for curtains is different from the fabric used for apparel or the intimate garments. You will find that a particular type of fabric is used for a particular end use. The difference in fabrics is due to difference in fabric properties which, you know, depends on fibre, yarn, fabric construction techniques and also the finishes given to the fabric. Why do you buy cotton and not synthetics for summer wear?

Let us recapitulate fabric related properties very briefly here and learn how these influence our selection of textiles and clothing.

### 1. Fibre Properties

You have already studied properties of fibres in a previous lesson. Do you remember what they are?

They are:

- length and appearance of the fibre
- moisture absorption
- heat conductivity
- strength

Let us see how these properties influence our selection.

- (i) **Length and appearance:** Can you recall fabrics made of staple fibres and those made of filament fibres? Yes, you are right. Cotton jute and wool are staple fibres and nylon and polyester are filaments.

How does the length of the fibre influence your selection? You know that fabrics made with staple fibres have a rough look and those made with filaments have a smooth and shiny look. Also, short wavy fibres like those of cotton and wool tend to become dirty very easily whereas long, smooth fibres like silk or synthetics do not become dirty easily and are easy to clean.

Hence, whenever you need cloth with a smooth and shiny look, you will look for fabrics made of filament fibres i.e. synthetics or silk.

Nowadays, some finishes are applied on rough and dull fabrics which give them a smooth and shiny appearance, for example, starched cotton has a smoother look. But you also know that starch is a temporary finish which is removed on washing.

- (ii) **Moisture absorption:** Are you familiar with this property of fibres which makes the fabric either absorbent or non-absorbent? Cotton absorbs water/moisture easily whereas synthetic fabrics have low moisture absorbency. When the weather is hot and humid, we prefer cotton clothes because they absorb



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the perspiration and keep the skin cool. Since synthetic clothes do not soak sweat, they are uncomfortable to wear in summers. Similarly, when choosing undergarments and socks, this property must be kept in mind because those are the areas where maximum comfort is needed.

- (iii) **Heat conductivity:** This property refers to the ability of the fibre to conduct heat away from the body. You may recall that cotton and rayon are good conductors of heat and keep the body cool. Silk and synthetic fabrics are poor conductors of heat and wool is a very bad conductor of heat and keeps the body warm. Keep this property of fabrics in mind when you choose clothes for summer or winter. You are probably already doing this by selecting cottons for summers and silks and woollens for winters.
- (iv) **Strength:** Property of strength is needed in washing of the fabric. Ease of washing a fabric depends upon the strength of the fibre when it is wet. You know that some fibres become weak when wet. Which are those? Yes, these are wool, silk, rayon, etc.,. Fabrics like cotton and synthetics are extremely strong and can be washed and cleaned easily. Hence, clothes for daily wear which need frequent washing, must be made of cotton or synthetic fabrics. Delicate fabrics like silk are more suitable for occasional use so that they need not be washed frequently. Being the strongest fabric, nylon is used for industrial purposes for making parachutes and ropes.

## 2. Fabric Construction Techniques

In your previous lessons you have learnt about various fabric construction methods. Each method, as you know, gives a special property to the fabric like knitting provides stretchability and elasticity to the fabrics so it is suitable for socks, undergarments, woollen sweaters, etc. Weaving provides smooth and firm fabrics so they can be selected accordingly for making dresses.

Now that you know that the properties of different fabrics depend upon the method of construction, you can choose the fabrics according to the end use.

## 3. Finishes Applied

You have studied about various finishes like mercerisation, shrinkage control, waterproofing, etc., which are applied on fabrics to enhance their properties and their appearance. Now the question is, does a finish influence your selection? Yes, a finish does influence our selection.

Supposing you go to the market to buy cloth for a salwar suit. You know that you will normally need about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  meters of cloth. You will have to buy some extra cloth because it may shrink on washing. However, if the fabric has the shrinkage control finish on it you do not have to worry about shrinkage. Similarly, if you need cloth to replace the cloth of your umbrella you cannot buy just any cloth from the market. You will ask for cloth which is waterproof. You may remember that fin-



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ishes are generally applied to improve look of a fabric. But sometimes, a cloth of inferior quality is overstarched to hide the poor quality and thus make it look good. How can you find out the true quality of an overstarched cloth? Take the corner of the cloth and rub it between your hands. If a white powder shakes out of the cloth, avoid buying it.

