CHAPTER II

GARMENT MERCHANDISING AND TRAITS OF MERCHANDISER IN SOURCING EXPORT ORDERS
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2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian garments have the best opportunities to survive in the global market because of its high fashion spectrum. However, fashion selling today is not just a question of lower wages. Quality, speed, cost, efficient logistics and support of information technology have become the essential infrastructure for fashion export business. Being closer to demand through systems for not just “quick response manufacturing”, but for “real-time merchandising” too, especially when dealing with importers serving independent retailers, and directly dealing with specialty stores becomes essential for success in the export of fashion garments. The change in mass marketing and retailing of apparel is towards a change from an unrealistic time divide between conception and consumption to a real-time fusion of the two.

2.2 FASHION CATEGORIES

In response to consumer demand and changes in consumer life-styles manufactures and retailers have developed various size and price ranges, as well as categories for styling and clothing type.

Variety in dress has resulted from manufacturers’ responses to changes in the habits and roles and the increase in consumers purchasing power. There is now clothing for all occasions and life-styles. Manufacturers produce many clothings by considering the age of target customer, price range, and gender. Retailers have separate departments for each category, price range, and size range.

Customers are becoming value-conscious, and in the marketplace, consumers seek multipurpose, multi-use clothing. They look for apparel that is wearable in a variety of settings - office, social activities, gym, home, or vacation. As a result, there
is a breakdown of categories: gym wear has become street wear; underwear is outerwear, and so on.

WOMEN'S WEAR

Clothing categories

There are many types of women’s apparel. Including dresses, social apparel, suits, outerwear, sportswear, active wear and lingerie. There are also specialty categories, such as bridal gowns and maternity clothes, and a huge array of accessories.

Dresses are single garments or two pieces on the same hanger priced as one unit. Styles range from tailored to simple, business to casual, dresses are easy to wear; no thought is required for coordination. Social apparel includes special occasion attire, such as long and short cocktail dresses, dressy pant ensembles and evening or bridal gowns. Suits are jackets and skirts (or pants) sold together as units. Suits range from casual to tailored. There is a trend to casual dressing at the office but it remains to be seen if professional women will give up their “power” suits.

Outerwear includes coats, caps, and jackets with a primarily protective function. Outerwear can be divided into four categories: traditional wool and wool blends; outdoor-ski anoraks in performance fabrics such as micro fibers; leathers; and furs; all are available in both classic and fashion styles.

Sportswear is any combination of tops and bottoms, such as jackets, skirts, pants, shorts, that are priced separately so that the customer can combine them as desired. Sportswear lines are organized as separate or as coordinated sportswear
(pieces intended to be mixed and matched). Sportswear is popular because of the variety of looks that can be made by combining separates. American designers have excelled in this category which suits informal American life-styles.

Active wear is one of the hottest categories of apparel today, fueled by the popularity of fitness. Active wear is subcategorized into two segments: fitness wear, worn by people who actively participate in sports, and active wear, worn for spectator sports or simply as street wear. Active wear includes bike shorts, leggings, T-shirts, crop tops, jogging sets, unitards, sweat suits and jackets. More and more active wear companies are offering as many styles for women as for men. To make their clothing relevant, some manufacturers have the athletes they sponsor help with the designs.

Swimwear includes one-piece suits, bikinis, and cover-ups. Manufacturers are beginning to cater to the baby boom market with bulge - concealers, push-up- bras, extra torso length, and other inner construction. Manufacturers are also adding special sizes.

Lingerie, including innerwear, body wear, sleepwear, and loungewear, is also enjoying increased sales. The popularity of lingerie is partly caused by the fashion of wearing corsets to show, as under suit jackets, and the marketing style of Victoria’s Secret. The more fitted look of today’s fashion is also influencing the rise in sales of body slimmers.

Accessories, give consumers an easy way to update their wardrobes with scarves, hats, handbags, footwear, and hosiery. The popularity of particular accessories is cyclical, such as belts with waist interest. Functional accessories, such as backpacks and sun hats, have become fashionable as well.
Size ranges

Each size range caters to a different figure type. Generally, today’s sizing standards are based on more realistic measurements than in the past. However, each manufacturer has its own interpretation of standardized sizing. Designer clothes may deliberately be labeled one size smaller so that the customer can feel good about being a size 10 instead of a 12. Some manufacturers try to accommodate a variety of body types by using a variety of fit models. Women’s size ranges include Junior, Missy, Petite, and Large Sizes.

Junior customers, sizes 1 to 13, have a less-developed figure and a shorter back-waist length (a higher waistline) than missy figures. This figure is usually equated with a slim, young customer.

Missy sizes 6 to 16 (or 4 to 14) are for the mature female figure, usually based on a height of approximately 5 foot 6 inches. For missy separates, some blouses and sweaters are sized 30 to 36 (8 to 14); others may be sized small, medium or large.

Petite sizes are created for the woman who is less than 5 foot 4 inches tall. Sizes range from 0 to 16. Most manufacture limits the size range to 4 to 14.

Large or women’s sizes range from 14W to 32W but are usually limited to 16W to 26W. Sometimes these sizes are represented as 1x(16 to 18), 2X (20 to 22), and 3x (24 to 26). Large-sized petites are marked WP.

Fashion for petite and large-sized women was virtually ignored by the fashion industry until 1977. Statistics now show that 54 percent of the total female American population wears either petite or large sizes. Among women over 40 years old, 40
percent wear size 14 or larger. Prestigious manufacturers such as Givenchy, Ellen Tracy, and Anne Klein II are now catering to special sizes. There is tremendous growth opportunity for manufacturers in special sizes because there are no extra costs for styling, excepting for new patterns.

Manufacturers still have to deal with a majority of figures that do not fit sizing standards. One reason that sportswear is so popular is that it gives consumers the opportunity to mix sizes to accommodate their less than prefect figures. Women, too, do not have the benefit of free alterations at retail stores as men do.
TABLE - 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style Range</th>
<th>Styling</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Size Range</th>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>Unique, top-name designer fashion</td>
<td>25 and up</td>
<td>Missy 4-12</td>
<td>Missy: mature, slim</td>
<td>Designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Designer fashion</td>
<td>25 and up</td>
<td>Missy 4-12</td>
<td>Missy: mature, slim</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missy</td>
<td>Adaptations of fashion looks</td>
<td>25 and up</td>
<td>Missy 4-14</td>
<td>Missy: mature, 5’7” block</td>
<td>Better to budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petites</td>
<td>Same as missy</td>
<td>25 and up</td>
<td>Petite 0-14</td>
<td>Missy: under 5’4”</td>
<td>Better to budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s or large sizes</td>
<td>Same as missy plus some junior looks</td>
<td>18 and up</td>
<td>16-26W or 16-26WP</td>
<td>Missy: large size + some petite</td>
<td>Better to budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>Trendy</td>
<td>2-40</td>
<td>Missy 4-12</td>
<td>Missy: slim</td>
<td>Better to budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Youthful, trendy, figure-conscious</td>
<td>13-25</td>
<td>Junior 3-15</td>
<td>Not fully developed</td>
<td>Better to budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Styling and price ranges

Apparel is also classified by style range. Style ranges grew out of age groups, price, and size ranges.

Couture This term is reserved for fashion that is made-to-order to fit an individual client’s measurements. These clothes are the most luxurious and the most expensive, often between $5000 and $50,000 for a single garment and reserved for a very small international clientele.

Designer this category pertains to ready-to-wear from successful designers who own their own business or have a “Signature collection” (with their name on the label). The high prices they charge, $1000 to $5000, allow them to use the best of fabrics and quality mass production.

Bridge this is style and price, a new range was created to give consumers a less expensive alternative to designer fashion. Bridge is simply a step down in price from designer, achieved by using less expensive fabric or different production methods.

Missy styling category provides more conservative adaptations of proven or accepted designer looks. Missy lines utilize less expensive fabrics and less extreme silhouettes. Missy styling is available in a variety of quality and price ranges: better, moderate, or budget.

Junior - style range grew out of junior sizing; young styling for a young figure. Styling is heavily influenced by the rock music scene, television, and by street fashion in Europe. It also tends to be body conscious.
As manufacturers or designer names increase in popularity they add lines in other categories so that their businesses can grow. As women’s designers enter the men’s wear market and vice versa, and with the popularity of men’s sportswear, the production and marketing techniques in men’s and women’s wear are becoming similar.

**Men’s wear**

Men’s clothing has also changed as a result of changes in their interests and more casual life-styles. Traditionally, men learned to look for quality, fit, and durability. Their wardrobes, formerly limited to suits, slacks, and sport shirts, have expanded along with their activities, and increased clothing choices have made them more fashion conscious.

The electronics and marketing fields have paved the way towards casual dress at the office. Many companies have instituted “casual Fridays”, and some have found it to be so popular that they have made it an everyday option. There are many theories as to why this is happening. Some authorities believe that members of the baby boom generation, who are now the business executives, are trying to stay young. Others think that middle-aged men are just more interested in comfort. Also, fewer companies are operating in center city locations, and more and more people are working at home.

As a result of the easing of corporate dress codes, the men’s wear industry is in a state of flux. Men’s suit sales have decreased, whereas sportswear is enjoying tremendous growth. In the past, suits represented half of men’s wardrobe purchases; now purchases are divided equally among suits, furnishings and accessories, and
sportswear. As tailored clothing becomes more casual, the category distinctions become blurred. There is an intermixing of business and leisure wardrobes: an Armani suit jacket over jeans, or a shirt and tie replaced by a T-shirt.

Casual does not refer to sloppy or cheap clothes. By the time a man has purchased all the necessary pieces in a sportswear outfit, it may cost as much as a traditional suit, shirt, and tie. Casual looks are also more confusing for the consumer. Men wonder how to present themselves as successful professionals in casual wear.

**Clothing categories**

There are now as many categories available for men as there are for women. Many designers and manufacturer, including Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Hugo Boss, and Nautica, have lines in several men’s wear categories. Stores have increased square footage in men’s wear areas and use aggressive display and promotional techniques to lure their increasingly fashion-wise made customers, categories include the following:

- Tailored clothing includes suits, tuxedos, overcoats, topcoats, sport coats, and separate trousers for business and evening wear. Tailored clothing requires lengthy, time-consuming, costly production, and retailers need to inventory many sizes.
- Furnishings include dress shirts, neckwear, underwear, hosiery, robes, pyjamas, shoes, and boots.
- Sportswear comprises of sport jackets, knit or woven related separates, sweaters, and casual trousers that fill the demand for more leisure and casual wear.
• Active sportswear includes all garments needed for sports or exercise, such as windbreakers, ski jackets, jogging suits, and tennis shorts.

• Work clothes, such as overalls, work shirts, and pants required by laborers, have become popular for leisure wear.

• Accessories include small leather goods such as wallets, shoes, boots, belts, jewelry such as cuff links, scarves, gloves, and eyewear.

**Styling**

The styling creativity and diversity are now apparent in men’s wear as a result of men’s desire to have appropriate clothing for their leisure activities. However, there are not as many styling categories for men’s wear as there are for women’s wear. Designer styling internationally recognized designers often set fashion directions in men’s wear.

**Size ranges**

Men’s suits range in size from 36 to 44 (with additional large sizes to 50), originally based on chest measurements. Lengths are designated after the size number R for regular, S for short, and L for Long. European sizes are 46 to 54 (add 10 to each American size). Young men’s sizes have a narrower fit in the jacket and hip than regular men’s sizes. There has been an attempt to simplify men’s sizing because traditional sizing requires a huge inventory of many combinations of chest and length measurements. Men also enjoy free alteration services at most men’s stores and in men’s clothing departments.
Dress shirts are sized by collar measurement (inches in America and centimeters in Europe) and sleeve length. Sport shirts and sweaters are sized in small, medium, large, and extra large. Trousers are sized by waist and inseam measurements. Dress slacks are left unhemmed to be finished by the store’s tailor as a customer service.

**Children’s wear**

The children’s wear business is very complicated because each size range is a separate market. Children’s wear is also highly competitive because the consumer is extremely value conscious. Parents do not want to spend much money on clothes that their children will quickly outgrow.

