CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
1.1 INTRODUCTION

Clothing is more important than most of us would like to believe. One may not fully agree with the statement that ‘clothes make the man’, yet common experience indicates that clothing creates an impression on the mind of the beholder. Dress is an outward expression of how people feel about themselves and the world around them. It is accepted as an intimate part of the individual, and an expansion or extension of the bodily self. If this were not so, then one could not account for fads and fashions that sometimes change by the minute. Clothing is generally used as a vehicle for expressing an identity and individuality. The design of the fabric and the style of clothing forms an important indicator of a person's position in society. As Veblen (1899, reprinted 1974) has cynically remarked, "A cheap coat makes a cheap man." In the Western societies, inexpensive and cheap wearing apparel produced by machines were considered indecorous as compared with hand-made clothes which were considered superior and honorific. Veblen also showed
that expenditure on clothes aptly illustrated a conspicuous waste of goods, and, that the apparel always indicated the pecuniary standing of the wearer. People spend money on clothes not simply because of comfort but rather to maintain the standard set by social usage. The commercial value of clothing depends on its fashionability and respectability rather than on the service which they can render to the wearer. "The need of dress is eminently a 'higher' or spiritual need" (Veblen 1899, reprinted 1974 pp. 115-125). Thus, apart from satisfying 'spiritual' needs, this conspicuous display of expenditure sets the norms for taste and decency. The members of society are guided by codes of propriety of dress in order to avoid insulting glances that may result if one is inappropriately dressed. Inexpensive apparel is considered inferior, and, the more expensive the apparel, the greater is its beauty, the social worth and "pecuniary success" are expressed through clothing (Veblen).

The distinction between the rich and the poor, the worker and the leisure class was indicated by clothing. Obviously, the elegant dresses could only be worn by
those who were not required to work. Thus, ladies of leisure in Western societies adorned garments which rendered them unfit for work. This wealthy population set the pace of fashion, and soon designers and fashion houses made their debut and fashions became institutionalized. The fashion houses which were patronized by the nobility soon gained recognition and prestige. "Labels" became important in the Western world and formed a hierarchy. For example, there was a world of difference between clothes designed (and fabrics used) by Pierre Cardin, Christian Dior, Harrods, Bloomingdale, Saks Fifth Avenue or Yves Saint Laurent on the one hand, and the mass produced clothes for the common consumer on the other. The President of the United States of America, the First Lady or the Queen of England, members of the nobility, the Prime Minister or other government dignitaries did not patronize the common man's wear. Despite the spread of democratic values of equality and the like, clothes remained an important element in status distinction in the Western world.
In India, though clothes were an important indicator of a man's position in society, yet fashions and labels were not institutionalized. In the traditional Indian society, each caste group could be identified by the type of clothes worn by its members. In fact, the fabric and style of clothing of each caste were quite distinctive. The lower castes were forbidden from wearing clothes prescribed for the upper castes. In South India, the Brahman after his purification bath would wear a silk dhoti and silk kurtā (Srinivas, 1952; Ghurye, 1951).

The married or unmarried status of the Indian woman was indicated by her clothing. The widow's clothing was quite distinctive (only black or white material was used) as was the position of a sanyasi expressed through his saffron attire. The norms of clothing for Indian women were prescribed according to their particular status, i.e., an unmarried girl, a bride, a widow, a matron and the like (Ghurye, 1951). For example, a bride would necessarily wear red or pink along with glass bangles and certain types of jewelry; whereas a widow would shave off her hair, discard the
upper garment and clad herself in a white saree wrap. The minute her husband died, all glass bangles were pulled off or broken. For a married woman not to wear bangles or sindhur or a string of black beads is considered inauspicious even today.

The industrial revolution brought in tremendous changes in the clothing traditions of both Western and Indian societies, and eventually freer style of clothing fashions emerged. The growing money power, mass production of desirable clothes gave the common man an opportunity to buy clothes freely. The styles of clothing which were jealously guarded by the nobility and the leisure class (and which were coveted by the working class), soon found their way into the open market. The entrepreneurs produced imitations of these coveted styles and designs of wearing apparel. Soon, imitations of particular 'labels' of originals from different fashion houses were sold for a pittance. The difference, of course, was apparent only to those who were familiar with the value of the original creation. Thus, the nouveau riche began to imitate the life style of the upper class (Weber, 1957; Klien, 1964).
In India too, clothing became more democratized and men and women of different castes became relatively free to imitate styles of clothing. Like their Western counterparts, nurses, servicemen and the like began to wear distinctive uniforms. But unlike the West, industrial growth was slow and rate of poverty high, and thus, extravagance in clothing remained limited to a small minority.

The saree is the Indian national dress for women and the price of the saree varies according to the fabric/design. Pure silk interwoven with real gold thread with intricate designs would cost a great deal more than pure silk interwoven with artificial gold thread. As prices of silk, gold or silver soared, these sarees flew beyond the reach of many. After independence, greater emphasis was laid on handloom and soon cotton handloom products were mass produced. In the meantime, synthetic material also found its way into the market and it came as a substitute for silk. It was cheaper to buy and to maintain. The mass production of synthetic material changed the lives of women, as it relieved them of the job of ironing, thus
leaving them more time to indulge in other activities.

The new values for clothing which have emerged in the wake of the boon in the textile industry, have percolated into all rungs of society. The cotton and man-made fabric production in India has reached new heights -- from a production rate of 951 Mn.Kg and 951 Mn.Mtr in 1970 to 1,312 Mn.Kg and 1,696 Mn.Mtr. respectively in 1984-85 (Statistical Outline of India, 1986, p.73 table 70). The emergence of the new dress culture and its institutionalization are evident from the wide variety of advertisements for clothing and fabric. The television programs are interrupted by a spate of advertisements for men’s/women’s clothing. Thus, names like Vimal, Gravier Suiting, Varelli, Garden Sarees, Mafatlal, Jiyaji, Bombay Dyeing, Bhilwara, JCT Phagwara and DCM have become household names mostly for the upper and middle class groups. This new trend of consumer culture is borrowed from the West.