So, when you are selecting fabrics, remember that all that shines and looks good cannot be of good quality. See carefully what you are buying and what is its end use. Knowledge of fabric properties will guide you to make a correct decision.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.1**

1. Select the correct alternative from the four given below each statement. Complete the statement using the selected word.
  - (i) Staple fibres give fabric a \_\_\_\_\_ look.
 

(a) rough	(b) smooth
(c) lustrous	(d) shiny
  - (ii) Filament fibres give fabrics a \_\_\_\_\_ look.
 

(a) dirty.	(b) smooth
(c) rough	(d) dull
  - (iii) \_\_\_\_\_ fabric does not becomes dirty easily.
 

(a) Cotton	(b) Organdie
(c) Denim	(d) Silk
  - (iv) Most suitable fabric for making baby garments is \_\_\_\_\_.
 

(a) silk	(b) cotton
(c) nylon	(d) denim
  - (v) A poor conductor of heat is \_\_\_\_\_.
 

(a) wool	(b) silk
(c) cotton	(d) denim
2. Fill in the blanks by choosing the correct alternative given along with each statement. Justify your choice in the given space.
  - i) \_\_\_\_\_ can be scrubbed hard while washing. (cotton/rayon)  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - ii) \_\_\_\_\_ is used for industrial purposes. (cotton/nylon)



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iii) \_\_\_\_\_ keeps you warm in winters. (wool/polyester)

3. Tick (✓) the statements which are true for knitted fabrics.

- i) Made by interlooping yarns
- ii) Have a rough look
- iii) Have a smooth look
- iv) Are very absorbent
- v) Are generally stretchable.

**26.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING SELECTION OF CLOTHING**

The clothes that you choose to buy and wear are influenced by several factors such as climate, age, occasion, activity and occupation.

**1. Climatic Factors**

You wear cottons in summers and woollens in winters. As you know woollen clothes are expensive and proper care is needed for their maintenance. People living in cold climate need to wear woollen clothes to keep warm. People living in very hot climates as in deserts need to wear turbans of thick cloth to protect their heads and wear long robes to stay cool.



**Fig. 26.1: Climatic Factors**



**Fig. 26.2 : Occasion**

**2. Occasion**

When you are attending a marriage you wear dresses in bright colours like lehnga cholis, ghagras and shararas often accompanied by bright accessories like bangles, chain and earrings.

Do you think these elaborate dresses could be worn on busy routine days? You would rather feel comfortable in a dress which fits you well and allows for ease of movement. Simple clothing with minimum accessories like



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a formal salwar kameez will give a more professional look for an interview. Sari, formal trousers, shirt, tie would be a good option that will make you feel active and confident.

### 3. Age

You must have noticed that the type of clothes worn change with age. Clothes worn by an adult-woman are definitely not the same as those worn by a college going girl. Similarly, men will prefer to wear light and comfortable clothes rather than fashionable ones. Let us see how the type of clothes worn change with age.



Fig. 26.3: Age

**Infant Wear**-The clothing requirements from birth to 12 months of age are few. The major requirements of the newborn are for warmth, comfort and cleanliness. Clothes should be soft and light as babies have tender and delicate skin. Since they are sleeping most of the time their clothes should be simple to put on and take off. It is also important that they should be easy to maintain. Cotton shirts that slip on or that have double-breasted front opening with snaps are some easy to wear styles. The diapers should be made of absorbent and soft cotton material.

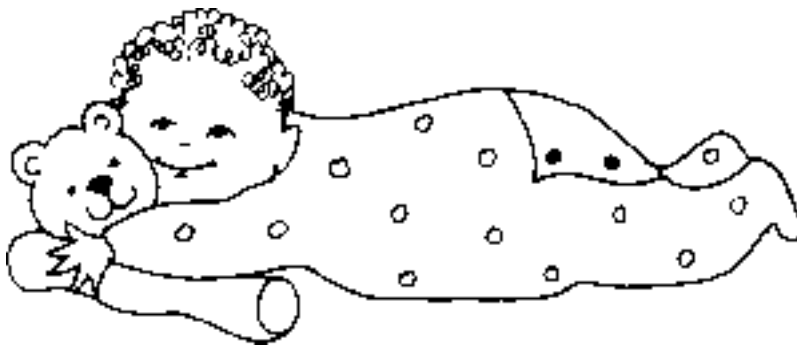


Fig 26.4 : Garments for Infants

**School going children**-Children of this age group are in the growing stage. They like to run about and play and are very active. Hence, their clothes must be made of strong and durable fabrics which can take a lot of wear and tear.