Children’s wear manufacturers often produce both dresses and sportswear to protect their businesses from shifts in fashion preferences. Some men’s and women’s wear companies. Brand such as esprit and Polo, also produce children’s lines, but others have tried and found it a difficult business. Children’s manufacturers, too, have had stiff competition from Baby Gap and Kid’s Gap and all private-label programs. However, a steady domestic birthrate of around 4 million per year is keeping the children’s wear market afloat.

**Categories**

It is very difficult to categorize children’s wear. Categories change with each size and price range. Also, boundaries between categories are becoming increasingly blurred. Some casual dresses fall into sportswear classifications; some dresses fall into tailored clothing classifications. Children’s wear, too, has become more casual as today’s children lead very active lives.
• Girls’ dresses are available in all style and price ranges. Holiday and spring are the biggest seasons for special-occasion dresses. Some girls dresses, jumpers, jackets, and skirts are considered tailored clothing.

• Boys’ traditional clothing includes blazers, other dress jackets, suits, dress pants, and dress shorts.

• Sportswear comprises T-shirts, jeans, pants, shorts, overalls, jumpsuits, leggings, girls’ skirts, boys’ shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, and sweat suits in knits and wovens, particularly denim and fleece. Boy’s wear has become very casual, and tops outsell bottoms.

• Swimwear groups swimsuits and beach cover-ups.

• Outerwear includes dress coats, all-weather coats, raincoats, ski jackets, windbreakers, and snow suits.

• Sleepwear includes layette gowns and sacques, blanket sleepers, pyjamas, nightgowns, nightshirts, and robes. A major issue in this category is the consumer product safety requirement that sleepwear be made of polyester so that it can have a flame-retardant finish. However, many consumers want pure cotton and, therefore, are buying play clothes to use as sleepwear.

• Accessories include shoes, hats, gloves, and scarves, hair accessories, sunglasses, jewelry, bags, backpacks, hosiery (tights and socks) and underwear; belts, caps, and ties for boys; and infant accessories, such as bibs and booties. Hats have been particularly strong to protect children from the
sun and have become a fashion statement, some manufacturers are including accessories with their apparel, priced as a unit.

Sizing

- Children’s wear sizing is separated by age groups.
- Newborn sizes are layette (0 to 11 pounds), 3,6, and 9 months.
- Infant sizes are based on “age” in months, usually 12, 18 and 24 months. In Europe, sizes are based on the length of the baby or the height of the child.
- Toddler apparel, for the child who has learned to walk, are sized 2T, 3T, and 4T.
- At this point, sizes are separate for boys and girls.
- Girls’ apparel is sized 4 to 6x7 to 16 (some companies manufacture sizes 2 to 10 or extra small to extra-large), pre-teen sizes are 6 to 14; and the young teen wears young junior sizes from 3 to 13.
- Boys’ sizes are 4 to 7 and 8 to 20.

Ease of dressing, washability, durability, and versatility are important design considerations in clothing for young children. For infants and toddlers who have to be dressed, crotch snaps and generous necklines are important. For the toddlers, ease of dressing, such as elastic waistlines, is also important because children want to dress themselves.

Novelty, color, and conversational prints are important in infant, toddler, and young children’s wear. Apparel printed with licensed cartoon or television characters has also been a phenomenal success.
Older Children have more definite opinions on what they want to wear, partly because of advertising, television exposure, and peer group pressure. This development has had an effect on styling in that many children’s wear manufacturers follow junior trends for girls and young men’s trends for boys. For all these style making and fabric imports, every buying house agency, exporter needs to source the fabrics.

2.3 GARMENT SOURCING

INTERNATIONAL CLOTHING DISTRIBUTION ENVIRONMENT

The Western apparel market size is growing in a tremendous way by linking the apparel retailing which is one of the most engaging and influential activities in every developed country. However, the retailing of apparel across the world is affected by changes in consumer’s attitudes, distributor’s and manufacturer’s policies. The most important changes in the consumers can be summarized as

- The demand is becoming more and more fragmented, leading to niche marketing and innovative retail formulae. The consumers are paying more attention to the intrinsic quality of products like fabric properties, technical performance and the price quality ratio.

- The emotional appeals of designer products and purely brand-led buying have decreased. The choice of fashion goods is guided heavily by lifestyles and the choices are more independent than ever. The retailing techniques are, by and large, acquiring the same level of importance as the product itself. Value, fashion, lifestyle and entertainment are becoming essential requirements for all types of retailers.
One of the most important aspects leading to retail expansion is the emergence of regional blocks. The larger companies in Western Europe and in the United States are seeking geographical expansion. The USA expansion is more within, whereas the Canadian expansion is to the USA. The European expansion is to the eastern Europe and other countries within Europe which have similar altitudes, culture and climate. The Japanese retailers have been making alliances in Europe and the Far-East in their efforts to expand. The Japanese are also emphasizing acquisition of premium brands.

In the USA, the ethnic minorities have exerted much influence on the retail trade. The proliferation of specialty stores and a trend towards greater specialization and service focus will be strong in international retailing. Another major trend noticeable is private or owned-label branding by retailers to drive home more benefits from differentiation. This is considered as an effective route for ensuring customer loyalty. Private label products are positioned at a greater percentage which is less in practice than the national brands.
Considerable internationalization of retailing in the 1980’s and 1990’s, greatly encouraged by technological advances and the need to maintain profitability under recessionary and difficult conditions. Internationalization is taking many forms from international product sourcing to mergers and acquisitions and overseas investments. Global sourcing has become an accepted practice for increasing retail margins and ensuring customer satisfaction. This has also resulted in consolidation of multiples, thus becoming larger and smaller independents, increasing their market share by becoming members of co-operatives, large groups, voluntary chains, etc. This will obviously mean increase in the power of a few retailers who influence sourcing policies and practices.

**INTERNATIONAL SOURCING:**

India\textsuperscript{37} has a great potentiality for her garments in Europe and USA. In Europe, the multiples and Hyper / Super markets are considered as high growth retail channels whereas department stores, variety stores and independent retailers are facing a decline. Mail-order is also expected to grow marginally. The garments are sourced through independent retailers, multiple / speciality, variety stores, hyper/super markets and mail orders.

In the USA also, the apparel retailing is undergoing sweeping changes\textsuperscript{38}. Department stores and mass merchandisers are facing slow growth but Specialty stores, discounters and manufacturer-owned stores are showing strong increases. Over 40 per cent of the apparel sales are being made by non-traditional outlets like discount, off-price, factory stores and mail-order. The demarcation of discounters, off-price and conventional retailers is blurring.
The garments are sourced in USA through Department stores, off price, factory outlets, mail-order, discounters and through speciality stores.

Value, fashion, lifestyle and entertainment are the common consumer criteria emerging for all types of retailers and this is influencing their product group selections and sources for the same. Customers want value for money. They are short of time and want the shopping experience to be fast, easy, fun and hassle-free. Yet the consumers also want uniqueness, and exclusivity. Consumer-responsive retailers are bound to gain market share. The retail distribution channels are shifting in importance and many retailers are experiencing financial difficulties.

APPAREL DISTRIBUTION STRUCTURE, ENTRY MODES, RETAILERS' SOURCING FLOWS AND PRACTICES

The retail sourcing decisions depend on the type of retailer (department store, speciality store, catalogue house, etc.) and the type of consumers and their purchasing criteria. A comparison of the clothing distribution will help to focus on the marketing strategies, as the sourcing criteria widely differ based on the distribution channels and retail formulae as prevalent in different countries. The schematic flows indicate the distribution systems and sourcing flows as prevalent in the clothing trade in select market. The retail structural composition also holds the key to understanding the sourcing options and practices that will have a bearing on the selection of countries vendors.

The retailers have merchandisers and buyers who are generally in charge of the buying operations. The larger retailers have import departments for general import decisions and buying departments for merchandise development and selection.
FIGURE – 2.2
DIRECT EXPORTING

Manufacturer → Wholesaler → Retailer → Distributor → Agent

INDIRECT EXPORTING

Manufacturer → Wholesaler → Retailer → Buying Organisation (Buying House) → Export House
EMERGING RETAIL AND SOURCING TRENDS

Information technology is becoming part of the merchandising process in an unprecedented way. The changing customer requirements are captured by the ongoing monitoring by computers, which in turn gets manufacturers to react to these requirements. The retail store reacts close in the time frame to the required change in assortments and product mix.

In earlier times, the seasonality was clearly pronounced. Ordering and production cycles were well established. The vast time gaps between the concept / design stage, production and retail sale will be high for one year to one-and-a-half years. The life span of the products on shelf was disproportionately short-six to eight weeks. There are times when actual peak sales of the products manufactured after 12-18 months of investment in time and effort is as short as two weeks. There has
been no system which could respond to the customers' real-time requirements. And therefore, millions worth of merchandise used to get marked down reducing the profitability of the retailers. But the merchandising has the best chance to be close to the real-time demand of customers. “Quick Response” systems are being set up by a number of garment manufacturers to serve the developed markets. Quick response is reacting to an outside customer requirement as early in the time frame as possible. But “Just-in-time” implies advanced planning systems to ensure availability whenever the demand or request occurs. In “real-time merchandising” this is integrated to take care of the demand as it happens, Interactive systems, anticipation and planning, therefore, become essential.

Today's consumers, by all indications, want better information, products very close to their want variations, a value-for-money brand, efficient service and co-existence of fashion and function. The manufacturers and retailers are understanding this slowly. The rather unpredictable fashion feelings, value drive and ever-changing wants and nuances of aspirations have pressed them to consider “real-time merchandising” seriously. This emphasized the orientation of the retail structures, sourcing steps, manufacturing systems and information technology.
FIGURE 2.4
SOURCING FLOW

LARGE DEPARTMENT STORES

DIVISIONAL OFFICE

BUYING OFFICE

CC- MADRAS

MADRAS OFFICE/QC

BOMBAY OFFICE/QC

DELHI OFFICE/QC

LARGE SPECIALITY CHAINS

GENERAL BUYING OFFICE

IMPORTER - WHOLESALER

CC- BOMBAY

CC-Delhi

REPRESENTATIVE - MADRAS DEDICATED FACTORIES CAPTIVE UNIT

REPRESENTATIVE - BOMBAY DEDICATED FACTORIES CAPTIVE UNIT

REPRESENTATIVE - DELHI DEDICATED FACTORIES CAPTIVE UNIT

MADRAS/TIRUPUR

BANGALORE

LUDHIANA

MID-SIZED DEPARTMENT/SPECIALITY CHAINS

IMPORTER-WHOLESALE

BUYING OFFICE

BUYING AGENT

SMALL INDEPENDENT RETAILERS

IMPORTER-WHOLESALE

BRANCH OFFICE

BRAND - MANUFACTURER IMPORTER

IMPORTER-WHOLESALE

QC STAFF - TIRUPUR

QC STAFF - MADRAS

QC STAFF - BOMBAY

QC STAFF - BANGALORE

QC STAFF - LUDHIANA
However, the adoption of “real-time merchandising” depends on many factors. For instance, if basics are the mainstay of the apparel retail business and the design variations are in a manageable range, even quick response has very little meaning and the system may not prove to be cost-effective except as an efficiency parameter for “fill-in” or replenishment. However, if one is looking at a system where already collection with 4-6 seasons and in each season 1-3 deliveries are taking place, quick response and if possible, real-time merchandising makes a lot of sense. Here the chance of flexible, small lots and a wider variety of garments prone to change drive the manufacturer / retailer to move towards tying up retail sales information, order processing, procurement of fabrics, trims, production and logistics through information technology in such a manner that the system works on a synchronized, fast-responding manner close to real-time wants of target customers. However, there is a substantial difference between quick response and “Just-in-time”. “Just-in-time” is more limited in scope and is more of an inventory management and distribution system than a pro-active approach to customers’ needs.

Preoccupation of modern marketers and retailers: ensure that the modern, complex consumer is satisfied again and again through a system responding fast enough.