But what were the social and cultural effects of this handloom and synthetic revolution? Did this affect the style of clothing of Indian women when they
began to enter the job market? Is there any difference in the clothing habits of working and non-working women? Does a woman's socio-economic status affect her clothing? These are some of the questions that are sought to be answered through the present study.

In order to analyze the relationship between the socio-economic status of women and clothing, it is necessary to review the socio-economic changes that have occurred in India since Independence.

India has witnessed profound changes in almost every aspect of life. Since the advent of independence, the pace of change has been greatly accelerated. One of the major consequences of the varied processes of change operating in the country has been the emancipation of women from various traditions. In free India, women have entered salaried and remunerative occupations and professions in increasing numbers. The numerical growth of women taking up employment in various capacities is evident in the busy area of any of the large cities in India. Indian women from the lower strata of society have always worked for wages but those from the upper classes were mostly confined
to their homes. Independent India saw the creation of new opportunities for women and as a result, they have entered vocations that were largely the preserves of men. This is a significant development. According to the 1981 census, 14.44 percent of the entire labour force is women. (See appendix I)

Many factors and forces have contributed to the growth of the newly emerging middle class working women in India. The socio-economic emancipation of the Indian women itself is a product of independent India. Their emancipation has affected not only their personal status, but has also brought about changes in their attitudes towards various social and cultural issues which have been the guiding principles of their behavior patterns. The real advance which has been made during this period is actually in the revolution that has been brought about in the outlook with regard to the conception of the position and role of women in society (Desai, 1957). The Indian woman is no longer looked upon as a child-bearing machine and a helot in the home. She has acquired a new position and a new social stature.
This emerging social trend, due to the active participation of women in salaried occupations has given rise to much speculation regarding its effect on their sex role identification and their position in society. It is assumed that these changes have also affected their clothing habits.

Since the study of women has become an important area of research in recent years, large number of research publications on women have already appeared in the West and in India. Even though the situation of women has changed considerably, they have yet to break away from traditions which have subjugated them from time immemorial.

Far reaching changes have taken in the scope and character of woman's participation in socio-economic life as a result of widespread opportunities for education. Education has played a vital part in the evolution of women's employment. With increased opportunities for education they began to enter the school system in large numbers. Once educated, they were apparently free to enter the world of productive employment. But the road leading to this goal was
neither straight nor smooth. Women today have the opportunity to pursue higher education. Various studies have shown that there is a definite co-relation between the educational level of the women and their employment. Women are increasingly becoming a vital force in the social and economic development and tend to share the economic burden with their male counterparts.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Until the dawn of the industrial revolution, the rightful place of the woman was the home and her legitimate role was to be a good house wife and mother. This position was maintained throughout the middle ages. However, the difference between the rural/lower class and the urban/upper and middle class women was somewhat glaring. The women from lower strata worked in the fields and other agriculturally related jobs, and thus helped their husbands to supplement the family income. Economic deprivation in the lower classes and the rural areas forced all members of the family to work in the fields and in unskilled occupations. But,
women in urban areas, especially the upper and middle class women, were mostly confined to their homes and were not allowed to seek employment as work/employment was contemptuously associated with rural lower class women (Promila Kapur, 1970; Klein, 1964). The commonality between rural/lower class and urban/upper class women lay in their subordination to the menfolk. The superiority of the male was reinforced by his capacity of being the bread-winner.

It was only with the progress of industrial revolution and the large scale entry of women into gainful employment, that changed the role patterns (Holter, 1971). With the growth of industry, new needs were created and new demands were made on women to fulfill these needs. In order to supplement the family income and to meet the growing demands for consumer goods, women from the middle class entered the job market. Industrial labour required absence from home for almost half of the day. This compelled the woman to shrink a part of her role as housewife and combine gainful employment with her housekeeping activities. As the technology of industrialization improved, a
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special 'class' of white collar jobs emerged. These office based jobs involved less physical labour but demanded a higher educational background. Because of the comparatively less strenuous nature of work and the moderate amount of education required, women began to be recruited in larger numbers to these job positions.

Industrialization also accelerated the growth of two social movements - one for democracy and equality, and the other for socialism and natural justice. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, waves of these ideologies reverberated. The birth of liberalism, which was the off shot of these movements gave rise to a demand not only for improving the conditions of mankind in all ways, but also in raising the status of woman in society by making her economically independent. According to Klein (1964), the place where the Feminist Movement was born "was not the factory nor the mine but in the Victorian middle class drawing room". The beginning of the movement for women's liberation may be traced to the increased educational opportunities, and, consequently, the increased economic opportunities for women. Thus,
liberalism gave legitimacy to the movement of emancipation of women. Women of the middle classes were backbone of the movement (Baber, 1953).

The changing character of the economy in the industrialized societies necessitated the participation of women in gainful employment. Increasingly large numbers of women began to leave their family based tasks and entered the job market as factory and office workers. Economic responsibilities slowly began to be shared by women and as a result, the sex role differences became less and less obvious. The employed housewife brought more income for the family and this improved the standards of living and created an increased desire for social mobility through conspicuous consumption. This led to the tendency for providing better education to children. This luring economic prospect enhanced the chances of education for female children as well (Nye, 1956).

In India, such changes occurred at a slower pace. Indian society is largely characterized by an attachment to traditions and women's position and role have not witnessed the same rapid transformation as in the
West. However, in recent years, and, especially during the post independence era, women have gained an access to both legal and social status. The spread of education among women has led to their entry in different spheres of economic life. Various socio-economic and politico-legal factors have brought about a newly emerging middle class of working women in India (Kala Rani, 1976).