While selecting, do take care to see that there is adequate cloth inside the seams which can be opened up to fit rapidly growing children. The clothes must also be easy to launder as they get dirty frequently.



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**The later Teen Years**—This is the age when one starts going to college. Teenagers are very conscious about clothes and want to wear the ‘latest’ styles. They like to have variety in their clothes because they do not want to repeat the same dress every day. For them, fit and style are important qualities of clothes and construction is not often considered. It is advisable to select clothes which they can mix and match so that they can achieve variety with few clothes e.g. few colours of churidars or salwars can be combined with few ‘Kameez’ which can go with all legwears. Similarly if a teenaged boy gets a couple of pair of jeans and a few T-shirts, he can combine them to achieve variety in his wardrobe.



**Fig. 26.5: The later Teen Years**



**Fig. 26.6: Adults**

**Adults**—Selection of clothes for adults depends to a large extent upon the type of work that a person is engaged in. A working woman will need clothes which are easy to launder and which do not need much ironing because she has very limited time. She will also prefer to wear clothes which do not easily wrinkle as she must look good till the end of the day. Do you remember which are the fabrics which do not wrinkle easily?

**Old age** Old age brings its own problems. The body becomes stiff, the eye sight becomes weak and energy level is considerably reduced. You must have also observed that normally old people wear light material. The clothes they wear must be loose and comfortable rather than fashionable. Also, it would be advisable for the clothes to have front openings which are easy to see and manipulate and large buttons and button holes.

**4. Profession / occupation**

You must have seen doctor and nurses in white or light coloured simple clothing. Such a dress gives a neat and clean look to the wearer and also has a soothing effect on the patient. What is the uniform of a soldier?

Many professions have a specific dress code which gives them a special identity for example people working in the hotel industry, airlines, traffic policemen, security guards and so on. Sportsmen especially athletes and tennis players wear tiny shorts and snug tops of highly absorbent fabric. Such a dress may look out of



**Fig. 26.7: Profession / occupation:**

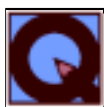


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place when worn on other occasion. Similarly a swim suit would look appropriate only near a swimming pool. Clubs, hotels and often formal parties have their own dress regulations.

What kind of clothes should you wear when you have to take a long bus or train journey? Clothes for travelling should preferably of dark colours and should not crumple easily.

Certain specialised activities require special apparel for example special overalls are worn in the laboratory, during mixing chemicals for pest control by people or by those who work in nuclear power plants. They protect the workers against radiation hazards. Workers in mines wear mining suits and special helmets fitted with torches. Divers wear wet suits with slippers that help them move easily under water. Do you know astronauts wear space suits fitted with total life support system to sustain and protect them from the harmful effects of outer space? Firemen wear apparel made of fireproof fabrics. What should you wear while working in the kitchen? Yes, go in for snug cotton clothing. Avoid loose fitting clothes and hanging dupattas and shawls.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.2**

- I State true or false and correct the false statement.
1. Synthetic fibres are ideal for baby's under garments.
  2. Doctors wear white coats to look fashionable.
  3. Clothing for travelling should preferably be of light colours.
  4. Delicate fabrics like silk are ideal for a long train journey.
  5. Cotton shirts that are easy to slip on or that have double breasted front openings with snaps are some easy to wear styles for infants.

II Match column I with column II

Column I

1. Baby garments
2. Teenagers
3. Active children
4. School going children
5. Grandmother

Column II

- a) variety to mix -n- match
- b) denim
- c) made of absorbent cottons
- d) glamorous
- e) strong and durable
- f) bright clothes
- g) dresses with front opening

**26.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Whenever you go shopping you want to buy a product that looks good, is durable





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and easy to maintain. In a nutshell, you want a good quality product. What are the aids that help you make a good choice? Markings and labels on the fabrics and garments respectively are consumer aids which give you an idea about the quality of the product. Hence you can call them quality indicators.

26.3.1 Labels and Markings

Labels and Markings

- (a) A label is a piece of paper or plastic that is attached to an object in order to give information about the object. A label can tell you what the object is, who has manufactured it and how to use it.

