

Original Research Article

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## Influence of Covid-19 Pandemic on Clothing Interests of Working Women

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### ABSTRACT

#### Keywords

Influence, Clothing, interests, Covid-19, trend, Working women

#### Article Info

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The Covid-19 pandemic has spread exponentially across the world, creating a significant impact on social lives, and it varies across the different age and culture groups. The pandemic is harming health, social and economic well-being worldwide, with women at the centre specially the working women. The clothing interests of working women were changed drastically due to the influence of the pandemic. Therefore, the main aim of the study was to find out whether the Covid-19 pandemic also affects the clothing behaviour of working women as it affects in socio-economic and other aspects such as livelihoods, food systems etc. Study revealed that 80% of the respondents agreed, Covid-19 had affected their clothing interests whereas 20% of the respondents disagree to this. The respondents prefer mostly casual wear (66%) while coming to office. The respondents like to wear cotton materials (82%) because they consider comfort as it is the main key in putting together work and looks during this pandemic. Most of the respondents (56%) find that care of clothes a very tiring job during this pandemic.

### Introduction

Clothing is a fascinating part of everyone's life. The primary function of clothing is to improve the comfort of the wearer and make us look more elegant and also to express a lot about an individual's status, personality, modesty and occupation. The global pandemic is creating a profound shock worldwide since 2019, presently it has affected the socio-economic life and other aspects such as livelihoods, food systems, health etc. in our daily lives. Along with that this unfolding situation is affecting the

clothing behaviour of people drastically. Women are among those most affected. As compared to men, women are believed to invest more time and money in choosing their clothes. Moreover, women choose clothing thoughtfully to match the social activities they have to perform, probably because wearing an outfit that is perceived as appropriate for the occasion increases their satisfaction. Particularly, the working women were heavily affected because they are shouldering much burden at home and work places as they have to continue to do the majority of work in households due to absence of paid workers.

Moreover, the travel restrictions, school and day care centre closures and the increased risks faced by elderly relatives can be expected to impose additional burdens on women even when both women and their partners are confined and may be expected to continue working from home. Due to extra burden and also the social and financial upheavals caused by the pandemic, the fashion needs of women have changed.

They have not faced this challenge before. The working women have to consider lot of factors before wearing clothes during this pandemic because they have to wash their clothes regularly at each wear and also care of clothing is becoming a very tiring job for them. Therefore there's an increased demand for clothes that can be worn both casually and in more formal settings. Keeping in view the importance of clothing interests of working women during this pandemic, the study have been carried out with a developed questionnaire to assess the preferences from the respondents to know how Covid-19 affects their interests on clothing in daily lives to cope with the pandemic.

## **Materials and Methods**

**Locale of the study:** The study was conducted among the working women of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat, in the month of September, 2020 after lockdown. Total 100 respondents were taken for the study.

**Tool used for data collection:** An interview schedule consists of twenty questions was prepared to assess the Influence of Covid 19 Pandemic on Clothing interests of working women. The prepared questionnaire was provided to the respondents.

**Analysis of Data:** Collected data were analyzed by finding out percentage of respondents for each questions.

## **Findings**

The Survey was conducted among the working women of Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat. They were asked several questions regarding their interest on clothing during and after pandemic. The main aim of the study was to find out whether COVID19 pandemic also affects the clothing interest of working women as it affects in other aspects like health, hygiene, food habits etc.

### **Education level and occupational status of the respondents**

All the respondents belong to the age group of 25-60 years. Education qualification of the respondents was graduate (9.38%), post graduate (37.5%) and doctoral degree (53.12%). Regarding occupational status, respondents were involved in different occupation like teaching (61%), research activities such as project work, field work, lab work etc (15.62%) and administrative work (23.43%) (Fig 1 and Fig 2).

### **Type of clothing and material preferred by the working women for attending office/college during pandemic**

The survey revealed that, 94% of the respondents were attending office/ college regularly after lockdown. While coming to office/ College during this pandemic, 66% of the respondents mostly preferred casual wear, 24% preferred tradition wear (mekhela chaddor) and very few respondent (10%) had preferred Saree and other formal wear (Fig. 3).