Scientific and technological progress has accelerated the process of change. As a result, the position of women in India has also been affected. In cities and villages, women of today are attempting to break the social and psychological barriers in order to assume new responsibilities. Their economic horizon has expanded considerably. They are now being employed as teachers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, journalists, nurses and officers in the government departments and commercial houses. The growing participation of women in the economic development of the country is reflected from the fact that in the organized sector, the number of women employed has increased considerably. An important factor attracting more and more women to
employment is the economic necessity. In the urban middle and lower middle classes, this is very much the case. Some women from the middle and upper middle classes take up employment to improve the standard of living of the family by augmenting the family income. Under the pressure of the economic necessity, opposition to the gainful occupation of women is steadily diminishing even among the orthodox and the conservative groups. Women who aspire for a career have sufficient opportunities for higher education (see appendix II) and also for professional and technical training, yet they lag behind in availing these facilities and in catching up with men in the field of education.

Various studies have indicated that education is the gateway to employment and subsequently achieving a higher position in society (Ramanamma, 1979). In view of the fact that Indian women are increasingly entering gainful employment, it is assumed that this has raised their economic status in society. Subsequent to the rise in their economic status, they are likely to have developed a different style of life. Weber (1957) has
shown that acquisition of wealth leads to acquiring/imitating a different style of life. According to Weber, life style denotes acquisition of particular type of education, clothing, mannerisms and the like. Veblen (1899) has also shown that the members of the leisure class follow a peculiarly particular style of life.

The present study thus concerns itself at examining the relationship between the socio-economic status of working women and their clothing.

Clothing has been a very important indicator of status and from time immemorial. Style of clothing ranging from varieties of fabrics to designs for both men and women have occupied much of man's time and resources. It is but an obvious fact that clothing is one of the basic needs of man. The manifest function of clothing as a basic need is to cover one's body and protect oneself from the inclemens of weather. But, more meaningful is its latent function - one being status indicator (Merton, 1968). It would thus be interesting to find out how clothing is related to the socio-economic status of women.
1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of the relevant literature shows that studies on women can be broadly divided into three categories: those concerned with various aspects of fashion and clothing; those dealing with socio-economic status, their position, role and social activities; and lastly, those concerned with various aspects of decision-making power of women and their efficiency in gainful employment.

Since the focus of the present study concerns itself with the socio-economic status of women and clothing, it would be appropriate to begin with a historical review of literature relevant to clothing. The religious and mythological literature review is followed by historical and sociological review.

Religious and mythological literature is replete with descriptions of clothing and its importance to man. Such differences in clothing have been amply displayed in the Indian television serials of "Ramayana" and "Mahabharat". Rama and Sita stripped themselves off their royal garments and wore the simple saffron robes of the Brahman Sanyasi in the wake of
their exile. The Pandavas too had to discard their princely robes and adorn the white priestly garments to move about incognito. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden, they were ashamed of their nakedness and immediately found it necessary to cover themselves with leaves (Holy Quran, VII:22; Holy Bible: Genesis 3:7). Descriptions of Heaven and Hell clearly indicate that the believers will go to Heaven and will be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls and their garments will be silk. Whereas the sinners shall go to Hell and wear garments of fire (Holy Quran, XXII:19-25, Quran: Appendix XII).

Similarly, in India, sculptures in ancient Indian temples depict a variety of clothes. The recent discovery of treasures of Tutankhamun of Egypt (3300 years old) show the use of linen for wrapping dead bodies (Edwards, 1978). The same historical descriptions also reveal that rank differences were evident from the different types of clothing and jewelry adorned by a person. The clothing distinction between the royalty and commoner was strictly adhered to. Since this was so, then the relationship between
social rank and clothing was but obvious. But unfortunately these historical descriptions have not given way to empirical studies and we find little evidence of sociological empirical work on socio-economic status and clothing (Ghurye, 1951).

Western sociologists like Veblen and Weber have dealt rather aptly with the subject. Veblen (1899, reprinted 1974) in his 'Theory of leisure class', identifies particular life styles with particular classes. He analyses the conspicuous consumption of the members of the leisure class and identifies particular styles and types of clothing worn on different occasions by men, women and servants.

Weber (1957), with almost equal zeal as Veblen, has indirectly shown the relationship between clothing and status when he made the contrast between class and status groups. According to Weber, status is determined by a specific social estimation of honor. This status' honor is expressed through a specific style of life. Associated with this style of life are particular occupations, education, and certain "honorific preferences" like wearing special types of
costumes. Though Weber did not explicitly dwell on the subject of costumes, yet he made a very significant point in establishing the importance of clothing in particular status groups.

Both Weber and Veblen also indicate that identity with particular class could be achieved through imitation of particular styles of life including clothing. Herbert Spencer also viewed dress as a "collateral development" of the indicator of class distinction. He drew his conclusions on the observations made on the particular colours used by the Roman royalty and medieval French nobility. He believed that rigidity of stratification is reflective of distinction in stratification of clothing. As classes become loose, dress etiquettes tend to be ignored. As militancy and authority declines, ceremonial garments are replaced by informal clothing and this gives way to varying fashions.

portray the importance of clothing, its various types of designs/colours selected for different occasions, the symbolic status and prestige of particular types of clothes, the role of clothing in status, role and rank identification and the like.

The eminent sociologist, M.N. Srinivas (1955) in an attempt to understand the process of change through sanskritization has very lucidly brought to light the fact that imitation of the style of life of the upper caste includes imitation of the style of dress of that caste. He thereby has drawn our attention to the fact that different caste groups are identified by their special apparel and one of the steps in gaining recognition as a member of that particular caste is to usurp that position by imitating not only the rituals but also the clothing patterns.

Clothes hold an important place as status symbols. The status factor is indicated in any clothes that give the wearer a feeling of approval, recognition, and belonging, either in one's own class or in the class above. According to Ryan (1953), "In the complex western society there are a wide variety of cultural
roles. Each individual plays more than one of these roles and is aware of what others expect of him in each of them - expect in dress as well as behaviour. The individual tries to live up to these expectations."