Today practically everything we buy has a label on it. Collect any 10 labels and look at the information given on them. You will find that all of these labels have some written information and/or some graphic display. Labels are made of many types of material- eg., paper, cardboard, fabric, tin or a simple tag attached to the product. In packages these can be a part of the package.

The information on labels includes brand names, pictures, designs, date of manufacture, packing, etc., and any other legal material that the manufacturer may care to put on it.

What about label on the yardage? What you see at the beginning of each fabric or 'Thaan' is called a 'marking'. Markings are shapes or designs printed on the surface of an object especially to give information and for identification.

As far as consumer goods are concerned, sometimes we just look at the emblem, picture or name by which we may identify the product, eg., Bombay Dyeing or DCM products. These are **brand labels**. There are **descriptive labels**, which give the characteristics of the contents of the package such as size and variety of the products. Besides these



Fig. 26.8: Brand labels

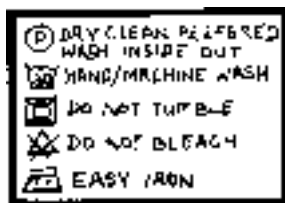


Fig. 26.9: Care labels

types there are **certification labels** that claim approval of some agency other than the producer and clarify that the product meets certain accepted standards. For example, 'Woolmark' is used for pure wool products. There are also **care labels** which give information regarding washing, ironing, storing, etc., of the product.

Another type of labels are designed to tell consumers about composition of a product and what can be expected of it in the way of performance, how it should be cared for and the use to which it may be put. This type of label is called **informative label**. So, to be really effective they must give sufficient



information to the consumer. However what all is given on a marking may not be meaningful, for example, a name like Lizy bizy is not providing any meaningful information about the composition of the fabric.



**Activity 26.1:** You must have collected 10 samples of labels. Look at them carefully and fill up the following table. One of these have been done for your convenience.

S.No	Label	Information provided	Placement of the label
1.	XL	Size. Extra large.	Stitched at the back of neckline.
2.			

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**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.3**

CROSS WORD

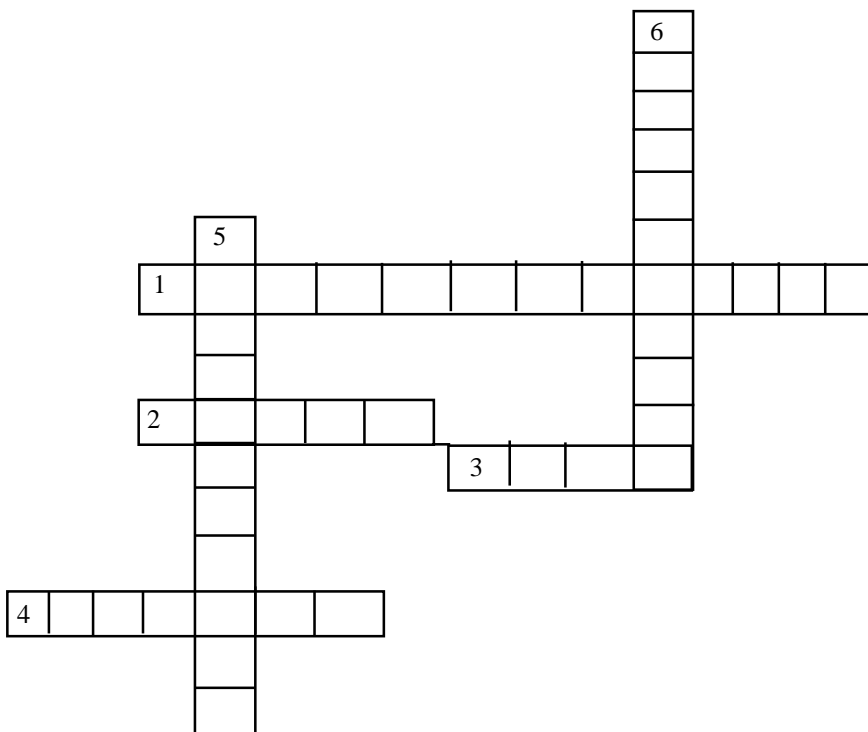


Fig. 26.10



Given below are the clues for different types of labels

Use these clues to fill in the cross word.