The manufacturing technology has already moved ahead in quick response. “Real-time manufacturing” and real-time production monitoring in response to customers’ need are ardently followed by most manufacturers in our competing countries. The “global sourcing” through dedicated manufacturing facilities for fabrics and garments is already the hallmark of many large successful speciality retailers moving more towards “real-time merchandising”, therefore seems more
plausible. Their association with manufacturing in the far-east and in south east Asia have given them the experience and expertise to link demand and supply on a “real-time basis”, with the help of technology, more out of today’s compulsions of profitability and cost-control than necessarily out of an urge for customers’ satisfaction.

In the USA, 50 per cent of the apparel used was imported. The imported apparel at retail meant about $74 billion, out of $149 billion spent by the Americans on apparel. In Europe, imports of clothing in the EU touched ECU 19 billion, out of which ECU 14.5 billion was from developing countries, chiefly from Hong Kong (14.9 per cent), the Peoples’ Republic of China (14.4 per cent), etc. The location of demand and the location of supply are, therefore, now getting highly polarized. This brings into sharp focus the need for “real-time merchandising” and “synchronized manufacturing”.

With market segment fragmentation and recession continuing and the niche markets breaking the traditional segment barriers and walls, the move towards real-time merchandising is inevitable.

SOURCING OPTIONS, CRITERIA AND FLOWS

The buying operations are generally guided by the overall policies and philosophy of the companies and macro-environmental variables. The specific inputs which influence the operation are the fashion stance of the stores, price points, promotion methods, organizational structure, assortment mix and retailing mix elements and geographical locations. The import and sourcing policy and import
decisions are taken by the Corporate office and the buying operations are delegated to
buyers/merchandisers based on the overall budget, openness to buy, turnover ratios,
lead time, square footage, sales expectation, mark-up-margin-profitability, etc. the
basic requirements of a fashion retailer could be quick response, small quantities and
flexibility in assortments, for instance. These characteristics when turned into specific
sourcing criteria could mean a price-performance ratio, fashion-price or quality-price-
speed expectations. However, the objectives in most cases are:

1. Reduced inventory
2. Maximised profits/square footage sales
3. Optimised seasonal sales
4. Obtained exclusivity for building customer loyalty.

The imports are carried out with the help of buying office\textsuperscript{41}, agents,
representatives which, in other words, are some kind of direct contacts or through
importers/importer-wholesalers. The department stores and speciality stores carry
both private labels and national brands. The brand manufacturer importers get the
goods produced with the help of representative offices and quality control staff and
then supply the brands to retailers with the help of warehousing and logistic support
systems. Again, some operate on standard two seasons which speciality stores work
with as many as six seasons. Working with four seasons is a standard practice.
Depending on this, the cycle times and lead times are worked out. The fabrics again
depend on the seasons, price points and fashion elements. The import penetration,
substitution level, etc. determine the domestic sourcing. Once the decision is taken to
import, the import can be done as far as fabrics are concerned from south-east Asia,
the Pacific Rim or the Orient. The garment manufacturing can be in any of the
countries based on the volume of imports, price, lead time on hand, price-sensitivity of the product, craftsmanship, skill, labour content, etc. as applicable to the garment. In some cases the package programmes are executed when the fabrics are also from the same country as in India or Indonesia or CMT / CMPQ kind of operations are carried out as in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, etc., when the fabrics have to be imported from some other sources. In most cases, the garments are done based on ‘package programmes’ and in a few cases, the fabrics, trims etc. are imported. Then the options emerge with regard to logistics: by air, by sea, by sea-air route, etc., depending on the CIF landed cost of the garment and the selling price it can fetch. Often it is also a question of pressure on time and the number of seasons that guide the operations.
FIGURE - 2.5
SOURCING OPTIONS/FLOWS: A SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION

Company Policies → Import Policy & Sourcing criteria → Reliability, speed/quick response, price-performance ratio, fashion etc.

Increase customer loyalty, reduce inventory, maximize profits, optimize seasonal sales

Direct Through Importer

Speciality store

Importer or Independents

Brand- Manufacturer importer

Private Label

National brands

Private Label

National brands

Local brands

National brands

Own brands

Number of Seasons

Number of Deliveries

Manufacturer of Garments Basic/Fashion

FAR EAST

PACIFIC RIM

ORIENT

Far East, Mexico, Latin America, C.I.S., South-East Asia, South Asia

Within the Country

Agent

Buying House

Buying House
For developing countries like India, the most important markets are USA, Germany, UK, Netherlands, France and Japan. Marketing of garments to these countries requires understanding of markets in depth: market size and growth, import penetration, nature and characteristics of demand, distribution and flows in the channels and above all, consumer psychographics and demographics.

The markets to be considered as international are a misnomer in a way. Whether it is the USA or the European market, the exporter has to be concerned with the domestic markets of these countries. The consumers in these countries match the products from other sources to their culture bound, learning-bound requirements. Thus, in international marketing, the process actually taking place is the product-market match process and at the entry level, this is of critical importance. Even later, for every new product and every new market, the process repeats itself. Here, the process is of bridging the distances.

**PRODUCT-MARKET MATCH PROCESS**

In the globalization process across the world, there is the emergence of a global consumer who values quality and price-performance relationship. On this level, there are similarities between consumers in different markets, but on several other counts, especially aspects of fashion and function, there is more difference than similarities. In order to make a successful product-market match, the exporters have to develop an active marketing philosophy with a global approach to international marketing. The transition from an ethno-centric to geo-centric approach is essential to develop a truly global international marketing approach. In view of the liberalization taking place in India, the opportunity to become a world-class competitor in other countries is within the realm of reality.
ASPECTS OF PRODUCT-MARKET MARCH IN APPAREL EXPORTS

The aspects in this process to be highlighted are:

1. **RAW MATERIALS:** The raw material of fashion is fabric. The Indian fabrics, with the exception of cotton, are not keeping pace with the market realities. Even in cotton, the hand-feel and brightness of the fabric are often considered to be below par. Weaving defects, lack of variety, dyeing variations, insufficient roll length, width variations, impurities and several such aspects are perceived as major drawbacks. For the exporter, in the product-market match process, this aspect calls for backward integration and substantial investment in sourcing capabilities.

2. **TECHNOLOGY:** The perceptions of a large number of exporters relate to obsolete machines, absence of better needles, lack of technology for fabric finishing, washing and packaging systems. Bridging the technological gap has to be done both at the macro- and the micro-levels. If some of the large garment exporters integrate backwards, as already done by some exporters, by setting up processing plants, printing units and modern assembly line units, the image starts shifting. Technology aids in developing consistency in quality. Consistency in quality is the major requirement for any brand or garment; lack of consistency resulting in high level of dissatisfaction, using technology to improve productivity. With the lowest labour cost per hour, though India has an advantage, with poor productivity and without the support of technology, the gap is too wide to bridge.
3. **DESIGN:** Design is the biggest element of value addition. Design cannot originate in vacuum. In the product-market match in a market, poor or inadequate designs can make or mar the process of successful marketing. Lack of sufficient understanding of physiognomy, body sizes, lifestyles, activities and climatic conditions result in incomplete design appreciation. The designers trained in India will need considerable exposure to the target markets before the design-match process can succeed. The customer-design interface is a matter of deep understanding of the country and the people. Another area is using the aspect of design capabilities and creativity to explore product development as an extra selling proposition (ESP), which results in long-term relationships and differential advantage.

4. **DELIVERY:** In the fashion business, delivery is the closest aspect linked to profitability. In the retail business, a product not available on the day it is demanded is equal to sales lost forever. In the garment business, especially in fashion, the product has to be treated as perishable. Time utility is the most important marketing aspect in the fashion business. Here, the perception of India is extremely bad. The single most important factor pulling down our performance is this aspect. The distance to be bridged is quite wide in this area.

5. **SERVICE:** Service aspects to an importer mean communication, reliability, product development support, business ethics, ease of dealing, quick settlement of claims and speed. Very often, a much valued service aspect is uninterrupted and factually correct information flows. Here, the Indian garment exporter is seen as lacking in important elements of service, though
he is courteous and hospitable. In the product-market match process servicing kind of combining service with product, or tangibles with the intangibles becomes a very important aspect.

6. NON-TARIFF BARRIERS, TARIFF BARRIERS, RULES AND REGULATIONS:

The regulations in force depend on the affluence, cultural proclivities and political variables of the country. Non-tariff barriers, under the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA), have created a situation by which product costs combined with quota premium and freight charges often render the prices non-competitive. Product liability regulation in Europe, country of origin label rule in the USA, wash-care regulations or environment based regulations are cardinal to completing the process of product-market match. A thorough study is essential in these aspects in order to ensure entry and acceptability of the products.

7. ENVIRONMENTALISM: The need for eco-friendly garments has surfaced as a major direction. Ban of certain chemicals like benzudene. Non-degradability and such other aspects are now to be incorporated in the product-market match process. Declaring the chemical constituents and working out the quantitative indicators have become essential for dealing with certain countries in Europe like Germany.

8. QUALITY: The functional and intrinsic quality of the product is prescribed by the buyers. ISO 9000 norms or other quality standards of the specific countries need to be adopted for long term growth in the market. Saliva-
resistant children's clothing to colour-fast fabrics and buttons – there are innumerable aspects directly linked to the parameters of performance and functional quality. Quality is an essential prerequisite now being taken for granted. Without ensuring quality, there is no likelihood of entry or acceptance. The time required for the quality matching process will depend on many factors. The product type itself will determine to a great extent, the time required for this process. The Japanese quality standards are so rigorous that they expect four to five years for an Indian exporter to match the dress shirt quality and one to two years for a casual shirt.

**STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IN PRODUCT-MARKET MATCH**

It is better for the exporter to go through the steps of product market match carefully, as withdrawal from a market on account of failure and then a re-entry are expensive prepositions. The product-market match can be summed in the following stages:

1. Identifying target countries;
2. Identifying target markets;
3. Bridging the distances in design, technology, quality, etc.,
4. Making a hypothetical product-market match;
5. Testing and evaluating;
FIGURE – 2.7

PRODUCT – MARKET (STAGE II)

NEW ENTRY PHASE (NEXT 18-24 MONTHS)

PRODUCT ADAPTATION

MARKETING

INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY (TESTING, MANUFACTURING)

QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEMS

PLAN LOGISTICS SUPPORT

PROMOTION

COLLECTIONS TO TARGET BUYERS

TRIAL ORDERS

FOCUSED RANGE PRESENTATION TO BUYING OFFICES

FOLLOW-UP
2.4 RETAIL MERCHANDISING

The term merchandising has many connotations. In the apparel industry, merchandising involves the planning, development, and presentation of the product line suitable for a firm's intended customers. Mazur cited a classic definition of retail merchandising: "to have the right goods, at the right time, in the right quantities, and the right prices".

In a broad context, retail merchandising includes all of the activities directly or indirectly associated with procuring and reselling merchandise. In a narrow context, retail merchandising embraces only the merchandise-procurement function. In this report, retail merchandising will be defined in the broader context to include all of the activities associated with buying, pricing, presenting, and promoting merchandise.

Corporate and Field Functions

Organizational functions can be classified by where the function is performed. A corporate function is performed within a company's central organization or corporate office. In a retail organization, buying, sales, promotion, and finance are all corporate functions performed in a corporate office. A field function is performed in a remote or satellite operation away from the corporate office. In a retail organization the store operations function is a field function performed in stores. Within the broad context of retail merchandising, functions are performed both corporately and in the field.
CORPORATE LEVEL MERCHANDISING FUNCTIONS

Buying is the main function of a corporate merchandising division. Traditionally buyers were responsible for a diverse group of activities that included inventory planning, selection, and allocation. However, the growth of large retail chains has fostered greater specialization in executing the buying function. Many retailers have split buying into four specialized functions: buying, planning, distribution, and product development.

A buyer buys and prices the merchandise for resale. A buyer’s challenge is to compose assortments that will appeal to the organization’s intended customers, obtaining the best possible goods at the lowest possible prices. Buyers explore the offerings of the wholesale market place by visiting domestic and foreign markets and through frequent interaction with producer’s sales agents. Buyers are also responsible for pricing goods low enough to be competitive with other retailers, yet high enough to meet an organization’s profit objectives.