Clothes are an outward expression of how people feel about themselves and the world around them. Clothing is recognized as an intimate part of an individual, an expansion or extension of the bodily self. Research continues to clarify the importance of clothing as related to one's concept of self (Ryan, 1963). One strong reason for the importance given to clothing has been attributed to the status factor. Ambitious persons aspire to move up the social hierarchy. It is within the middle class that the greatest emphasis is placed upon clothes and appearance which form the basis of status symbol. This group is more "status conscious" than either of the other groups (Erwin, 1957).

According to Kinchen (1979), females generally are more likely than males, to use clothing as a vehicle for expressing conformity or individuality. Weitz (1974) also points out that women tend to display their emotions and to express themselves more freely than
While discussing the philosophy of clothing, Tate (1961) points out that clothing is an art and an expression of personality. Costume reveals much about the people of any historical period. It has long been recognized that being well-dressed gives a feeling of security. It is believed that individuals are often judged by their appearance and therefore clothes are important in gaining desired social goals. Proper dress helps to develop self-confidence and feeling of security at any age.

While discussing individuality and clothing choices, Kefgen (1971) points out that clothes and combinations of garments present visible characteristics that gives expression to a person's personality. In other words, the personality of clothing compliments the wearer's personality. Clothing choices reflect the self-concept. She further explains that a first impression is always a final impression if no further impression is made. Clothing transmits a message which is seen before the voice is heard. It has been said that clothing does not make the man, but it does much to explain him. In other words, what covers the body
reveals the character.

In a survey conducted among women on psychological effect of clothing, Ryan (1953) found that majority of the respondents had listed several reasons for giving importance for clothing. The two listed most frequently had to do with the effect of clothing on one's social position and social achievement. According to her if the working women felt well-dressed they had more self-confidence, with the result that they could forget themselves and devote their full attention to others or to their work. Furthermore, they believed that people were judged by appearance and that clothing influenced social acceptance, popularity and job success. In most cultures it is much more than having enough or the right type of clothing for warmth and protection. Clothing is important as a means towards acceptance by the group. There is a relationship between clothing and social status as there is between clothing and a prestigious job. Clothing is one of the factors that create a favourable or unfavourable impression during interviews for employment or admission to schools/colleges (Tate, 1961).
Dear-Born (1918) had stated that clothing determined in large measure how one appears on the street and in society, the friends he makes, the job he seeks and the company he invites his home. Forty years later, Hall (1955) showed that although it is not true that 'clothes makes the man', yet clothes are important in determining the impression a person makes on others and in giving him self-confidence.

Sociological studies on clothing of working women in India are few. In fact, the literature pertaining to clothing describes Indian fabrics, designs, fashions and styles and regional variations in clothing habits. A great deal of literature on clothing and jewelry of various tribes and castes are available but unfortunately no empirical studies have been cited.

As opposed to this, a great number of empirical studies on status of Indian women, their role in the family and place of work have been conducted. A few of these studies which are relevant to the present thesis are reviewed below. A detailed account of the position, activities, role and status of working women was examined by Sen Gupta (1960). This study analyses
women workers of India and deals with women employed in factories, mines and in the essential services and professions. Ross (1961) has given a vivid picture of the educated women and their interpersonal relations in their family.

The Research Programme Committee of the Planning Commission has outlined some details about the educated women of the cities of Kanpur, Chandigarh, and Delhi. Hate (1930, 1946, 1948, 1969) has conducted various studies on women in India. Her main attention is on socio-economic condition of educated women, social position of Hindu woman and her future. According to Hate, a deep and vital change has taken place in the economic condition and personal status of women. In her latest study of 1969, she has examined the changes in the status of women in India after independence. She has analyzed the political, economic and social background of this change. Her samples were drawn from middle class working and non-working women living in four cities; Bombay, Poona, Nagpur and Solapur. Her findings revealed a positive change in the status of women.
Verma (1964) conducted a study of the middle class working women in Kanpur and reveals that most of the middle class women prefer to take up white collar jobs. Gadgil (1965) analyzed the extent of women's participation in economic activity in India and the impact of development on them.

Chaudhry (1969) and Sharma (1969) also have conducted studies on 'women in employment'. Strobel (1967) has dealt with professional women in Delhi. Patel (1958) conducted a survey of women in professions in the city of Ahmedabad and has reported the increased socio-economic status of working women. Despande (1953) has given a clear picture about the economic and social status of women workers in India. Ministry of Labour, Labour Bureau (1953) has conducted a survey on the socio-economic status of women. Richards (1954) made a socio-economic survey of girls serving Central Government offices residing in Vinay Nagar colony, New Delhi.

Promila Kapur has conducted various studies on Indian women. Her first work (1960) focused on 'socio-psychological aspects of the change in the attitudes of
educated working Hindu women. Her second study related itself to 'marriage and working women in India' (1970) in which she analyzed the factors that contributed to the maladjustment/adjustment in married life of the educated working women.

According to Gore (1968) a woman's lower status in the family is related to her exclusion from the economic activity. Madan (1976) has established the viewpoint prevalent among educated people that the key to an improvement in the position of a woman at home is her access to an independent income. This view gained strength since economic problems of the middle class are often found to be the cause for the employment of women, and often a wife's income is necessary to maintain the family standard of living. Dube and Pakiwala (1980) have edited a volume on patterns of family structure and intra-household relations on the one hand and work and production on the other. They have focused on women in business and their role in the household. The studies included in the volume examine the changing character of the division of labour and redefinition of work in the wider economic processes in
south Asia including India.