It was also found that 82% working women preferred cotton material, 36 % preferred cotton/polyester blend, 6% preferred polyester and very few preferred other fancy materials (6%) (Fig.4).

### **Assessment of factors considered most in selection of clothing during pandemic**

It was found from the study that most of the working women considered the factors like comfort, protection and functionality while selecting clothing during pandemic. Out of 100% respondents maximum preferred more than two factors in selection of clothing. The study revealed that 76% of the respondents preferred comfort as an important factor and it is the main key in putting together work and looks during this pandemic. 48% of the working women preferred protection as the factor while selecting clothing. Clothing that are functional (to be served many purposes) was preferred by 24% of the respondents. Very few respondents consider style, fashion and fitting in their clothing during pandemic (Fig.5 ).

### **Preference of clothing while attending/conducting virtual sessions from home by the working women**

The study revealed that 72% of the respondents were attending/conducting virtual sessions from home. The clothes which serves dual purposes i.e casual and daily wear were preferred mostly (60%) while attending/conducting this virtual sessions followed by casual wear (30%). A very few respondents preferred daily wear clothes (5%) and formal wear (5%) (Fig.6)

### **Preference on type of mask preferred by the working women while going out**

It was found that all the respondents like to wear facemasks while going out and regarding type of facemask, 84% of the respondents preferred to wear reusable facemask other than Surgical, Knitted/hosiery, N95 respiratory, non-woven, designer and other type of facemasks as shown in( Fig 7).

### **Preference of the respondents interested to go for shopping after unlock**

It was clear from the study (Fig.8) that 82% of the respondents showed their interest to go for shopping and stated various reasons for shopping after unlock. 25% preferred for requirement for new clothing, 24 % preferred for upliftment of their mood.

Some of the respondents stated that they want to go to shopping for pleasure, urge for shopping, curiosity to see the new collections and window shopping.

### **Preference of online shopping during pandemic**

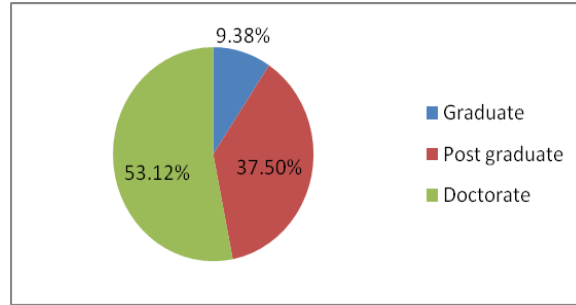
It was found from the study that 40% of the respondents preferred online shopping during pandemic. Fig.9 showed the percentage of respondents regarding purchase of types of clothes through online during pandemic. 60% of the respondents purchased daily wear clothes, 20% casual wear and formal wear (10%). Very few preferred to buy fashionable clothes, sports/active clothes and warm clothes through online during pandemic.

### **Preference of attending wedding/birthday parties/religious ceremony during this pandemic**

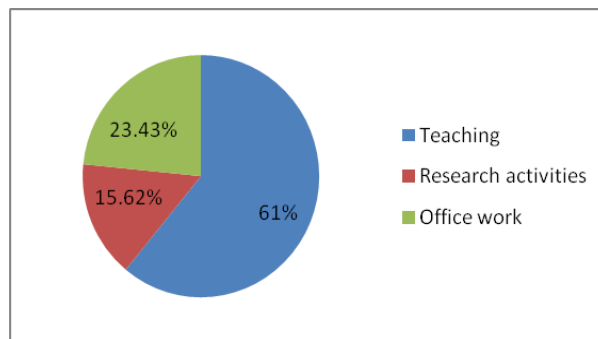
The study revealed that 92% of the respondents were not attending wedding/birthday parties/religious ceremony during this pandemic. Though they were invited because of this pandemic crisis they were not willing to attend.