The magnitude of a buyer’s responsibility is defined by annual sales volume, and as might be expected, the mass buyer is paid a higher salary than the small buyer. The importance of a buying position may also be linked to the complexity of the wholesale market or the risk associated with purchase decisions. A purchase decision for fashion goods, such as dresses, involves higher risk than a purchase decision for basic goods, such as hosiery. Buying decisions for fashion goods are based on uncertain predictions of consumer acceptance of new styles. An inaccurate prediction will result in poor sales, and the need to sell off the inventory at profit-threatening prices, Buying decisions for basics are often just reorders of historically best-selling brands, styles, colors, and sizes.
A **planner** projects sales and inventories based on an analysis of sales history, current market trends, and the organization’s performance objectives. Planning is a statistical function that requires astute analytical aptitude and the ability to make multidimensional decisions. A **distributor** allocates arriving shipments of merchandise to individual stores based on each store’s capacity, current sales trends, and inventory levels. Often called allocators, distributors correct stock imbalances in stores, and are a critical link between stores and the corporate merchandising division.

A **product developer** determines which products to develop internally with the store’s private label. Product developers establish specifications for the design, production, and packaging of these goods. They are also responsible for contracting producers to manufacture the goods according to the specifications.

The interdependence of the activities of buyers, planners, distributors, and product developers requires harmonious interaction among all four functions. In some retail organizations, the planning and distribution functions are combined. In small, conventionally structured organizations, the buyer is responsible for planning and distribution, as well as buying. The product-development function exists only in stores that engage in private labeling.

Many organizations use titles such as senior planner or lead analyst to indicate seniority or level of responsibility. As the title suggests, an assistant buyer assists a buyer with various day-to-day activities, and is often being groomed for a buying position. An associate buyer is one step closer to the goal of buyer, and often assumes responsibility for buying a category of goods within the buyer’s total area of responsibility.
Buying, planning, allocation, and product-development responsibilities are typically assigned by merchandise department. A department is a group of related merchandise. A division is a group of related departments. Divisions and departments are identified by product line. A men's division is composed of several men's departments, such as men's outerwear, men's suits and sport coats, men's designer collections and men's accessories. A divisional merchandise manager (DMM) is responsible for merchandise division. The DMM monitors the sales, inventories, and assortments of the departments within the division to ensure consistency with the organization's merchandising and profit objectives. DMMs report to a general merchandise manager (GMM) who manages a group of related merchandise divisions. A GMM is typically at the vice-president or senior-management level. Organizational hierarchies for planning and distribution often parallel organizational hierarchies for buying.
2.5 FASHION BUYING

FIGURE - 2.9

LIAISON BETWEEN FASHION BUYERS AND OTHER ROLES
Fashion buyers work for retailers and are responsible for overseeing the selection of a range of products aimed at a specific type of customer and price bracket. The buying role can vary significantly between different companies and market sectors. Buyers of ready-to-wear or branded merchandise select garments from finalized product ranges which are sold to them on a wholesale basis, containing the label of the designer or brand. In contrast, buyers of own label ranges develop products in collaboration with their suppliers, which are usually sold under the retailer’s label. Many fashion retailers have separate buying departments or divisions— for men’s wear, women’s wear, children’s wear and home-ware. In a small company buyers may be responsible for a wide range of product types but in larger multiple retailers responsibility for buying is subdivided into smaller areas such as tailoring or accessories. Buying often involves more extensive travel to a variety of worldwide locations than most other jobs within fashion and textiles, to visit suppliers and research into trends. This buying cycle is in constant progression and it is likely that the buyer will be involved in monitoring the delivery and sales figures of one season’s collection whilst planning to buy the next season’s range.
FIGURE 2.10
THE BUYING CYCLE FOR BRANDED AND DESIGNER MERCHANDISE

- **REVIEWING SEASON’S PERFORMANCE**
  - Monitoring sales figures
  - Retails selling period
  - Monitoring deliveries

- **BUDGET PLANNING**
  - Planning buying schedules and trips
  - Range selection
  - Price negotiation and setting retail prices

- Order processing and confirmation
Buyers select garments from designer and branded ranges mainly through the following methods.

- Attending fashion shows
- Visiting showrooms
- Attending trade fairs or exhibitions
- Meetings with sales representatives at the retailer’s premises

**Designer ranges**

Ready-to-wear collections usually bear the designer’s name on the label and have runway shows which enhance awareness and the desirability of the range to fashion consumers. Buyers of designer ranges may be invited to attend ready-to-wear fashion. However, buying decisions are more likely to be made before or after the runway shows in the showrooms of the designers or their sale agents. London fashion week also represents an exhibition to give the designers a base to do business with the buyers who attend this event. Having seen a variety of collections, buyers usually then review which products are most suitable for their customers before placing orders.

**Branded Ranges**

Branded ranges retail at similar prices to diffusion ranges in the middle market or compete with the upper end of the mass market. Prices of branded ranges are higher than those of many high street multiples. Department stores may sell several brands alongside each other which may be selected by a fashion buyer working for the store. Sales figures for branded merchandise can be influenced by several factors which are controlled by the brand, such as advertising and promotion campaigns and
the brand’s quality of service and delivery. Buyers can visit relevant trade fairs around the world twice a year to review a range of brands within their market sector. The various fashion trade fairs are:

**TABLE - 2.2**  
**FASHION TRADE FAIRS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade fair</th>
<th>Product types</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pure Women’s wear</td>
<td>Contemporary women’s wear, accessories and footwear</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>February and August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitti Uomo Immagini</td>
<td>Men’s wear</td>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>January and June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitti Bimbo Immagini</td>
<td>Children’s wear</td>
<td>Florence</td>
<td>January and July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moda UK</td>
<td>Mainstream, women’s wear, menswear, footwear and accessories</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>February and August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Edge</td>
<td>Alternative fashion and club wear</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Typical Trade fairs take place over a three-day period and several may run concurrently in the same city, allowing buyers to view a variety of fairs in one trip. Exhibitor directories are useful for contacting brands after the show. Pure Women’s wear is the largest individual fashion trade fair in the UK with over 800 exhibitors. There are also several small shows for niche areas of the market in other locations, such as Surf shop in Exeter. Access to fashion trade fairs is restricted to trade visitors and tickets are available prior to the shows through the venues or exhibition organizers. Groups of students may be permitted to enter some trade shows if an advance booking has been made by their college or university.

**BUYING OWN LABEL RANGES**

Most fashion multiples sell own label ranges and their buyers are involved in developing these products. The extent of the buyer’s involvement in product
development can vary depending on the way the retailer’s buying department operates and the level of seniority and background of the buyer, e.g. someone qualified in fashion design may have more influence on the design of the products. Those buyers without formal fashion qualifications may rely more on their suppliers for design input. The experienced own label buyer’s role involves a wide variety of tasks which are mostly carried out through liaising with colleagues and external suppliers. Department stores buy a combination of branded and own label merchandise and it is usual for them to develop and sell exclusive own label ranges under a different name to that of the store, such as House of Fraser’s Linea ranges of menswear, women’s wear and home wear.

Knowledge of sales figures and other information from one season influence the development of retailer’s future ranges. Buyers can work on up to three seasons simultaneously, e.g. monitoring sales figures for the current season whilst fitting ferments for the next and researching into trends for the following season. A season loosely refers to a six-month selling period from February to July for spring/summer and August to January for autumn/winter. The seasons can be subdivided further into phases of one or two months though some fashion-led retailers such as H&M have new styles delivered on almost a daily basis. In chain stores the buying cycle from initial research through to the delivery of products into stores often used to take up to a year but many retailers are now competing to get ‘fast fashion’ styles into stores by reducing the timescale within elements of the buying cycle.
FIGURE – 2.11
THE BUYING CYCLE FOR BRANDED AND DESIGNER MERCHANDISE

MONITORING SALES FIGURES

- Retails selling season
- Bulk production and delivery of product
- Fabric and garment approval

BUDGET PLANNING

- Comparative and directional shopping
- Range planning
- Garment sourcing and price negotiation

Final range selection
Range Planning and Selection

After planning the budget for the season and defining the number of styles required in a range in conjunction with the merchandiser working on the same product area the own label buyer begins range planning. This involves compiling a commercially acceptable collection of garments within financial and design parameters, prior to production and delivery. The range is aimed at a certain retailer, product area and season and must be suitable for the potential customer’s lifestyle, coordinating with other products sold by the retailer at the same time. When buying a new season’s range, the fashion buyer needs to plan the following:

- Balance of different types of garment;
- Specific product styles;
- Fabrics, colours and prints;
- Supply sources;
- Selling prices;
- Size ranges;
- Order quantities.

Buyers should also familiarize themselves with the ranges sold by their competitors through comparative shopping, so that they can see the choice offered to their customers. Most fashion multiples select many of the designs from their suppliers but some retailers have their own in-house design teams, with whom buyers work closely. Several high street retailers collaborate with ready-to-wear designers to produce ranges which are exclusive to that store at much lower prices than the designer’s main line, by manufacturing the garments more economically in large quantities.
The final range selection is a significant meeting for the buyer, attended by senior managers such as buying and merchandising managers, when decisions are made about which styles are to be included in a range for a particular season. The buyer is responsible for presenting the range to colleagues, usually in the form of sample garments, and occasionally as drawings and fabric swatches. Samples are generally produced by suppliers but fashion retailers have their own sample rooms. A range plan document is presented at the final range selection meeting including details of the styles which the buyer is proposing. The merchandiser supports the buyer in this meeting with financial information about the range. Some buyers may have pre-selection meetings beforehand with merchandisers, garment technologists and designers reviewing the range as a team. Senior managers need to approve the range which the buyer presents at the final range selection. Amendments to the range may be requested by the buying manager before it is signed off, with the aim of maximizing the commerciality and profitability of the collection. Merchandisers can then place orders with the suppliers.

**Fabric and garment approval**

Most retailers have procedures to which the buyer and supplier must adhere to ensure suitable quality standards such as approving samples of fabrics and trims and fitting garment samples on models. These tasks are carried out in collaboration with garment technologists and in some cases fabric technologists. Fashion buyers can spend much of their times communicating approvals and rejections to suppliers. Many fashion buyers are responsible for over 100 garment styles, so the progress and development of every item must be carefully documented, which is often the responsibility of the assistant buyer. Computer databases can be used to track progress
and can be made accessible to buyers and merchandisers (and sometimes suppliers) through the company’s intranet.

**Monitoring Sales Figures**

During the selling period of a garment range buyers and merchandisers have access to sales figures which they review at least once a week to identify sales patterns in the range. Buyers also visit stores to receive anecdotal feedback on sales from retail branch managers. The sales performance of a product can be assessed by volume of sales per style or financial turnover per style. Sales figures for the range can be compared to sales for the same period in the previous year, known as ‘year-on year’ or against the sales forecast for the season by the merchandise team.

**Fashion buying for mail order**

Most large mail order companies employ teams of buyers and merchandisers to develop own label ranges in the same way as fashion retail chains. Like department stores, many mail order catalogues also stock branded merchandise, so they employ buyers for either own label or branded ranges. Because mail order products are sold through photographs rather than in stores, this can influence the mail order buyer’s choice of products and the resulting sales figures. Photographic samples for mail order catalogues must be prepared well before the selling season, as publishing can take several weeks, so trends need to be predicted well in advance. Once product samples have been photographed for inclusion in the catalogue, the buyer has to ensure that products which look identical to the photograph are manufactured and delivered on time for the launch of the new season’s range.
FIGURE 2.12
FASHION MERCHANDISING

- Visual merchandisers
- Fashion buyers
- Fabric buyers
- Retail garment technologies
- Sales executive and agents from suppliers
- Finance department
- Marketing PR/department/press office
- Stock allocators or distributors
- Import/export department
- Retail branch managers
- Distribution centre staff
2.6 FASHION MERCHANDISING

The role of the fashion merchandiser is to maximize a retailer’s profitability by ensuring that the selected product range is delivered to stores in the right quantities at the right time. Co-ordination and liaison with internal department and external suppliers are required to arrange for the product to be delivered to the retailer’s warehouses and distributed to retail branches. The fashion merchandiser is usually responsible for:

1. Budget planning
2. Attending range planning and selection meetings
3. Placing orders with suppliers
4. Reviewing the progress of the selected range;
5. Liaison with suppliers regarding production planning and deliveries
6. Overseeing the allocation of stock to retail branches
7. Evaluating product sales figures and supplier performance

In some companies elements of the job described above are part of the buyer’s role or may be performed jointly by the merchandiser and buyer.