Across

1. Of acceptable standards (13)
2. Company identity mark (5)
3. Information of maintenance (4)
4. Printed on fabrics (7)

Down

5. Content characteristics (11)
6. Stating product performance (11)

### 26.4 MALPRACTICES

You all must have heard about various types of malpractices by traders and/or manufacturers of food items or electrical gadgets. Same is the case with the textiles and clothing sector. It is essential for all of us to know about these and to do the needful to control these. Some of the commonly observed malpractices in this area are-

**(a) Giving lesser quantity and/or poor quality of the product.**

Four meters of fabric bought for a suit often turns out to be 3.80 meters when you measure it. The retailer who does this either uses a short measuring rod or stretches the fabric while measuring it.

**(b) Cheating on price.**

Traders charge more than the price displayed on the item or on the packet containing goods. They name some tax and add it to the price printed on to the label. They may pick up some word on the label, eg., 'silk finish' and charge extra for it.

**(c) Selling defective goods.**

There are many places where traders sell materials of seconds as fresh and charge the price of fresh products.

**(d) Providing false, misleading and incomplete labels and markings.**

When you buy fabric for curtains, the marking should tell about light fastness. If it does not, then it is incomplete information. Similarly, the terms used should be meaningful and not misleading. The information provided should be correct. The information provided on the label on a garment is often quite vague and incomplete. For example, a label on a ready-to-wear garment does not say anything about washing, drying, ironing, and storing of the item.



So it is essential on our part as consumers to be alert and give no chance to the manufacturer or retailer to practice these malpractices and in case of complaint get in touch with concerned people to file our complaint. There is a Consumer Protection Regulation Act (1988) which covers all the above-discussed malpractices.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.4**

**Crack the Code**

How can you become an alert consumer? Using the code given below, decipher the qualities of an aware and alert consumer.

**CODE**

A=1	G=7	M=13	S=19	
B=2	H=8	N=14	T=20	Y=25
C=3	I=9	O=15	U=21	Z=26
D=4	J=10	P=16	V=22	
E=5	K=11	Q=17	W=23	
F=6	L=12	R=18	X=24	

- (1) 23-1-20-3-8      20-8-5      6-1-2-18-9-3      2-5-9-14-7

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
13-5-1-19-21-18-5-4

- (2) 3-8-5-3-10      20-8-5      16-18-9-3-5      16-18-9-14-20-5-4

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
15-14    20-8-5    16-18-15-4-21-3-20.

- (3) 18-5-1-4      20-8-5      11-1-2-11-5      1-14-4

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_  
13-1-18-10-9-14-7.

- (4) 4-15      14-15-20      8-5-19-9-20-1-20-5      20-15      21-19-5

\_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_



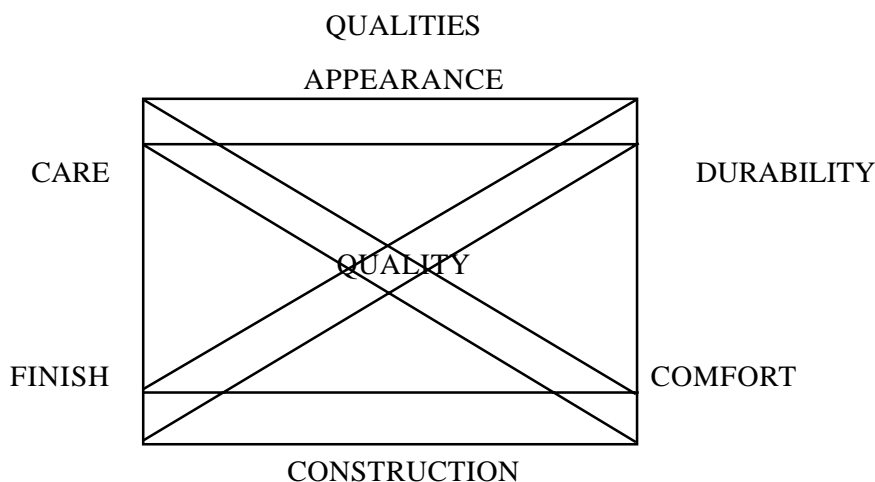
3-15-14-19-21-13-5-18    16-18-15-20-5-3-20-9-15-14

18-5-7-21-11-1-20-9-15-14    1-3-20

**26.5 GUIDELINES FOR JUDGING QUALITY OF FABRICS**

There is an astonishing variety of fabrics in the market these days. Manmade fibres, blends and a whole lot of natural fibres have brought a revolution in the textile industry. For instance, cottons blended with lycra are very popular in pants and jeans. These are comfortable and give a good fit. Khadi and its blends with cotton and silk are catching the eye of both young and old. Many synthetic fibre blends are also popular because of their easy wear and care property.