While attending wedding/birthday parties/religious ceremony the respondents preferred easy to care clothes (70%) followed by casual wear (20%). Very less respondents preferred gorgeous and heavy clothes for the ceremonies. (Fig10)

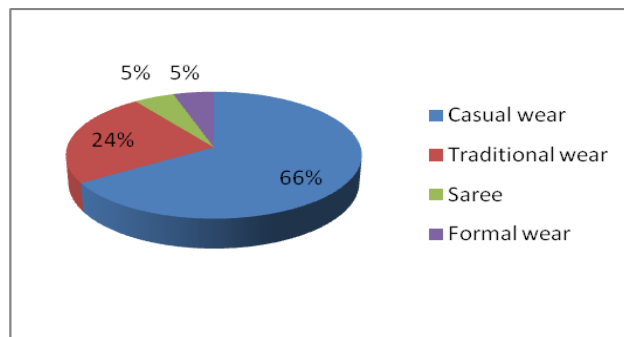
**Fig.1** Qualification level of the respondents



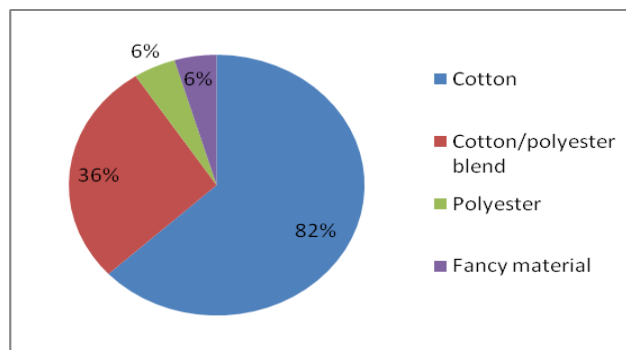
**Fig.2** Occupational status of the respondents



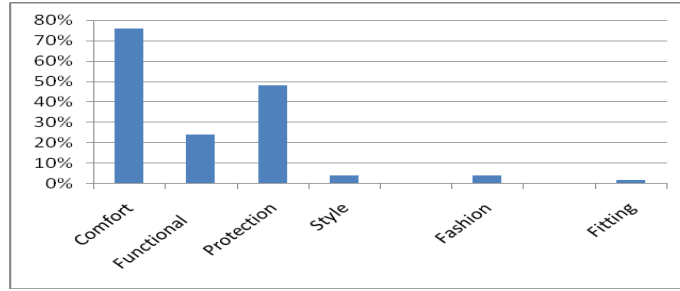
**Fig.3** Assessment of type of clothing worn by the working women during pandemic



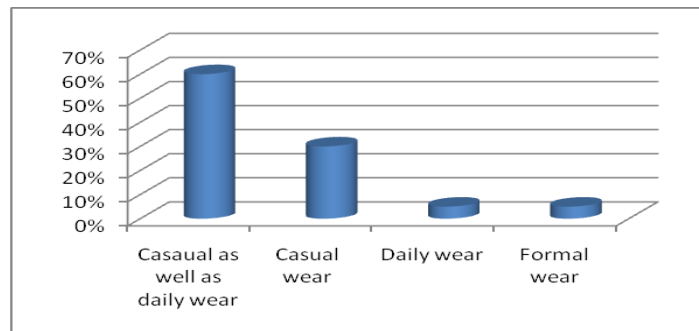
**Fig.4** Assessment of type of materials worn by the working women during pandemic



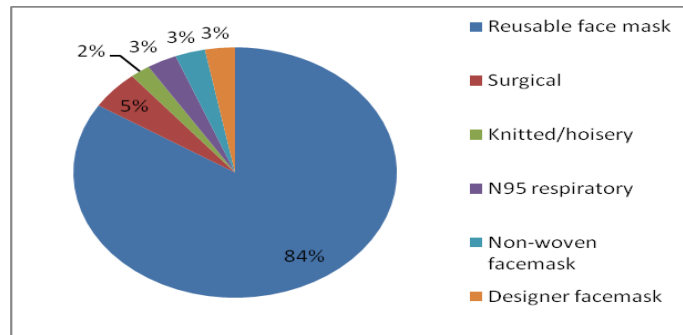
**Fig.5** Assessment of factors considered most in selection of clothing during pandemic