Since fashion products are frequently referred to as merchandise, various roles within fashion retailing and manufacturing use the term merchandiser, such as visual merchandisers, who are responsible for the display of products within retail outlets. Some garment suppliers also employ staff known as merchandisers and this is similar to the retail merchandiser’s role in that they also play a part in the delivery of fashion products to retailers. In the USA the term fashion merchandising is often used to encompass a broad range of activities relating to the marketing and retailing of fashion merchandise.
Budget Planning

Merchandisers plan the budgets for product areas, deciding the amount of money which will be available to buyers for a range for a particular season (known as ‘open-to-buy’). Budgets are based on a combination of historical sales figures, mainly from the previous year, and forecasts for future sales. The budget is a projection of the amount of money the retailer will spend on buying merchandise from suppliers for the season and the sales turnover this is expected to generate. This could be influenced broadly by the financial performance and expansion plans of the retailer and general fashion forecasting. Apart from specific fashion trends, product types vary in popularity over a period of time, e.g., the recent move away from the fashion for trousers and increasing popularity of skirts and dresses in women’s wear, so the amount of money committed to each product type may vary per season. In the era of ‘fast fashion’, an increased amount of many retailer’s open-to-buy is retained for selecting products shortly before or during the season, to respond more quickly to fashion trends.

2.7 TRAITS OF GARMENT MERCHANDISER

Sample Order Execution

After the receipt of the specification, pertaining to the sample order the merchandiser has to understand what are the requirements of buyers. Sometimes there may be amendments related to any of the specifications in the sample order sheet. It is the duty of the merchandiser to execute sample order and dispatch on time the “Right Quality”.

COSTING

In many companies costing is done by costing officer and CEO. In some companies it is done by the merchandisers who should know the following details

1. Yarn Cost
2. Process Cost (Knitting, bleaching, Rising, etc.)
3. Rates pertaining to various sewing operations
4. CMT Rates
5. Ironing, Packing charges + accessories rate
6. Overheads & insurance 3%
7. Shortage (or) wastage 3%
8. Free on board (7.0 B) (Transport Charges) 2% to 3%
9. Insurance 2% - 3%
10. Buyers agents commission 5% - 6%
11. Quota rate per garment
12. Profit 15% - 20%

PROGRAMMING

Most probably is done by Chief Executive Officer (or) Production Manager. In some companies it is done by the merchandisers. The following factors should be considered in programming.

Allowances

a. Fabric Structure
b. Dia Fixation (Knitting dia, calendaring dia and compacting dia)
c. Process loss (Shrinkage, etc.)
d. Size-wise piece weight
ROUTE CARD DRAFTING (OR) PRODUCTION SCHEDULING

For each and every order, route card (or) production scheduling is to be done by the merchandiser. It facilitates the merchandiser to follow up the orders in a planned manner. The following details (or) aspects should be considered in drafting (or) scheduling.

1. Design
2. No. of sewing operations
3. No. of Processes
4. Despatch date
5. No. of components
6. Type of Stitches
7. Order quantity
8. Production capacity of the in-houses (or) sub – contractors unit and processing units.
9. Prioritising

The other factors
10. Targeted dates for various processes (or) stages of merchandising
11. Actual finishing date (To cross check the deviation between the planning and actual performance of any stage (or) process).
Targeted dates for all the stages of merchandising should be decided. Actual dates on which a particular process (or) operation is actually done should also entered in production scheduling. The merchandisers are accountable for the deviation.

ACCESSORIES ARRANGEMENTS

Merchandiser has to make arrangements for the timely delivery of the required accessories to the concerned units. Accessories requisition slip may be used for requirement purpose. The merchandiser has to cross check the actual requirements after verifying the details furnished in accessories requisition form. After the receipt of accessories quality check can be done.

APPROVALS

Approval is an authentication of all required conformances related to a process (or) an operation. The merchandiser should know the quality parameters of various processes and sewing operations before approvals. There should not be non-conformities. Evidences for approval should be cross checked to confirm that all the approvals having made properly.

PATTERN APPROVALS

Patterns should be approved for

1. Measurement
2. Style and fit
3. Allowances
4. Accuracy of pattern
If there is any non-conformance in patterns that should be corrected before it is used in production. Pattern approval samples will be received from the concerned units and approved by the approval department (or) merchandisers. If there is non-conformance in any size sample revised sample for that size should be again submitted for approval.

SIZE SET APPROVALS

Size set approvals are made by the approval department (or) by the merchandisers. All the quality parameters related to various processes, sewing operations have to be cross checked. The below mentioned aspects should be considered.

1. Measurements
2. Aesthetics
3. Process Quality
4. GSM
5. Piece Shrinkage
6. Washing fastness of the piece
7. Sewing Operation quality (SPI and stitch width)
8. Print (or) embroidery position
9. Labeling instructions

Size set approval sheet will be prepared in triplicate
10. Washing fastness of garment should be verified.
11. Shrinkage in garment can also be verified.
PREPRODUCTION SAMPLES

This sample should be submitted on time to the concerned person (Buyers, buyer agents’ office, buying office). All the quality parameters have to be verified. In case of non-conformances it will be mentioned in the approval sheet by the concerned persons. Sometimes we may have to submit the revised samples after the required rectifications.

PILOT RUN INSPECTION

Pilot run denotes the first production garments’ quality parameters are verified and preventive measures can be taken. The follow-up team should do pilot run inspection to identify the various defects and it will be rectified in production.

IN PROCESS INSPECTION

In “process” means “in between any process” (or) sewing operation (or) any activities related to execution of an order. We can have procedures for frequency and adequacy. In case of major non-conformities we have to highlight the problems of quality at the right time to the right person without fail. Consistent follow-up inspection is a must to confirm that all the required quality procedures are adopted by the concerned units and preventive actions are taken to enhance the performance.

PRODUCTION CONTROLLING

Controlling of production must be right from the operatives’ level. Efforts should be taken to control the non-conformities during production. Consistent supervision is essential to control the non-conformance. Periodical quality check should be done after every hour.
SHORTAGE PROBLEM

The merchandiser has to identify the shortages of any material that is yarn, fabric, accessories etc. right at the initial stages. After identifying the shortages steps are to be taken for the arrangements of required materials on time. In case of shortages also we have to follow the quality control and quality assurance procedure without fail. Quality of the material should not be compromised.

FOLLOWING QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES

In some companies written quality procedures are available in quality manual. The merchandiser has to know all the procedures of quality control. In all processes and operations quality procedures should be followed very strictly. It has to inculcate the importance of procedures to subordinates, in-house units (or) own units, and sub contractors.

FOLLOWING QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

All the required test procedures (as required by the buyer) should be followed very strictly without partiality. Evidences for testing (test reports, tested samples, tested swatches, tested accessories) should be maintained properly. Before cutting, the merchandises have to confirm that the concerned unit has got all the required approvals properly from the authorized person.

MONITORING THE JUNIORS ACTIVITIES

The merchandiser has to monitor his subordinates. He has to teach the subordinates about the quality procedures. He has to give instruction to them before going for factory visit he has to discuss the various activities to be executed on a
particular day. The merchandiser has to control the activities of the subordinates so that the performance of the team is good.

**MONITORING THE ACTIVITIES OF SUBCONTRACTORS (OR) IN-HOUSE UNITS**

The merchandiser has to monitor the activities of in-house unit (or) subcontractor units. The garment merchandiser has to confirm that all the quality control procedures and quality assurance procedures are followed up properly by them (or) not. The garment merchandiser has to inculcate the importance of adopting quality procedures to attain the planned performance level.

**BUYER COMMUNICATION**

The merchandiser has to go through the faxes coming from buyers and he has to furnish the production status of particular orders to the concerned buyer on time.

The following are some of the duties of buyer communication,

1. Sample execution
2. Amendments
3. Comments on the send samples
4. Sample order sheet
5. Buyer visit
6. Production status
7. Sending sample, swatches and accessories regarding the approvals.

**PROPER REPORTING**

The merchandiser has to furnish (or) the best the report to the right person at the right time. The garment merchandiser has to give report for the mentioned below activities.
1. Sample execution
2. Approvals
3. Testing Procedures
4. Production Status
5. Programming
6. Shortage Details
7. Inspection details and status
8. Production status for meeting etc.
9. Report from inspection agencies, testing labs (SITRA, TEXAN, LAB, SGS, UNIQUE, Inspection Centre, etc.).

HIGHLIGHTING

The merchandiser has to highlight the major problems in merchandising at the right time without fail. Highlighting will facilitate the superior to take the necessary steps to tackle the problems on time. Proper decision is made due to timely highlighting.

RECORD MAINTENANCE

The merchandiser has to maintain quality records pertaining to various buyer orders. Proper filing should be done, who can utilize the services of subordinates in record maintenance. The following are some examples.

1. Sample details

   Sample Inspection Reports

2. Testing reports

3. Evidence of approvals
4. Proper filling (Buyer wise, order wise)
   (P.O. sheet & Amendment sheet)
5. Pattern Approval sheet / size set approval sheet (Copy)
6. Pilot run Inspection – Report
7. Fabric inspection report
8. Mid Inspection report
10. Test reports from inspection agencies and labs
11. Production status reports
12. Production status reports related to meetings
13. Pre – final inspection reports
14. Final Inspection reports etc.

DEVELOPING SAMPLES

Some buyers will give specifications (or) diagram (or) Patterns from which you may have to develop samples. Samples may be fabric with required knit structure (or) garments with required specification. The merchandiser has to consider all the quality parameters related to the samples to be developed in case of non-conformities in the sample developed. Revised samples may be sending for approval purpose. It is the duty of the merchandiser to dispatch the developed samples on time to the concerned buyers by means of consistent follow up.

PLACEMENT OF ORDERS

Priority is given to Approved sub – contractors after evaluation (when the production capacity is not sufficient) order is placed to new manufacturers. However,
orders can be placed to in-house units too. In some companies, merchandiser is accountable (or) responsible to find out the right manufacturers after proper evaluation. At the initial stages small quantity order will be placed. After verifying their performance will be placed. Yarn may be produced by the concerned unit (or) it may be provided by the supplier (the main manufacturer). In case of CMT order after the confirmation of average piece weight of a particular size, processed fabric is delivered to the concerned unit by the supplier.

TAKING MEASURES FOR CONSISTENT PRODUCTION

It is the duty of the merchandiser to monitor the merchandising activities in accordance with the production scheduling. He is accountable for the execution of each and every process (or) an operation with the targeted time. He has to take necessary steps for the consistent production by tackling the problems in merchandising for e.g.,

1. Quality of Yarn
2. Replacing good quality yarn
3. Consistent arrangement for fabric
4. Timely arrangements for the timely supply of accessories.
5. Follow up of the shortage in quantity.

PREVENTION ACTIONS

Detection of defects is not the only duty of merchandiser. He has to take preventive actions to eliminate deviations in all the stages of merchandising.
ATTENDING MEETINGS WITH SUPERIORS

Meeting may be conducted for general discussions about execution or for implementing new systems like ISO (or) it may be a status meeting. In case of production status meeting the production details about various buyers’ order will be collected by the merchandiser who is answerable to various questions raised by the superiors pertaining to the execution of the allotted orders.

CM AND CMT

In case of CMT orders the processed fabric (or) cut components are delivered to a manufacturer. The manufacturer may be accountable right from cutting to manufacturing and checking (or) right from manufacturing and checking (or) right from manufacturing to placing also. Packing materials may be delivered from the main manufacturer to units during orders on CMT basis. In CMT orders the profit margin will be less.

PRODUCTION, SCHEDULING (OR) ROUTE CARD

This card is prepared for each and every order. It can be prepared by the follow-up team while drafting route card the following aspects are to be considered.

1. Buyers Acceptance level (AQL)
2. Quantity of an order
3. Style (or) Design
4. No. of processes to be executed
5. The complexity of processes
6. No. of sewing operations
7. Type of stitches
8. Production capacity of the particular unit.