Studies conducted in the West show that it has become customary for young middle class women to work before marriage. This may mean that women in these situations are assuming new roles. They are playing a "brother role" by shouldering the economic responsibilities (Ross, 1973). But how far does this new non-traditional role elevate the position of woman? According to Luthra (1976) economic well-being as a result of employment would help to raise the position of women, and will provide her more freedom. Mehta's study (1976) also points out that the working woman has become an asset to the middle class family without being a serious embarrassment to the family. As long as she abides by the general decorum of the family, the family generally has no objection. Kala Rani's (1976) study concerns itself with educated married working women who live in nuclear families. In carrying out the dual roles, wives have to maintain a balance between their duties towards their home and towards their occupation. The consequences of the employment of women for the family are far-reaching. Her emancipa-
tion from traditional house-hold functions may lead her to neglect her obligations to her home and children (Wood, 1975). But some other scholars believe that the emancipation of women will not damage the family, rather it will benefit their family life (Chitnis, 1975).

It is reported by some researchers (Singh, 1975) that the nuclear family is usually free from most of the traditional restrictions. It initiates changes in the interpersonal relations among its members, and women in this family have more freedom than in the traditional family.

Jauhari (1970), Usha Talwar (1981) have also provided valuable research material which deals with various aspects of the status of working women.

Ramu (1989) has examined the domestic roles of working and non-working women in Bangalore in order to understand the differences and similarities in their lives. He also examines the attitudes of the husbands towards women's work and concludes that a woman is not necessarily treated as an equal by her spouse as a consequence of contributing a second income to the household.

Studies by foreign scholars also indicate that the employed mother has an edge over the unemployed mother in the decision-making process in the family. They have examined the factors involved in women's decision to work, and have stressed that personality factors are as important as the economic needs. The employment of women may be viewed as a part of general trend toward a decrease in the differentiation of sex role. The important factors in this regard are increased participation of men in routine household tasks, a change in power relation from male dominance
towards husband-wife equality.

Heer (1956) has examined the question of dominance and working wife. The working wife exerts more influence in decision making than the non-working wife. Goode (1965) has pointed out that industrialization was the main explanation for the trend towards egalitarian relations within and outside the family. Blood and Wolfe (1965) have pointed out that the diminishing authority of the American husband over his wife is perhaps due to the steadily increasing proportion of wives who work outside the home. With the upsurge in women employment came the most dramatic alteration in the image of women.

Wife’s choice to work outside the home indicates that both partners realize their freedom and independence. Her income allows both of them the means to enjoy a higher level of sociability. Due to her employment a working woman was placed in the higher income bracket. Her contribution to the total family income gave her an advantage on the sociability index, compared with the non-working women. Working women were involved with new network of friends and work
associates with whom they and their husbands socialized (Ordin, and Badburn, 1968). More and more women now have the opportunity to pursue higher education and more of them exercise this option. Various American studies have shown that there is a definite correlation between the educational level of women and their employment (Klein 1968). Ginsberg (1967) argues that the more education a woman has, the more likely she is to be in the labour force.

Women's exposure to new environmental situations and modes of living have changed their family lifestyles. Working women have the opportunity to develop a taste for material goods used by colleagues (Wood, 1975).

A major factor contributing to the status of women is the change in the structure of economy which offers greater role for women in the productive function. According to Holter (1971), the needs of the economic system with respect to labour and consumption are seen as promoting a change from traditional sex roles to egalitarianism.

The literature dealing with various aspects of
women in employment show that the woman employee is as efficient as the male employee in identical employment situation (Ross, 1973; Sen Gupta, 1974; Srivastava, 1972). However, some scholars have also reported that the woman employee is more efficient in certain respects. In the matter of reliability, promptness and punctuality she is even better than her male counterparts (Kapur, 1975; Rande, 1968; Hate, 1946).

1.4 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The review of literature shows that studies on clothing and fashion, status of women, and other aspects of women's studies have been dealt with individually. But specific studies reflective of special relationship between socio-economic status and clothing of women are not available. The few available studies that tend to document the existence of such a relationship between status and clothing, have based their conclusions more on secondary sources rather than empirical studies. It is also observed that trends and values in clothing habits have changed drastically over
the years and clothing trends have become more informal and democratized. In view of the changing trends in clothing, it would be fruitful to examine whether such trends of clothing habits bear any special relationship to the changing socio-economic status of women.

The theoretical bases of the present study rest on the premise that an important factor contributing to the changes in the clothing of women is the change in the structure of the economy which now offers greater freedom of choice not only of the type of clothing and fashion trend that she should follow, but also for role selection. Sociological, anthropological and social-psychological theories seem to point out that change in the requirement of the economic system is the prime moving force of shifts in sex roles or changes in the status of women. The new industrial organization in urban India has made women an integral part of the new economic order and an important part of its manpower resource. With the upsurge in women's employment, came the most dramatic alteration in the position and image of women.

Another factor which is related to change in the
social position of women is education. With increased opportunities for education, women began to enter the school system in large numbers. More and more women now have the opportunity to pursue higher education and this has enabled them to gain a wider experience in society. They now have increased knowledge about clothings, fashions, fabrics, designs, etc. Apart from this, new avenues of employment opened up to women.

Yet another factor contributing to this change is the spread of birth control methods. The woman today is increasingly encouraged to practice birth control and this gives her greater leisure time to seek employment in case she so desires. Employment has contributed in several ways to improve the position of women in the family and in society as a whole. This changed status would, as a corollary, encourage women to dress themselves more carefully and in accordance with their changed situations.

The new economic role in which a woman finds herself determines her position in the family. Her participation in economic life renders her economically independent and this affects not only her personal life
but also changes the dynamics of relationships within the family. According to Gore (1968, pp. 13), 'A woman's lower status in the family is related to her exclusion from economic activity.' The key to an improvement in the position of a woman at home is her access to an independent income. This view is more acceptable because economic problems of the middle class are the main reason for the employment of women. Very often a wife's income is necessary to maintain the standard of living of the family. It has become customary for young middle class women to work even before marriage. Thus, women in these situations may deviate from their traditional roles as home-makers and move into occupations which were traditionally reserved for men.