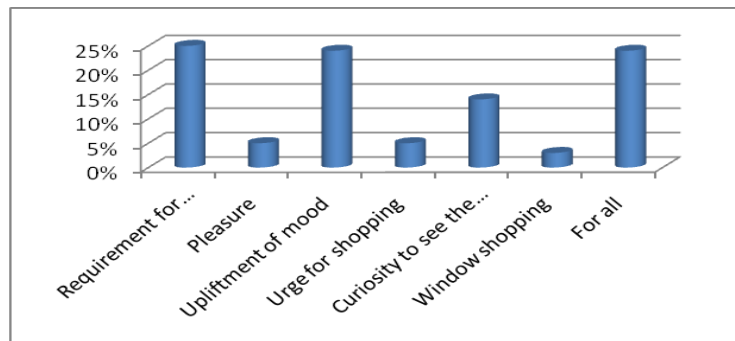
**Fig.6** Preference of clothing while attending/conducting virtual sessions from home by the working women



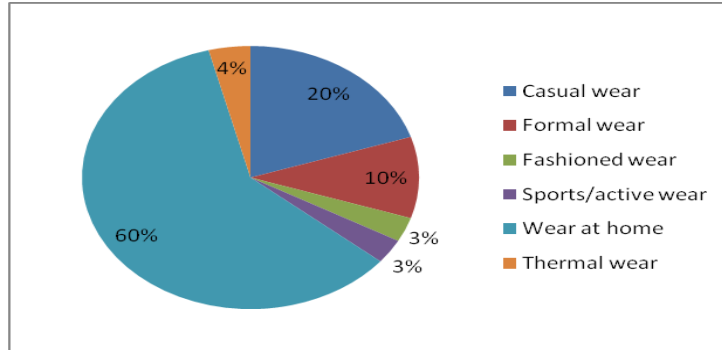
**Fig.7** Preference of type of mask preferred by the working women while going out



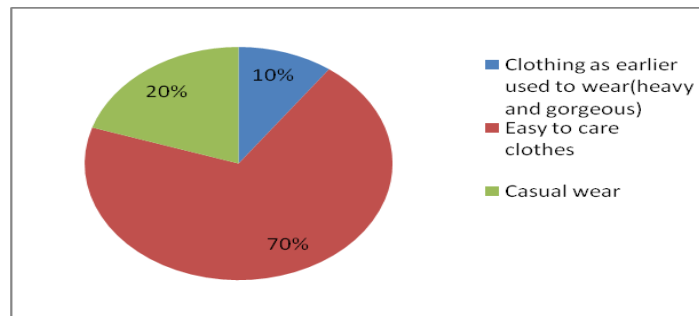
**Fig.8** Preference of the respondents interested to go for shopping after unlock



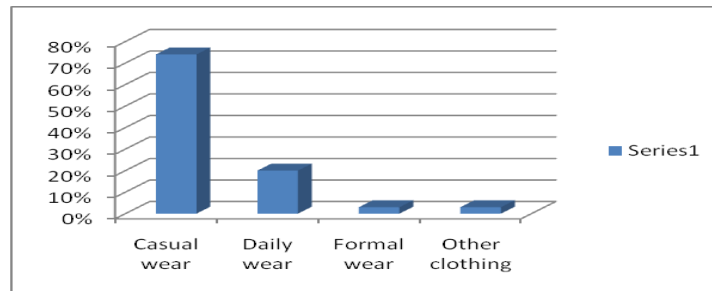
**Fig.9** Preference of purchase of types of clothes through online during pandemic



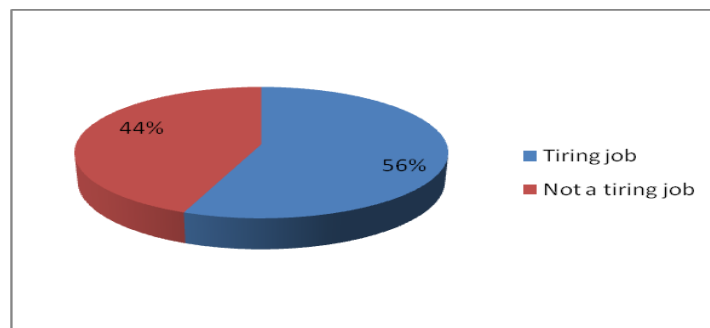
**Fig.10** Preference of attending wedding/birthday parties/religious ceremony during this pandemic