It is now possible to choose the fabric that is just right for a particular end use. But what qualities does one look for while selecting and purchasing fabrics?



When you go shopping just keep the following criteria in mind and you would be successful in making a good purchase.

**Material**

1. The cloth should be pleasing to touch.
2. Durability of fabric as you know, depends on the kind and quality of the fibre, strength of the yarn, the amount of twist in the yarn and compactness of construction. A closely woven fabric has a larger quantity of yarns than a loosely woven fabric and is therefore more serviceable.

**Weave**

1. Long floats in weave should be avoided as they tend to snag easily.
2. The strength of the cloth may be tested by applying tension between the two



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thumbs. Threads should not slope away from each other if the cloth is soundly constructed.

3. Filler yarns should meet selvages at right angle. Yarns at an oblique angle mean fabric is off-grain.
4. Weave should be uniform when you hold it up to the light and check for any unusually thin or thick areas. A fabric with uneven weave does not wear well. The light test will also show up weak spots or any other irregularities.

### Finish

1. Note the smell of the cloth, it should be clean and not oily.
2. Look against the light for even dyeing. If you notice that colour has rubbed off from the crease lines it indicates poor dye quality.
3. A geometric pattern should meet the selvedge at right angles. It is difficult to match an irregular print while making an apparel.
4. No powdery dust should appear when fabric is rubbed between the fingers. Visible powder is an indication of too much starch. Manufacturers use high degree of sizing to conceal poor quality of fabric. Silk is also gummed heavily to increase its weight since the price increases with weight.
5. When buying velvets, towels, etc., see that the nap or pile in raised fabrics is dense and fine. Strength, particularly weftways, should not have suffered.

## 26.6 SELECTION OF READY-MADE GARMENTS

In today's fast moving life, it is very difficult to take out time for getting clothes stitched. You have to go to the market to buy a fabric, look for a tailor, order stitching and wait till the dress is ready. Or you have an alternative of buying a ready-made dress.

There are markets which sell ready-made garments at a very low price. The only problem is that these items are not made with your measurements hence may not fit you. Hence it is important to know what you should look for when you are buying a readymade dress.

### Guide to purchase readymades :

1. **Design of the garment:**  
The design of any item is guided by four important elements: basic style line, shape form, colour and texture or the type of fabric.



Fig. 26.11: Design of the garment



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When these elements are put in a completed composition, they make a design which has balance, proportion, emphasis, rhythm and unity. Look around and examine carefully the dresses people are wearing. Why do they look good or bad? Can you see the four elements of design in them?

2. **Fit :** After you have selected a dress from its outer appeal, you have to see the size and fit. In fit, we look at the shoulders, bust, waist and length. It should be appealing to the figure. It should not be undersize or oversize. Take the exact measurements of the person and buy the garment accordingly.
3. **Workmanship:** Workmanship means the constructional details. So, look at the wrong side of the dress. Pull one end of the seam to check the durability. All seams should be double. Seams should be finished. There should not be any puckers in the seams. Check the fasteners and zippers by opening and closing. There should be enough seam allowance. Edges of collars should be well defined. No raw edges should be visible. Pings, facings, etc., should be neatly done.
4. **Price:** Price factor actually goes along with all other factors. The quality of fabric, constructional details, embroidery, etc., will definitely influence the price. Normally, we have the idea that high priced garments are expected to be of high quality, but this is not always true. So it is essential on our part to see whether the price demanded actually provides us that much wear or not.
5. **Care and maintainance:** Most of the time we buy a dress and after the first wash we find that the colour of piping spoils the whole dress. Or sometimes after ironing, the lace gets burnt or that you have to repeatedly spend drycleaning charges even for a cotton suit because its colour is not fast.



**Fig. 26.12: Fit and workmanship**

For a wise selection of ready made garments we should read the care instructions at the time of purchase and tally with the price. Buy a fabric which requires minimum of care and maintenance.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 26.5**

- I Justify the given statements -
  - i) A closely woven fabric is more serviceable and stronger.  
Justification .....
  - ii) Long floats in weave should be avoided.  
Justification .....



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.....  
 iii) No powdery dust should appear when fabric is rubbed between the fingers.