Economic well-being of working women would help to provide greater freedom in the management of various roles. If a woman is not economically free she will have to depend on her husband/sons or other members of her family. As such, dependents are never free. This relegates a woman to a lower position in society. If men and women are to enjoy freedom then they should
both be economically independent (Devi, 1982).

One other important impact of women's employment is the change it brings in the relationship between members within the family. According to Wood (1975), "there is an unusual amount of self assertion reflected in the structure and nature of the family to the middle class working women."

These changing relationships have important consequences for the husband-wife relationship. In a society like India where traditionally a woman had practically no role outside the home, her whole life revolved around the family. This hold of tradition is still strong over a large part of Indian society despite rapid industrialization and urbanization. Traditionally a woman's world is her home and she is primarily required to look after the welfare of her husband, children and other members of the family. The husband's task is to assume full responsibility of making adequate arrangement for the provision and protection of the family members. Thus, in the social structure of the tradition-oriented family, the typical pattern of husband-wife relationship is one of male
dominance and female subordination. The husband enjoys a superior position over the wife and the major decision-making power lies mostly within the husband's domain. The wife tacitly accepts a subservient position in the family and her role and position in the family remains less important.

The woman's participation in the economic sphere has brought about changes in the family power structure. When the woman stepped out of her home and entered the outside economic world, she was bound to encounter new areas of interaction. The additional economic activity led to her participation in a fresh array of new roles. The work role on one hand brought her out of the limited sphere of her home, and on the other, made continuous demands on her time and energy. With this addition of new roles, a change in her position had to occur.

Since the working woman supplements the family income, she spends a great deal of time outside the home, it is quite possible that she may not be able to perform her traditional household duties, and as such may expect help from other family members or hire servants.
In Western countries, where domestic help is not easily available, the working wife needs her husband's help to carry out household jobs. In India this is not necessarily so because most families hire domestic servants to carry out household jobs and the working woman is not burdened heavily with the household jobs. As such then, the husband does not necessarily have to share the responsibilities of domestic chores with his wife. But the employed wife is not completely free of her household responsibilities.

It is obvious then that participation in employment outside home has caused various changes in the family life of women. One of the most important change is the economic independence attained by working women. Another possible change is the redistribution of household chores and the changing pattern of the duration of labour and a decrease in the differentiation of sex roles. In a tradition-bound society, like ours, the male member is the head of the household and he makes most of the decisions. But this position may have considerably changed as a larger number of women have taken up gainful employment. Since the salary/income
of a working woman is a substantial contribution to the family income more rights would accrue to the woman in the decision-making process. The break-up of the joint family and the emergence of the nuclear/extended family may have also affected the traditional structure of the family.

In a traditional family a dichotomy of behaviour between men and women was an accepted way of life. The strict separation of male and female worlds contributed to exclude women from participating in economic production and the woman thus maintained not only her subordinate position but also restricted her interaction and movement in the outside world. Employment tends to provide new experiences which may change their attitudes and behaviour patterns.

The traditional behaviour pattern of women is expressive of their lack of freedom. It is necessary to examine the patterns of behaviour of working women in the family to determine the extent of freedom accorded to women. Employment generally leads to changes in traditional patterns of behaviour. Non-observation of traditional customs denote that females
are meted out equal treatment with the male members. Under the traditional set up, female members of the family eat after male members have eaten. As a rule, the daughter-in-law must cook the food and attend to household chores. The women are expected to stand in the presence of male members and are confined to separate quarters. Their movement outside the home is restricted and they are not always free to entertain their friends.

These behaviour patterns are indicators of the position of women in the family. They also indicate the prevailing social attitudes towards women in the family.

Freedom of movement outside the home can be considered as a positive factor in according equal status to women. Any restriction on the movement of women outside the home is an indicator of their lower position. Traditionally Indian women did not prefer to go outside the home without any escort. But modern way of life and employment outside may compel women to move out alone. It is practically impossible to have an escort every day in their journey to and back from working
places. This practice of going without an escort has enabled the working women to move around freely.

The foregoing discourse of woman's socio-economic status, her role in the family and society and her decision-making power, leads us to examine the theoretical basis for the analysis of the working woman's own perception of her position in the place of work vis-a-vis her superiors, colleagues and subordinates.

Several studies have shown that the working woman, whatever be the job she holds, is equal in efficiency and performance to the male employee in identical employment situations (Sengupta, 1974; Srivastava, 1978). In some cases, the women employees are even more apt as regards reliability, promptness, punctuality, discipline and honesty. All these indicate that a working woman is in no way inferior to her male colleagues. It would thus be relevant to examine whether employment has contributed to change in the position of women.

When the woman enters the job market she leaves behind her traditional housewife role and assumes a role, which was traditionally associated with men.
Since men and women work under the same conditions, it would be interesting to discover how men react to working women. Since strong notions of traditional "feminine behaviour" may exist, it is quite possible that women may not be able to work effectively in such places where constraints of various types prevail against women's chances of success. This may affect the effectiveness of working women as employees and create problems for them. Sometimes women may not be accepted by men as superiors. Thus problems of those women who are working in higher positions may be even greater. Her subordinates may not like to work under a female boss. These factors need to be systematically analyzed. The performance of the woman's role in the office/institution dominated by males is an interesting subject. The experience of working women on the treatment they receive and on the facilities that are made available to them may indicate the respect accorded to working women.

Since occupational role is performed in relation to other people it may not only become a source of status, but will also determine the type of dress a
woman would wear at work. Occupational role of women is a legitimate social reality. The treatment of women at par with men in their offices and institutions can be legitimized only through due respect, cooperation and recognition. The present study also examines the extent of recognition, cooperation and respect received by the working women sample from their male superiors, colleagues and subordinates.