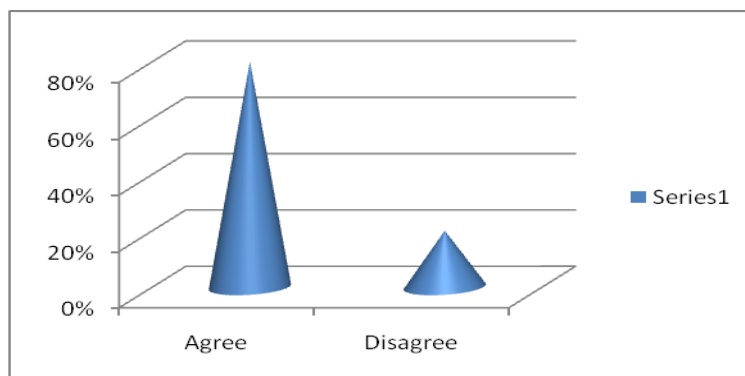
**Fig.11** Type of clothing preferred by the working women for marketing during pandemic



**Fig.12** Assesment of opinion regarding care of clothes



**Fig.13** Assessment of respondents opinion regarding affect of Covid-19 on clothing interest



**Type of clothing preferred by the working women for marketing during pandemic**

Survey revealed that 88% of the respondents go out to nearby market for shopping vegetables, medicines, grocery etc. during this pandemic. While going out to nearby market for shopping they mostly preferred casual wear 74%, daily wear (20%), formal wear (3%) and other clothing (3%) because they have to wash their clothes at each wear (Fig11).

**Preference of frequency of laundering of clothes during this pandemic**

Respondents were asked whether they wash their clothes after coming back from office, college and market. It was found from the study that 84% of the respondents launder their clothes after each wear, 6% of them launder their clothes after 2-3 wears whereas 5 % of them lauder only when dirty/soiled and other 5 % launder as and when required.

**Preference of laundering method and disinfection of clothes during pandemic**

The study revealed that 68% of the respondents followed both manual and mechanical laundering followed by only manual 20% and only mechanical 12%. For disinfection of clothes the working women

mostly (85%) used soap and disinfectant like soap and cold water (6%), soap and hot water (3%), washing followed by ironing (4%) and other method (2%). And they prefer sundrying (94%) after washing their clothes during this pandemic.

**Preference of care of clothes before storing**

The respondents were asked several questions regarding care of different types of clothes. All the respondents know how to take care of clothes.88% of the respondents wash their clothes before storing, 98% of the respondents used naphthalene ball or other freshener during storing, 60% of the respondents wrap their silk and woollen clothes with newspaper during storing. 78% of the respondents occasionally sundry their clothes, 12% of them sundry their clothes after 3 months,10% of them in rainy seasons.

Study also revealed that taking care of clothes is found to be a tiring job for 56% of the respondents while for other 44% of the respondents is not the same (Fig12).

**Assessment of respondents opinion regarding affect of Covid-19 on clothing interest**

Surprisingly, the study revealed that the Covid-19 pandemic has really influenced the

clothing interest of working women. The results obtained that 80% of the respondents agreed that Covid-19 had affected their clothing interests, whereas 20% of the respondents disagree to this (Fig 13)

It can be concluded from the present study that 80% working women agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic has really influenced their clothing interest. The study also reveals that how working women choose their clothing while coming to office/College/market during this pandemic. As most of the respondents have to attend their duty regularly, in that case casual wear (66%) and cotton material (82%) was mostly preferred for their comfort and ease of handling. During pandemic most of the working women prefer easy care clothing for attending marriage, birthday and other ceremonies. To maintain the hygiene during pandemic it was essential to wash the clothing after each wear. Hence, it becomes sometimes a tiring task. This study reveals that taking care of clothes found to be a very tiresome work for 56% of the respondent. The best strategy of advice to adjust or to survive in this tough time is to adapt the change. Influence of covid-19 in clothing interest of working women is being forced to change and women are progressively moving towards online shopping.

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