The merchandiser should prepare the production scheduling soon after the receipt of the purchase order sheet. It is better to consult the concerned persons to know the feasibility (or) possibility of executing the order as per producing scheduling. Two copies as should be prepared. One copy will be handed over to the concerned unit for their reference purpose. Another copy will be retained by the follow-up team for their reference. It has to be properly filled up along with the P.O. sheet for easy reference. It will be signed by the concerned factory representation and the merchandiser and the merchandiser (or) as a follow-up team is accountable to the management to execute a process (or) an operation within the stipulated time. They are accountable for the deviations in the execution of order.

Similarly the factory representative follows up the route card which should be taken to the units for collecting the current status about an order. All the current details some examples, Process → Position → dyed, balance to be dyed in lot (or k.g.-wise etc) should be entered in computers so that our superiors will know the current status of the order.

Sometimes buyer may require the merchandiser prior to the delivery date. In such cases it is the duty of the merchandiser to reschedule the merchandising activities. For rescheduling we have to consider the following points.

1. Total quantity finished (in process or any other operations)
2. Balance quantity to be finished
3. Capacity of particular section
4. How many pieces are to be finished daily?

5. Whether we have to increase the number of machines, workers etc.

6. Deciding the alternative arrangements

7. No. of hours required, No. of days required

8. Available time

9. Lead time

10. Supply time.

11. CSR – Critical scheduling Ration (Depending upon the available activities related to various processes and other operations to be accelerated, so that we can finish the order as per the delivery date)

Sometimes the buyer will require partial quantity of an order. The merchandiser should make arrangement for the timely dispatch of the required quantity.

SIZE SET SAMPLE VERIFICATION

SIZE SET

It refers to a set of samples submitted for size set approval purpose. In case of non-conformance revised sample (or) samples are to be submitted for approval.

1. Use the size set approval sheet

2. Read the specification in P.O. sheets and amendments if any

3. Fill up the required details properly in the approval sheet. For e.g., (Date, Order, Style / Design, colour / combination, size, Measurement, GSM, Texture, fastness ok or not ok).
4. In case of major non-conformance in measurements high lights this to superiors.

5. Aesthetics should be verified. (Aesthetic means style, texture, surface of the fabric, colour etc.)

6. Verify all the reports and confirm that approvals have been made properly.

7. In case of approvals by superiors you can verify the evidences of approval if any.

8. Verify the quality parameters of various processed like dyeing, printing, etc.,

9. Sewing performance should be verified. (SPI, Stitch, Width, Run of Stitch, stitch hole, puckering, etc.)

10. Label specification should be verified (design, logo, brand name, wash care instructions)

11. Label positioning should be mentioned in the approval sheet.

12. Embroidery and printing position should be mentioned in the approval sheet.

13. Get one damaged piece and verify GSM, shrinkage in garment and washing fastness.


15. Major non – conformities should be highlighted in the report.

16. It is prepared triplicate (i.e for office use, for merchandiser and for the follow up team).

17. Size set comments should be studied thoroughly and preventive measures are to be taken to eliminate the defects mentioned in size set comments in production.
APPROVALS

It refers to oral (or) written Authentication of all required conformances.

Types of Approvals

1. Set Up Approval

It refers to the approval of the setup of an organization (infrastructure). It also means approval of one (or) two pieces (or) sample based upon the results, a particular lot will be approved.

E.g.,

- Packing verification of each piece
- Embroidery approval
- One Embroidery swatch approval
- One sample roll approval in dyeing
- One piece approval to verify label attachment

PROCESS APPROVAL

For this kind of approval the merchandiser should know the various quality standards and regulations pertaining to the different processes to be executed in a particular order. The merchandiser should know the quality parameters level of the buyer. In case of minor non-conformities reprocessing may be necessary to correct the minor defects. Segregation is a must to identify the processed material having conformances (or) non- conformances.

PRODUCT APPROVAL

Product approval denotes verifying the product quality taking into consideration the following aspects: test reports, Aesthetics, Measurements,
Workmanship, Cleanliness, way of presentation (packing) for product approval AQL could be verified. Moreover, we have to consider the accepted level. In some buyer orders for major defects at one level, and for minor defects at another level.

**TIME MANAGEMENT IN MERCHANDISE**

T - Total

I - Involvement

M - Manpower in

E - Employment

Time is a precious resource. It has to be utilized in an effective way by means of proper planning, organizing, controlling. Merchandiser has to plan and organize his time so that it could be utilized effectively. He has to control its use. Time should be utilized properly. Effort without good result (outcome) is a waste of time.

**ABC ANALYSIS**

The merchandiser has to study and plan his work load which should be reduced by delegating some of his duties to his subordinates. He has to segment the activities into

a) Essential activities to be done personally or to be done with the help of his subordinate. These activities get top priority.

b) Activities that are the activities that are basically non-essential. Doing these activities need more justification than not doing it.

Daily goal setting will facilitate the merchandiser to utilize his time (on a day) effectively, so that the set goal will be attained.
LIST THE DAILY GOALS

Daily goals are to be set by determining what is important & urgent. What are all the activities to imparted, bestowed, top priority, and setting goals will enable a merchandiser to concentrate on the set goal and to eliminate irrelevant activities that are non-essential attainment of daily set goals.

PRIORITIZING

ABC analysis will lead to the attainment of the most important goals in a planned manner. The merchandiser time and effort could be invested effectively. Wastage of time and effort in non-essential activities is eliminated.

DO’S AND DONT’S

The merchandiser has to list out the tasks and activities to be done to attain the high priority goals. He has to start with the most important activities. He should note in his work done register (or) diary what are the do’s and don’ts on a particular day. How long he works doesn’t matter much. How effectively he spends his time and effort is vital to an effective merchandising.

DO IT NOW

Procrastination (delay) is one of the time wasters and it may become an urgent job due to the changes in circumstances. The merchandiser should have to do with the “right new” attitude.

FLEXIBILITY

Priorities have to be reviewed consistently due to the change in circumstances, priority get and so the changed. The merchandiser should revise the changes in priority and it should be duly communicated to the concerned person (or) persons’ so
that they could also be ready to handle the unexpected situation. The merchandiser has to plan to handle the unexpected changes.

**DO IT ONCE**

Avoid the temptation to stop and start each job once. Deal with task and finish it once for all.

**NOTE DOWN**

Note down the priorities, revised priorities scheduled events, rest scheduled, events deadlines etc. Noting down will enhance the memory.

**PLAN AND ACTION**

There should not be deviation between your plan and action. Identify the obstacles for proper execution. Find out solutions, and distractions should be avoided.

**CONSISTENCY**

Consistency should be followed to attain the daily set goals. Goal should be quantitative and qualitative. Till a particular activity proper allocation of time and effort is a must.

In marching towards the requirements, the merchandiser has to develop himself (by enhancing his capabilities) and improve his performance level, so that there should be a match between required awareness and existing awareness, required knowledge, and experience and existing knowledge and experience. He has to update his knowledge to be fit for consistent survival and development, spare some time for personal development.
DETERMINATION OF TARGET DATE FOR A TASK

1. Yarn Procurement
   - Quality of an order
   - Availability
   - Importability
   - Timely delivery from vendors.
   - Prioritizing
   - Financial position of sub-contractor
   - Procedural procrastination in supplying yarn to sub-contractors.
   - Delay in procurement

PRODUCTION CONTROL

Function of production control to produce the required product with minimum total cost and time for required delivery. Minimum cost includes direct labour, indirect labour, raw material, equipment, capital utility, rent, maintenance, supplies and supervisory cost. The production plan has to anticipate the itemized and total cost of producing and delivery of the product.

Production control is composed of a sequence of five activities.

1. Analysing
2. Forecasting
3. Planning
4. Deputizing
5. Supervising
Analysing is the process of determining the quality specifications of the product. Also give the basis of quantitative production capacity of each operation, job or process. Forecasting is the process of estimating the volume of sales, rate of sales and rate of delivery. Planning is the activity of organizing the sequence of communications and material processing. Scheduling is the second half of planning activity, it adds when to arrange, what and where. Deputizing consists of assigning to ‘who’ to plan, execute what, where and when. Supervising is the activity with which the production manager inspects and corrects the execution of his production plan.

**PRODUCTION ANALYSIS**

**Quality specifications**

1. Finished garment for consumer
2. A muslin fitting or other facsimile of garment
3. A sketch of the garment

**Steps for qualitative production analysis of garment are**

a) Examine the sketch, fitting or garment and determine the style line specifications with respect to fit, drape and silhouette.

b) Determine all the possible pattern break downs on the garment. Sketch the patterns in miniature with detailed contour of each pattern and state number of pieces for each pattern in garment.

c) Fabric analysis includes Yarn, construction, count, finish of fabrics to be used. Evaluate its drape work characteristics with respect to specific style specifications and production process.

d) Trimming and findings analysis determine the specifications, properties and work characteristics of the trimming and findings in the garment.
i. Sewing thread

ii. Closures

iii. Paddings

iv. Reinforcements

v. Edge finishes

vi. Decorations

e) Process (construction) analysis

i. Determine and evaluate sewing operations

ii. Stitching operations

iii. Seaming operations

1. Determine and evaluate sewing operations

   i. Cutting

   ii. Folding

   iii. Fusing

   iv. Marking

   v. Positioning

   vi. Under pressing

   vii. Turning

2. Determine and evaluate the finishing operations

   i. Cleaning

   ii. Final processing

   iii. Final inspection

   iv. Packing
Quantitative production it made to determine

1. Production machine and the utility requirements needed for the operation.
   Cutting, sewing and completion operations.

2. Work station layout
   a) Proper arrangements of material s, operator, machine and / or equipment or tools.
   b) Proper work cycle for the job of the work station

3. Transportation to the next work station
   a) Method used
   b) Equipment used

4. Flow process guide sequence of operation with respect to
   a) Spatial relationship
   b) Time relationship

5. Production control plans the production schedule. (Time Table)

Distribution of documents and records

In order to determine the proper amount and sequence of paper work and forms needed to control production, it is advisable to make a Documentary flow chart.

This documentary flow chart should show the following.

1. Where each form originates the authority
2. How many copies each form has and where each copy is distributed
3. The disposition of each copy, re posting, endorsement, filling
4. The relationship of various authorities and departments with respect to production control.
A documentary flow chart is somewhat like a graph in general structure. One axis contains the various departments in the manufacturing organization among which a communication system must also be incorporated. These are listed as best as possible in the logical sequence for the flow of activity. The other axis in the documentary flow chart is the time axis; it shows the sequence of control with respect to the progress of manufacturing. Figure include the number is an example of a documentary flow chart in which color is used to show point of origin, posting, endorsement and filing for each communication control form. The color used for posting automatically shows a record form such as an inventory of journal.

Documentary flow charts can be constructed to contain every document issued and received in the organization other documentary flow charts contain only the bare minimum needed for making a sales line, controlling the production and controlling shipments of sales. Figure is such a documentary flow chart. No style goes into production, under this documentary flow chart, until the requisite controls for it, such as time study sheets, method instruction sheets, have been checked. This type of documentary flow chart is preferable.

TYPES OF CONTROL FORMS

Sales order

It contains the following information (a) date order was taken; (b) delivery date or dates and amounts per date; (c) where and how to be delivered; (d) to whom the order is sold (e) the authority for the order and the customers purchase order number; (f) the prices and terms of order; (g) amounts ordered per style and size range; (h) amount ordered per color range; (i) packing and shipping instructions (other than those listed in (b) and (c)); (j) who took the order; and (k) serial number.
SALES TALLY SHEET

This is made out in production control department which controls and determines the total amount per style, size and color.

PURCHASE ORDER / PURCHASE REQUISITION SHEET

The purchase order of raw materials should contain the following information
(1) the date the order is given; (2) the authority for the order and the order number;
(3) the delivery date or dates and amounts per date; (4) where and how to be shipped;
also any pertinent packing instructions; (5) the firm's name; (6) the vendor's style and color name and/or numbers for the raw material (amounts of each order); (7) the prices and terms; and (8) the width, finish of fabrics and other pertinent quality specifications for the fabric, such as pick count and tension strength that are needed for this fabric.