In the case of male employees, higher employment level contributes to higher status. But in the case of women, in a traditional society like ours, this need not be true. One cannot always expect that the men who work with women will readily accept them as equals in proficiency, skill, capacity and efficiency. Recognition from superiors is very important for a subordinate woman employee to perform her duties. Her working relationship with her superiors has to be considered while analyzing her success in the performance of her occupational role.

In the teaching institutions, the treatment women teachers receive from the headmaster, principal, chairman, Dean, etc., is an indicator of the pattern of
discrimination or favour shown to them. If due recognition and favour are accorded to women, this may be considered as an indicator of male recognition of women employees' capacity for equal work. This kind of cooperation and recognition is an important factor in indicating the position of a working woman in her place of employment.

Working women's relations with their superiors is significant in evaluating their position in their workplace. One of the aims of the present study is to examine whether they receive treatment equal to that of male employees from their superiors. It is assumed that sex discrimination does not exist in the workplace, and that traditional attitudes of men towards women may disappear at the higher levels of employment. In other words, a decrease in the traditional attitudes may be expected in the case of those working women who are placed at comparatively higher levels of employment.

Theoretically, male and female employees working in the same employment level enjoy legally equal positions as far as power, rights and duties are concerned. But this may not be true in their practical life. In
the traditional and modern societies alike, where women are considered as intellectually inferior to men, the position of working women in the institution may be influenced by this type of stereotypic prejudices. So the social position of a working woman can be measured, to a certain extent, on the basis of the treatment she receives in her place of work. Her job satisfaction will depend to some extent on the co-operation extended by her male colleagues. The attitude of the male colleagues towards the present sample may disclose their acceptance of women as equals. In other words, status of working women is expected to be based upon the extent of co-operation she receives from her male colleagues and this can be considered as an index of her equality.

The nature of interaction between working women and their male subordinates is also an important factor. Since traditionally the Indian male is considered superior to the woman, male subordinates may not be so willing to accept a woman as their superior. In that situation women superiors may not get equal respect and co-operation that would generally be shown to male superiors.
After independence, the socio-cultural climate of India has considerably changed. It is evident that the forces of modernization have made a powerful impact on our society, and a change in the role of women is underway. But it is observed that barring a minority, the role of women continues to be dominated by traditional household duties. Even if women assume occupational roles, these are considered only as secondary or supplementary roles as the main role of breadwinner is assigned to men. Impediments in the path of women prevent them from deviating from the traditional way of life. Social taboos and psychological barriers hamper their participation in activities outside the four walls of their house. However, employment of women outside their home has lent a new dimension to this situation. The working women have emerged as a new category of women who perform their roles not only within the family but outside it and thus contribute towards the family income. This has forced the men-folk to accept this new role of women. As a result, the norms and values have changed and the society now tends to allow the working women to perform some other
supplementary roles. This privilege is, however, enjoyed only by the working women, and their unemployed counterparts are forced to continue with the traditional roles and norms of behaviour.

The working women then, will have comparatively higher position than non-working women in the wider society. It is also assumed that they will take part in some social activities outside the home. The occupational role paves the path for women to participate in group activities like professional associations, cultural organizations, voluntary organizations, etc. This provides them opportunities for making acquaintance with a variety of people and for participating actively in the wider social life. It also exposes them to new situations and experiences which result in a more balanced development of their personality. Thus, a marked difference is expected between the working and the non-working respondents in their participation in the larger social life.

Professional, social and cultural organizations have an important place in the life of an individual. In a traditional society these organizations are
expected to provide women with an opportunity to develop their faculties and ideas, and to increase their efficiency.

Thus, while examining the relationship between clothing and the socio-economic status of women, several other corollaries concerning the position of women in the family, place of work and society were also examined. It is assumed that under the changing circumstances, the pivot around which a woman's life revolves is her socio-economic status. She draws her strengths and weaknesses from the position that she holds on the economic ladder. Associated with this economic position are not only her position in the family, place of work and society, but also her personal decisions regarding her public and private appearance expressed through her clothing. The Indian woman of the bygone days was obliged to wear clothes prescribed by custom, climatic conditions and availability of particular material. Fashion as a phenomena was quite unknown to them (Muller-Lyer, 1911). Today, clothing transcends these limitations, and costumes have become more and more internalized with the drastic changes in the
socio-economic structure, the Indian woman has learned to keep pace with the changing fashion. The import of fabrics and costume designs and the rapid development of the clothing industry, and the decline of traditions and customs, the Indian woman finds herself transformed in the world of fashion. The women of the upper classes find themselves outstripping the lower classes who are fast trying to reach new heights in fashion. The upper classes outsmart them by changing the fashion. The poor classes are not able to discard garments before they are completely worn-out - hence the costume inequality becomes ubiquitous.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Having considered the theoretical bases for examining the relationship between socio-economic status of women and clothing and to analyze the power structure within the family and place of work, it would be fruitful to define and explain concepts used in the present study.

WORKING WOMEN

At the outset an initial distinction between the
various general categories of women who are employed must be identified. The label "working women" is by no means exact but it does carry certain generally understood associations. For the purpose of this study, every woman who works is not classified as a "working woman". For example, there are women who work as labourers or are employed in factories as skilled or semi-skilled workers. These women are classified as women workers. The term working women in this study refers to a group of married or unmarried women with a certain level of educational qualification and who are gainfully employed in various offices and institutions.

Thus, the term "working women" refers to those educated women who are engaged in salaried or remunerative occupations and professions outside their home.