Justification .....

II List atleast two points that you would keep in mind for

a) selection of textiles on the basis of -

i) Weave 1.....  
 2.....

ii) Finish 1.....  
 2.....

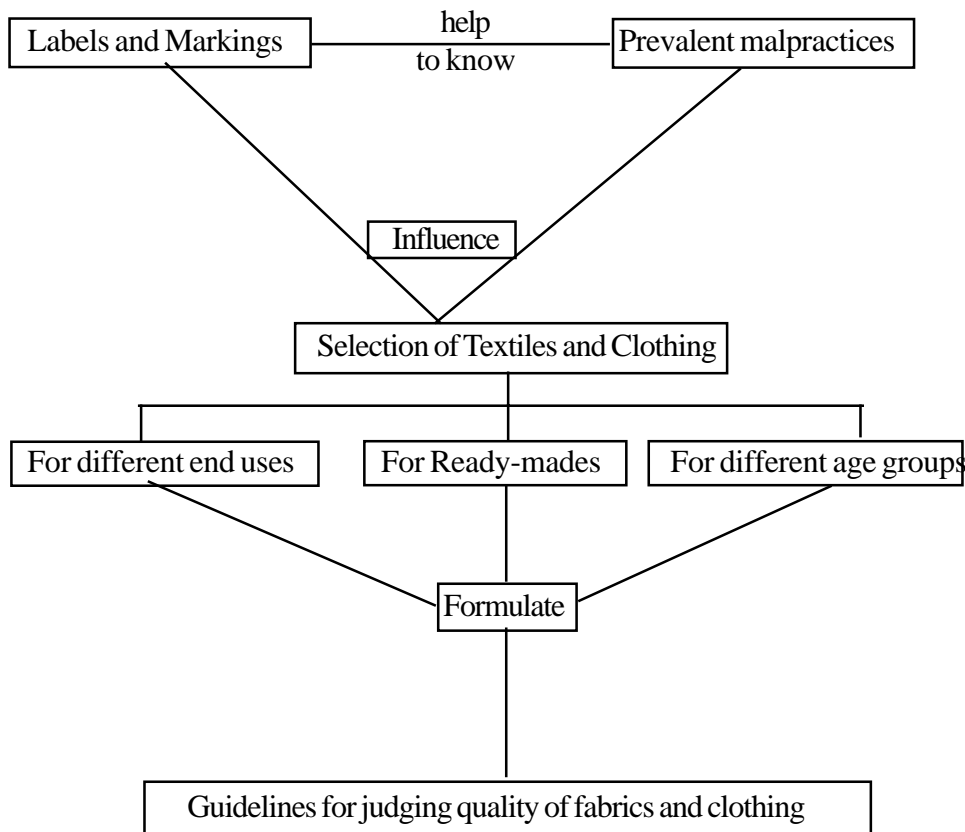
b) selection of garments on the basis of

i) Work manship 1.....  
 2.....

ii) Care and maintenance 1.....  
 2.....



**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**







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**TERMINAL EXERCISES**

1. What is the difference between a label and a marking?
2. What are the different malpractices prevalent in selling fabrics?
3. Collect 10 markings and write about the informative label of marking. State why it is good.
4. What properties will you keep in mind while selecting fabric for curtains?
5. You have to buy a ready-made suit for yourself. How will you make a good purchase?
6. You have a college-going sister. What fabrics and dresses are most appropriate for her and why?



**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

- 26.1**
1. (i) - a (ii) -b (iii) -d (iv) -b (v) -b
  2. (i) Cotton (ii) Nylon (iii) Wool
  3. (i) Cotton, as it gains strength when wet.  
(ii) Nylon, due to its strength.  
(iii) Wool, as it is a bad conductor of heat.

- 26.2**
- I. (1) False, synthetic clothes are non-absorbant. These can be very uncomfortable as baby's clothes.
  - (2) False, doctors must look neat, clean and efficient. They must protect themselves from infections. That is why they wear white coats.
  - (3) False, during travelling clothes become very dirty. So, light colours should be avoided.
  - (4) False, one must wear strong and tough fabric during a long train journey. Only strong fabrics can withstand the wear and tear of a long journey.
  - (5) True, as a baby is mostly lying down such clothes are not only easy to wear but also does not hurt the delicate skin of an infant.

- II 1-c 2-a,e 3-d,f 4-b 5-g