RECEIVING MEMO

This is made out by the receiving department and lists the specification and amount of all raw materials and supplies that are received. It contains the following information; (1) date received; (2) item received specification and amount (the slippers style number or name also the firm's style number or name); (3) form one who received the carrier; (4) the shipper's name; (5) firm purchase order number for the shipment; (6) the shipper's sales order number for the shipment and (7) the signature of the one receiving it signifying the purchase order authorizing that the shipment has been checked.
CUTTING ORDER

This form is initial work order made by sales or production. Large firms may have systems where both cutting orders and cutting or spreading tickets are made out, whereas small firms may use only one form and call it a cutting order or cutting ticket. Cutting orders should carry the following information; (a) the date the order is issued and the serial number of the order, (b) style number and / or name of the garment; (c) general description of the garment, (d) listing of the types of fabrics to be cut for the garment; (e) the mill number or any of specific fabrics to be cut; (f) the colour and size distribution (and totals per size and colour); (g) the date these garments are required for shipment (or the special delivery date itself), and (h) any special remarks with reference to items such as zippers, buttons labels, tags and shoulder pads.

Cutting tickets should contain the following information; (a) the cutting order number against which the cutting ticket is made and the cutting order date (b) the cutting ticket number and its date (c) the code numbers of the markers to be used; (d) the colour and size distribution of the amount to be cut, (e) the number of bundles made for the sewing department; (f) the work or pay control ticket numbers issued against the cutting ticket; (g) the date work began on the ticket; the date the work was completed; (h) the calculated yardage to be used; (i) the actual yardage used; (j) remarks of any discrepancy between the above two yardages; (k) the names of those who worked on the lot (cutters, spreaders, etc.) and (l) the piece goods listing; inventory number of each piece and its yardage (m) the fabric width; (n) the market length; (o) table number and section.
CUTTING ORDER

Re-cut or swatch ticket This is the original in the cutting department whenever garment parts that are damaged and cannot be used have to be cut again.

SEWING DEPARTMENT PROJECTION TALLY

This would originate in the sewing department after a cutting department projection has been received. The form tells the pressing (or finishing) departments as to the exact time the pressing department will receive each style (and the amount) during the next week. This form should generally contain the following information; (a) the day, date and our each style or job order, to be sewed, will be ready for off-pressing (or finishing); (b) the amount, colors, size and bundle distribution of each style; (c) the cutting order number, cutting, ticket number, move ticket number (or job order number) of each bundle; (d) the date each bundle style, move ticket or job order is required for shipment; and (e) the date the projection is made and the time span the projection covers. A three copy distribution would usually send one copy to production control, one to the sewing department and one to the pressing department.

PRESSING (OR FINISHING) PROJECTION TALLY

This would originate in the pressing department after the sewing projection is received and would usually duplicate most of the information listed in the sewing projection. A three copy distribution of this form would include sending a copy to production control, one to pressing, one to the packing and shipping department or to the finished stock department.
PACKING AND SHIPPING PROJECTION

This would originate in the shipping department after the pressing projection is received and it would list the following information; (a) the day and date of each shipment scheduled to be made in the coming week, the customers name and the shipment destination; (b) the style color and size distribution of each shipment; (c) the sales order number against which the shipment is made; (d) the cutting order against which the shipment id made; and (e) the date the projection is made and the time span the projection covers. A three copy distribution would usually send one copy to production control, one to the sales department and one to the shipping department.

CHARGE MEMO

Shipping memo is another name given to this form. This form is the one made for each shipment when ever the shipment is made. It lists the contents of each shipment and gives the distribution of each shipping container.

INVOICE OR BILLS

This originates in the accounting department after the charge or shipping memo is received. This usually contains all the information on the shipping memo plus the price of each item and the total amount due for the shipment. A two copy distribution would send one copy to the customer and the other copy to the accounting department.

PRODUCTION CONTROL LEDGER CARDS (INVENTORY RECORD)

These forms are issued by production control to control purchasing, production and inventory activities. Two basic forms may be used to control all these activities. Production control card I may be called the planning or purchasing control
card for each style and colour. If a style is made in six colour, six cards would be used to control the planning for this style.

PRODUCTION CONTROL CARD

It is the finished garment inventory control for each style and colour.

APPAREL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

i. Whole garment production systems
   a. complete whole garment
      i. Continuous unit flow and
      ii. Intermittent multiple flow
   b. Departmental whole garment

ii. Section production systems
   a. Sub-assembly line systems (synchronized)
      i. Unit flow – continuous production
         1. Operation bundle
         2. Job sectionalization
      ii. Multiple flow – Intermittent production
         1. Operation bundle
         2. Job bundle
   b. Progressive bundle system (Unsynchronized)
      i. Garment bundle (continuous)
      ii. Job bundle (intermittent)

In the complete whole garment system on individual makes the entire garment from the cutting of the cloth to the final operation. The departmental whole-garment
system is used by custom wholesale manufacturers as well as “high price” or “better” dress or men’s suit manufacturers. In the departmental whole garment system one individual does all the work necessary to be done with the equipment.

**SUB – ASSEMBLY SYSTEMS**

In this system two or more operations are made on the same garment at the same time. Instead of only one assembly line as is present in the straight lines (or work stations) merge at this point (or points) to form another assembly line (or lines) until the final workstation is reached. Unit flow, each garment part or assembled section moves to the next workstation as soon as the worker finished the job or operation. Unit flow systems, operation or job sectionalization, are often referred to as “synchronized” production systems.

In operation section system, each worker performs only one operation; in the job section system the worker performs two or more operations sequentially, continuously. In the multiple flow system two or more of the same work units (parts being processed move to the next workstation at the same time in a group or bundle. This bundle (it may be tied or untied) may in turn be classified into two categories; operation bundle and job bundle. An operation bundle contains only the piece or pieces with which only one operation will be performed at one time. A job bundle contains the piece or piece on which two or more consecutive operations may be performed.
PROGRESSIVE BUNDLE SYSTEM

The “process layout” is a plant layout in which the production equipment is grouped. If a plant uses five different kinds of sewing machines such as (1) single needle lockstitch (federal specification number 301) (2) two needle lockstitch – 2 needle number 301; (3) two needle number 401 stitch; (4) single needle number 304 stitch and (5) three thread overlock machines (504 and 505 stitch type). These machines would be arranged so that all like machines would be located adjacent to each other in separate areas of the sewing department. In a true progressive bundle system, the parts of the garments are bundled in one of two ways.

GARMENT BUNDLE

This bundle contains all the parts of a single garment. In a conveyor system a conveyor carries all the parts of the garment from workstation to work station in a tray. The operator takes the part or parts needed for her operation and returns them to the conveyor after she completes her operation or operations.

JOB BUNDLE

All the parts of the garment do not move together in sequence from the first work station to the last. The bundle contains the part of parts for the operations that are to be done on one or more workstations. At certain workstations in the line other parts necessary for the garments are stored and waiting for the part of the completed garment that will come to this workstation from previous workstation.

PRODUCTION CONTROL REPORTS

There are two types of daily reports which should be used to determine whether line supervisors have been controlling production correctly, i.e., getting
prescribed productivity per operation and maintaining the pre-calculated minimum
inventory-in-process between levels. These two reports are

1. Daily operation productivity report (DOPR)
2. Daily inventory – in – process report (DIIPR)

This report has columns for the following items

a. All operations used to make the garments
b. Unit time of each operation
c. Total amount produced per operation that day
d. 100% operator hours needed for the required daily amount.
e. Operator clock hours that should have been used for the amount produced that
day.
f. 100% standard hours that should have been used for the amount produced that
day.
g. Efficiency attained per operation, that day.
h. Symbols for comments per operation re lack of prescribed productivity.

The daily inventory – in-process report illustrated. This report has columns for
the following items.

a. Cutting ticket number and / or Bundle control sheet number
b. Cutting ticket date and / or bundle control sheet date
c. Styles.
d. Amount of garments on the bundle control sheet (or cutting ticket)
e. Amount of bundles in the lot.
f. Date the lot entered the production line
g. Lowest level containing bundles of the lot.
PRODUCTION LINE FORMAT RE PLANT SIZE

There are two types of formats for balanced production lines. Each type has the same hourly (or daily) production per operation in its line. The two types are

1. **Complete production line** The line contains enough machines (workstations) to make all the operations listed on the FPG (s) simultaneously, with prescribed hourly productive and minimal inventory – in – process.

2. **Partial production line** The line contains only enough machines to make some of the operations on the FPG simultaneously with prescribed hourly productivity and inventory in process.

2.8 QUALITY CONTROL

Quality control is an essential part of production and is needed at every stage of manufacture. Parts must be correctly made or they will not fit properly. The finished products should be free from defect. Poor quality control leads to slow and expensive production. It also loses customers and sometimes results in expensive recalls.

IMPORTANCE OF QUALITY CONTROL:

The importance of quality control can be highlighted as follows:

1. It increases the profit earning capacity of the business.
2. It enables the industry to complete successfully.
3. It reduces cost of production
4. It reduces operation losses by keeping scrap and wastes to a minimum.
5. It improves the product design.
6. It reduces the product line bottlenecks.
7. It improves employee’s morale.
8. It enhances customer satisfaction.
9. It increases the reputation of the industry.

**THE ROLE OF QUALITY CONTROL:**

1. In a total quality control scheme, the total involvement of all personnel is required as a philosophy.
2. The staff concerned in all duties must be given authority to carry out their functions. These functions should be defined.
3. Lines of communication and responsibility should be established to carry out an effective policy. Horizontal communication at all levels of personnel between Quality Control, Production and other departments is needed. Also there must be vertical lines, which follow the lines of responsibility and authority. In order to achieve this aim, the terms of reference under which staff work, must be established. This is, perhaps, best accomplished by job descriptions.
4. It is the job of Quality Control to establish the correct information concerning a quality situation, and present this clearly to their colleagues.
5. Persons outside Quality Control must be authorized to make the commercial decisions involved from a pre-established series of options, the consequences of each being fully understood.
6. Payment schemes should be re-examined where necessary to reward quality as well as production, in a balanced way, since both are commercially important.
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUALITY CONTROL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Control:

This concept was set in some where during 1950s and unfortunately we are still believing and continuing with this primitive stage of quality development. In the quality control, the emphasis is always on the product, assessment there by deciding the acceptance or rejection of the products without giving necessary feed back to concerned departments to initiate the corrective action. This results only in segregation of the good pieces and bad pieces from the entire lot.

Quality Assurance:

On the other hand there is an entire shift from product assessment to the assessment of process and methods, which includes the interdepartmental co-operation and the emphasis is on controlling the process rather than the product. This development in the quality management asks for the quality not only in the manufacturing but also in the allied functions like purchasing, marketing, training, handling documents and very importantly the communication within the organization.

Aims of Quality Control as the Instrument of Quality Assurance or Total Quality Control

The main aim of Quality control is to ensure that the requisite quality of product should be achieved. This ensures customer satisfaction.

The quality of the product is being achieved at every stage of manufacture from raw materials to boxed stock.
For goods quality the following is required

a) Checking the suitability of raw materials,
b) Checking the manufacturing capability of the production undertaking
c) Monitoring production; Feeding back information; responding to that information; and so getting defects removed at source,
d) Reduction of the fault rate
e) Saving costs
f) Maintenance of product consistency.

All of these factors increase the possibility of developing further business and the competitiveness of the company, and is therefore to the benefit of the company; Quality Control thus becomes a positive-benefit.

QUALITY CONTROL ASPECTS IN GARMENT MANUFACTURING

The complexities in garment manufacturing need due care and caution towards quality aspects at each level of production with appropriate methods and techniques.

In general, a garment consists of following components:-

1. Fabric, Lining, Interlining, Facings, 
2. Sewing threads,
4. Non-functional accessories viz., Decorative, Motifs etc.
5. Other specific items peculiar to a garment.

The quality of all above items have to be checked thoroughly as per standard needed in finished garments, to meet after-use and handling requirements.

The quality parameters of fabrics and accessories are given below.
➢ Fabric

Fabric Construction: Fibre contents, Blending or mixture, yarn quality – (tension, bending, compression, roughness and friction, tensile strength, shearing, shrinkages, constructions), Counts of warp and weft, ends and picks, weight per unit area, colour, designs, textures, feel, drape, Total Hand Value (THV), Other requirements as per sample and stipulations of buyers. Fabric must also withstand the steaming conditions, shape formation, appearance, meet sequence of production and appropriate fabric selection with tailoring controls.