SOCIAL STATUS

The term status is used in a variety of ways. It has both subjective and objective components. A great deal of the content of 'status' is viewed in terms of some indexes which indicate a person's position in society in terms of income, property, occupation,
education and skills. According to Weber (1957), status refers to an exclusive group of people who share a common style of life. The basis of Weber's distinction between class and status is prestige accorded to certain style of life like clothing, family background, education, occupation and the like. Thus, for Weber, two persons may have a common economic base but may belong to different status groups, e.g., a Brahmin and a Vaishya businessman may have the same income but they do not have the same status. As per norms of society, the prestige ranking of the Brahmin is higher. Thus, even a very poor Brahmin has a higher status than a rich Shudra. Mere "economic acquisition and naked economic power are of no consequence without status honour which is acquired. By the same token an occupational group is also a status group as it claims social honour by virtue of the special style of life which may be determined by it" (Weber, 1957, pp 26-27).

Linton viewed role and status as two aspects of the same coin. Status refers to the ideal pattern of conduct, and role to the actual behavior of a person which express the pattern (Linton, 1936). According to
Horn (1968), role refers to one's place in social relationships and status refers to one's place on a scale of prestige.

In the present study social status is defined as the position accorded to functionaries or role occupants placed in the same or similar situations, vis-a-vis, other functionaries or role occupants placed in other situations in the same society. Status is therefore a relative concept. In a society, certain norms are provided for its members regarding what is considered desirable behavior in various circumstances. An individual is expected to perform his/her role within these normative limitations to gain approval and admiration, rather than contempt and ridicule. Age, sex and occupation are among the factors considered by society in determining norms of social behavior. In a complex society, there are wide variety of roles. Each individual plays more than one role. Each role is associated with certain norms and the members of society are well-acquainted with these norms. Thus, the individual is aware of what others expect of him. He tries to live up to these expectations and acts
accordingly (Parsons, 1942; Rayan, 1953; Merton, 1968).

An individual's status is reflected through his/her role in society. A role may be more prominent and leads towards a more prominent/higher status, while some roles may be less prominent, being associated with a lower status in society.

Traditionally, the Indian woman was restricted in her activities as man was considered to be the breadwinner and hence enjoyed more privileges. His sphere of interaction lay outside the home where he earned his living and interacted in the public sphere. The women had limited access to the outside world, except in the case of the rural women who, due to economic necessity, had to work in the fields. This segregation of roles signified the difference in their statuses. The woman was by and large formally absent from public life and man made all the important decisions both within and outside the home. Males exercised formal authority over females. The routine traditional roles of women were associated with the home and rendered the woman to a lower status in society. By the same measure, professional roles which wield social, economic and
political power were allocated to men and consequently accorded them a higher status.

However, under the influence of changing social environment the position of woman has changed considerably. In this study, socio-economic status is defined in terms of the position held by a woman by virtue of the occupational role performed by her. This position is reinforced by her income and her educational background. The socio-economic status of women is examined in relation to their occupation, education and income. On the other hand, social status is viewed in three different spheres of her interaction, viz., a) at home in her family; b) in the place of work - office/institution; and c) in the larger society. Thus, a woman's social status is determined through the extent of power that she wields in her home in decision-making, in her ability to control not only her own earnings but also the family income. Apart from this, the freedom and respect that she enjoys in the place of work and society at large are also taken into consideration.

The social status of a woman can then be measured
in terms of:

1. the amount of freedom she enjoys in making important decisions at home;

2. the amount of freedom she has in spending the family income;

3. her deviance from the traditional sexually determined behavioral patterns;

4. the amount of freedom of movement that she enjoys outside her home for social entertainment like visiting the club recreation programmes, social visits, etc.

5. the amount of respect she commands from her superiors, colleagues and subordinates in the office/institution.

6. the facilities provided in the office/institution to perform her job efficiently, and with a sense of satisfaction.

CLOTHING

Clothes are an important aspect of society. Clothes communicate certain meaning to the wearer and the observer. Clothes give the wearer a feeling of approval, recognition and belonging to a particular
group (Rayan, 1966). Clothing is often used to seek admiration and esteem. Different types of clothing are used for different occasions, times and seasons.

Since clothing plays an important part in the life of man, it has far reaching effects in role identification. In every society different dress styles are required for different occasions - for example, clothing for bride, the widow, the monk, the king, queen, noblemen, tribal head, chauffeur, student, the police, the navyman, airman, priest, etc. are quite distinctive. In all societies clothing is used to identify roles and members of society perform innumerable roles during their life time. Thus, what one wears at home is not considered suitable apparel to work in the fields or in the factory or any other place of work or for the dinner party. The diverse roles of individuals are expressed by changes in their attire. However, clothing rules may be more relaxed in some societies and very rigid in others. For example, in India there were at one time strict restrictions on the type of clothing to be worn by widows. They were allowed to wear only black or white. Among the Catholics, both
priests and nuns are required to wear particular types of habits. Indian brides wear bright red clothes whereas Christian brides wear white gowns. Similarly, there exists a distinction between clothes worn by women at home and at work. Women in formal organizations are sometimes required to wear uniforms, e.g., air hostesses, nurses, waitresses and the like. Office secretaries do not wear uniforms but their role identification is amply communicated through their clothing fashion. Sometimes clothing becomes so deeply associated with particular roles that they have a tendency to become stereotypic. Thus one begins to interpret roles on the basis of clothing cues.

Over the years, there has been a change of attitudes and norms and values towards clothes. Men and women are now freer to adorn any type of clothing they wish. Clothing is becoming more informal and the restrictions are becoming scarce. Apart from uniformed personnel, clothes worn by men and women have undergone much change. Some clothing has acquired greater prestige value while others which were previously at a premium have moved down.
In this study, clothing refers to particular type of dress worn by women, i.e., whether it is a saree, salwar kameez or jeans, etc., and the type of fabric and designs used for making the dress. Apart from this, clothing includes the jewelry/ornaments, shoes, use of cosmetics, hair-style and the like. The sociological significance of clothing is examined in terms of individuality in clothing selection and style of working and non-working women.

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS - (SRS)

In the present study, socioeconomic status refers to levels of income combined with those of education and occupation. (These indicators of socioeconomic status are defined in detail in Chapter II.)