ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a study of the consumer preferences, purchase practices and problems of the consumers belonging to urban, district, taluk and villages in Andhra Pradesh, of the outerwear fabrics and selected properties of polynosic blended fabrics. Several factors which affect the decision making of the consumers and satisfaction with regard to the outerwear fabrics have been investigated in detail; the physical and mechanical properties of the polynosic blended fabrics and the making-up properties of these fabrics have also been investigated in depth.

The qualities desired by the consumers in outerwear fabrics, their attitude towards labels, certification and newer blends may vary from region to region. Certain demographic variables seem to be related to the consumer preferences, practices, problems and satisfaction. Though the consumers are anxious to make clothing selection decisions based on the actual quality of the materials available, their choice in the absence of suitable information regarding the product, is generally based on the external influencing factors. The importance of consumer education is stressed.
The findings of the consumer and market surveys reveal that the consumers use mostly PE/C blends and are unaware and ignorant of polynosic and polynosic blended fabrics.

An assessment of the several properties, viz., moisture regain, tensile and tear strengths, flat and flex abrasion resistances, stiffness, scratchiness, clinginess, warmth, absorbency, dimensional stability, colour change, pilling propensity, overall appearance, wrinkle recovery, shape retention, bending and shear properties, fabric formability and ease of care properties, is made. These properties have been determined in unlaundred and laundered states with two different detergents. A method has been described by which the properties can be determined. This method has been assessed by comprehensive experimental work and has been shown to give an accurate representation of the shape retention properties of the blends. Similarly a rapid method for determining the blend composition from the moisture regain of the fabrics has been described where standard calibration curves are presented to give the blend composition for polynosic/polyester and polynosic/cotton blends from the moisture content.

In addition to the above, a new index known as Product Performance Index has been proposed to represent
the overall properties of the blended fabrics. The results obtained from the bending and shearing properties have been utilized to determine the making up properties of the fabrics for the first time. Also the product profile charts have been considered to facilitate at a glance the respective properties of the fabrics.

The results show that 65 % polynosic/35 % polyester and 65 % polynosic/35 % cotton fabrics have been found to be more suitable to the consumers as far as optimum properties are concerned.

On the basis of the results obtained, the desirable flexural rigidity, detergents suitable, need for resin finishing and care instructions have been given.

The implications of the results obtained in the present study have been discussed.