Fabric width and lengths: The choice of different widths and lengths must be available in wider range to suit upend type of product pattern, making least wastages, most economic, and convenient to handle. Variation in width along fabric length must be restricted to minimum and within tolerance limits. End pieces (Short lengths, seconds, Fents, Rags, Chindies) are to be utilized economically.

Colour fastness, shades, strength: The fastness to acids, alkalies, bleaching with peroxides, gas fumes, crocking and dry cleaning, light, perspiration, washing, dischargeability etc. have been prescribed on grading scales. These can be tested in laboratories to ensure proper quality of finished product and meet international standards.

Fabric must have proper and uniform appearance, proper standard of breaking strength, yarn slippage, tear strength, dimensional stability during pressing, laundering and need be checked prior to commence production.

Shade sorting and Colour Matching: Colour is most important aspect of garment industry. Good colour matching is a must in each and every garment. Small
lot dyeing without moded machines, processes often cause lot of variation even in small width. In dark shades, these are very common and often noticed only after full garment is made. Utmost caution is therefore essential to minimize defects. Engineering and asymmetric designs needed special care for matching of designs in made up garment.

**Shrinkage:** It is caused by relaxation of excessive and uneven tension in warp and weft causing change in dimensional stability. Sanforization finish ensures negligible shrinkages. It will be appropriate to produce pre-shrunk fabric or else, preshrunk the same prior to production process which involve costs and delays.

**Fabric defects:** Common defects are warp and weft cracks and bars use of faulty yarn, floats, noticeable slubs, missing threads, broken patterns, oil stains, printing and dyeing defects and serious flaws. The mark appearance, serviceability and durability of garments. Fabric as far as possible must be free of these defects to ensure proper standard of quality.

➢ **Facing, Lining, Interfacing and Interlinings, Shoulder Pads**

Facing is a piece of fabric used for finishing garment edge. They are frequently used on necklines, armholes, front and back opening, occasionally at waistlines or lower edge of the sleeves. Choice may be made for fabrics having silky in touch, soft, smooth, matching with shell fabric. Binding can also be used as alternate to facing, in contrasting fabric as design features or in reversible garments. They must be cut bias to make it flexible.
Lining enhance finished appearance of garments, are functional in hiding seams and raw edges on the inside. It may be necessarily used in jackets and coats. It can be sewn as free hanging or joined by machine according to design plan. Interfacing and interlining is extra layer of fabric that provides shape and support on a detailed area of a garment. A good quality can be used in Collars, Cuffs, lapels, necklines, pockets, waist bands and opening edges. Choice may be made among sew-in type, fusible or special type for specific use on seamlines and folds. Shoulder pads enhance fashion look, improve fit, choice may be made among traditional style for set in sleeves, extended shoulder styles and removable pads.

The appropriate choice may be made in above materials keeping in view exact needs of quality, enforce shape, enhanced aesthetic value, get up of shell fabric and finished garment, posses good quality factors, within parameters or shrinkages and relaxations matching with shell fabric, withstand wear tear, add warmth of thicker lining, flexible. Posses sufficient stretchability, shaping, durable, sewability and economic in cost vis-à-vis cost of shell fabric.

➤ **Waist bands, Casings, Belts, Carriers, Fastenings:-**

Waist bands and casings must be evenly shaped; elastics must be evenly distributed within casings so as to ensure uniform distribution of draped fabric according to design plan.

Belts can be made from body fabric or otherwise with even width and stitching. They may be cut lengthwise to ensure dimensional stability and rigidity.

Belt carriers (loops) must be evenly distributed along waist line to accommodate belt stay in place. The size, shape, colour and make of buckles must
match with belts. Make may be either prong buckle or clasp buckle. Buttonholes must be formed according to exact need of fastening, button placements, fabric thickness and designs, functional and decorative plan of garment. Buttons must be of even shape and sizes, clear sewability on machines, uniform thickness, colours, shades, to withstand laundering, suitable for use on automatic machines, economical and match with fabric and garments. Buttons may be functional, decorative, positioned at balanced points of design plan, and must be secured by trying and knotting of threads ends.

Hooks and eyes can be used along or in combination with zips by stitching inside layers of fabric only and must not be visible on right side of garment. Thread's loop and frogs can also be used in place of metal eyes matching with garment colour, to make it inconspicuous as possible. Press studs may be used only on edges of overlap which are not under strain.

Zippers are available in wide range of sizes, colours, metallic and non-metallic, costlier and cheaper. Ensure uniform and proper quality standard, right size, weight, flexible, matching with shell fabric, and finishes top and bottom fastened securely, washability, withstand dry-cleaning, and durable. Care must be taken not to iron on synthetic teeth. Choice may be made according to use as at centre back, front of garment, as lapped zip, open ended or separating zip, fly front zip, exposed zip (in T-Shirt), concealed zips on open edges prior to seam being stitched according to design plan.
➤ Size and Instruction Labels:-

These are available in different sizes, woven or printed. They must provide brief basic and reliable details of product, properly guide for handle, care, washing instructions for excellent end use results. Use of “eco-friendly labels” has been made obligatory by western countries like USA and Germany.

➤ Care Labeling

Always use the recommended care label advice to achieve the best

- **Cotton Wash** (No Bar)
  - Articles that will withstand normal (Maximum) washing conditions at quoted tub temperature.

- **Synthetics**
  - Synthetic articles, easy care cottons and blends that will withstand reduced (Medium) washing conditions at quoted tub temperature.

- **Wool wash** (Broken bar)
  - Machine-washable wool and wool blends that require much reduced (minimum) washing conditions.

- **Hand-wash only**
  - Do not machine-wash

- **Mixed wash loads**

  As a general guide, you can combine oil items without the bar and wash at the lowest quoted temperature. Likewise, items with the same bar symbol can be combined and washed at the lowest quoted temperature. You can mix wash labels with and without a bar provided you wash at the lowest temperature and also reduce the washing action. Always follow any special instruction shown on labels,
particularly 'wash separately', which means what it says. Heavily soiled goods should be washed according to the care label, and not included in mixed loads.

- **Other International Care Labeling Symbols**
  
  ![Triangle] \( \text{CI} \)  
  Bleaching Chlorine bleach may be used

  ![Circle]  
  Tumble-drying May be tumble-dried

  ![Two Circles]  
  Tumble-dry high setting

  ![One Circle]  
  Tumble-dry low setting

- **Pressing**
  
  ![Three Dots]  
  Hot Iron

  ![Two Dots]  
  Warm Iron

  ![One Dot]  
  Cool Iron

  ![Dry-Cleaning Symbol]  
  Dry-Cleaning May be done

  A cross through any symbol means 'DO NOT'

- **Sewing Threads**

  They should possess good quality, sufficiently strong, elastic, withstand seam strength, match with fabric extensions, shrinkages, give best look of garments and
satisfy buyer's specifications. Quality can be ensured by specifying proper yarn count, ply, twist, twist balance, tenacity, elongation, stretchability, tensile strength, shrinkages in water, thermal shrinkages, abrasion resistance, flexural rigidity, sewability, imperfection, colour, package density and winding pattern etc.

➤ Laces

It is a derivation of net formed by looping, knotting, branding, twisting, stitching, threads, decorative, open worn patterns, by hand and machines. Some common types are Bobbin lace, Crochet, Diamond, Darned, Needle Point, Macronic, and Tatting Laces. These can be used according to design needs as designs, beading, edging, insertions. The quality is determined by type of yarn, made by hand or machine, intricacy of designs, fineness, type of finish, must withstand laundering, rubbing, squeezing, and ironing. They must be finished with pollution free finishes, admissible dyes and chemicals to improve marketability.

➤ Size Specification

Size specifications of people vary from continent to continent, even within a country. These are different for Ladies, Gents and Children. Africans are generally tall and Asians are short. A lot of studies made by various organizations on the average sizes and measurements, can be made use of which may ensure fair degree of accuracy while producing garments for particular zone of population in order to satisfy major part of customers.

➤ Stitching and Workmanship

Production system must be standardized, propely skilled and qualified work force need be involved to upgrade quality and thus reduce rejections. Quality can be
enhanced by adopting best choice of production layout charts suiting particular garment, fabric, processes and technology. The continuous monitoring and feed back system will ensure high quality standards. The following factors are important for checking. "Type of stitch lock or chain, stitch per unit length, type of seam, upper and lower thread tensions, avoiding seam puckering, tolerance limits (say 2.5% to 5% depending upon locations, accuracy, buyer's demand) of fitting needs, critical parts, matching balance marks in joining fabrics, meet vertical and lateral balances of fall in garments, proper shape and get-up of complete garment."

The shirring, gathering, smocking, pleats, darts etc. must follow the design plan strictly according to approved sample. Hemming must be finished neatly after removing extra cloth in between, sewn by hand or machine in either of types-narrow top stitch, wide top stitch, machine rolled, fused depending upon fabric and finishing plan. At corner joining, extra fullness created inside edge can be tidily disposed by forming a meter either a folded type or stitched type used. Trimming can be metered at corner with due care of matching design and make decorative as well. A special care is required to evenly distribute extra fabric at sleeve crown while joining with armhole fabric. The other critical parts for due care are- pocket fixing, plackets, cuffs, Seat seam, belts, pockets, etc.

INSPECTION ROUTINES

> Pilot Run Inspection:

“Pilot run” denotes the “first production garments quality parameters are verified and preventive measures can be taken”. The follow up team should do “pilot run” inspection to identify the various defects and it will be rectified in production.
> **In Process Inspection:**

In process means in between any process (or) sewing operation (or) any activities related to execution to an order. We can have procedures for frequency and adequacy. In case of major non-conformities we have to highlight the problems of quality at the right time to the right person without fail. Consistent follow-up inspection is a must to confirm that all the required quality procedures are adopted by the concerned units and preventive actions are taken to enhance the performance.

"In process inspection" in Garment Industry are classified as:

- **Raw Material Inspection:** Raw Material Inspection is done in two stages
  
  1. Yarn stage
  
  2. Fabric stage

- **In process inspection:** In process inspection is done in the following stages.
  
  1. Spreading stage
  
  2. Cutting stage
  
  3. Sewing stage
  
  4. Pressing and Finishing stage

> **Final Inspection / Final Audit:**

Inspectors look for any discrepancies in the final inspection when the production of the total quantity of an order or partial delivery is completed. They check on the shipment packing, the merchandise package and the merchandise. They also check the information printed on the cartons, including the shipping mark, the order confirmation number, the style number, that the merchandise inside the carton corresponds to the specified confirmation order, the required type of garment package, the design of the package, and the information printed on the bag, including
sizes, colour, lettering and brand logo. The type of garment is also checked, including styles, colour, sizes and all related hang tags, waist tags and pocket tags.

In some cases, where 80 per cent of the sample lot is not ready, inspectors arrange another date with the manufacturer to conduct the final inspection again and proceed to the next inspection. When the lot is ready for inspection, inspectors randomly choose the carton number for inspection in front of the finished lot and sign in the carton to ensure random sampling. In cases where the level of acceptance is marginal, the inspector needs to take a second sample for inspection. If the results of the two inspections are acceptable, then the merchandise can be passed. However, the maximum number of samples would only be two.

The inspector should pick one piece from the bulk production as the shipment sample after the final inspection has been finished and the concerned merchandiser must review it. If the inspector is not satisfied with the merchandise in either aspect during the final inspection, the shipment must be withheld and the management staff of the manufacturer notified immediately for necessary rectification. Meanwhile, the inspector must notify the merchandiser and the quality control manager for further action. The shipment will not be released unless the merchandiser and the quality control manager are satisfied with the rectification made by the manufacturer.

2.9 SUMMARY

The garment merchandiser tries to integrate and co-ordinates all the elements right from looking into fashion trends, coordinating fashion elements and buying, sourcing the essential garments for producing apparels to international standards, cohering quality parameters and different activities of lining in due course of production becomes the essential work life of a garment merchandiser.
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