Introduction
interest to have a high awareness of the products when she buys. The company should not hide any details about the product. Higher awareness can lead to saving money and improving the quality of the goods purchased, or in economic terms, increasing the chances of being on a better indifference curve and let the consumer influence the world as quoted

*Obviously we’re a consumer nation and you have the power to influence these big corporations who are running the world right now through what you chose to, or not to, purchase*

*Daryl Hannah*

Women as consumers are powerful catalyst as individuals and in groups in creating a healthier attitude for themselves, their families, their communities and nations. Women are ‘double consumers’-they make decisions not just for themselves but for their families as well. A women’s experience as a consumer is the basis for her further involvement in consumerism. Women play a key role as consumers. They need to be concerned with the quality of goods, rising prices, purchase, short measures and services.

Clothing along with food and shelter has been recognized as one of the basic necessities of every individual and it fulfils many of his physical, social, psychological, emotional, aesthetic and economical needs. Clothing refers to any tangible or material object connected to the human body says Usha and Radha (2007). Everyone has to wear clothes. Clothes are an important part of our lives (Frings, 2005). Good grooming with appropriate clothing not only enhances natural beauty but also compensates for its lack. One feels happy,
cheerful and confident when she is properly dressed up. Clothing becomes a means of expressing personality.

Vanishree and Shailaja (2000) are having opinion that clothing meets basic necessity of human needs and frequently is more important as a means of acceptance in the society than mere means of physical protection (http://alkindsofclothing.com). Clothing plays a significant role in an individual life, giving lot of personal satisfaction. "Sound mind in a sound body" John Locks stressed this principle and pointed out that in order to obtain sound body clothing should be the first consideration. Gupta (1999) states that at every stage of human development, clothing helps to establish identity of the individual to himself and to others with whom he interacts. The declaration that clothes say something about their wearer is perhaps undisputable. Moreover, judgments of personality and even intelligence are often made about an individual on the basis of their clothing alone feel Bansal (2008).

Changing life styles, technological development in textiles and international trade have brought about changes in the clothing preferences of the present day consumers. Consumers with the same needs may want different clothes depending upon their cultural background, age, socio-economic status and personality (Sumathi, 2005). The consumer tends to prefer clothing that is aesthetically attractive, socially acceptable, physically comfortable, psychologically gratifying, economically obtainable and at the same time easily maintained. Factors that could influence consumers clothing preferences are breathability, flexibility, lightweight, greater comfort and easy maintenance. Climatic conditions, geographical differences, activities, interests and opinions influence clothing practices and preferences. The main source of clothing is by outright purchase includes readymade apparels, materials for home,
dressmaking and professional tailoring services. Apparel and home textiles are utilized by consumer in everyday life.

Each day we make decisions about textiles. From the simplest choice of what clothes to wear to the commitment of a major portion of the family budget to buy a new garment, judgments about the performance, durability and attractiveness of textiles are consciously or unconsciously made. The key to decision making is knowledge about fibers, yarns, fabrics and finishes and then their inter relationships.

Collier and Tortora (2001) strongly expresses that textiles fulfill many purposes in our lives that their study can be approached in a number of ways. On awakening in the morning, we climb out from under sheets and blankets, we wash, bathe and dry ourselves with towels and put on clothing for the day. Even the bristles of our tooth brushes are made from textile fibers. We stand on carpets, sit on upholstered furniture, and look out of curtained windows. If we get into a car or bus, we sit on upholstered seats and the machine moves on tires reinforced with strong textile cords.

Now our roads, bridges and buildings are reinforced with textile fibers. Strong, heat resistant fibers in the nose cones of space ships travel to distant planets. Physicians implant artificial arteries made of fibers for surgery that gradually dissolve as wounds heal. Few of our manufactured products could be made without textile fibers. Even our processed foods have been filtered through textile filter. There is truly no aspect of modern life that is untouched by some area of textiles.

Proper care of clothing keeps it in good condition and increases its life. One of the most important problems in maintaining a satisfactory appearance in
clothing is the removal of soil that accumulates during wear and storage. Soiling of clothes may be in the form of deposited dirt or absorbed impurities because of perspiration. Unless these soils are removed the clothes develop a bad odor, which is not conducive to good health. Dirt is not only a menace to health but also affects the appearance of the garment, the comfort of a wearer and the quality of the garment. Since clothes come into close contact with the body, cleanliness of clothing is an essential prerequisite for health and elegance. Clothing care includes activities like washing, drying, pressing and storage.

The main propose of washing is to remove soil or dirt from the fabric. All garments must be cleaned frequently as over soiling leads to fiber disintegration. Factors influencing the performance of fiber and its quality are water, soaps, detergent, and mode of washing, stiffening, blueing, drying and ironing. Some attention to the way in which clothing is stored may help to prolong the life of textile products. A garment when given intelligent care will last longer, perform better and look better than one that is neglected.

Good clothing practice includes the knowledge of wise selection of clothing, possession of an adequate wardrobe suited to various activities which in turn helps proper dressing habit. All these aspects being to the fore front need to educate the consumer on several aspects related to apparel and home textiles.

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, consumer education is the preparation of an individual, thorough skills, concepts and understanding that are required for everyday living to achieve maximum satisfaction and utilization of existing resources. As given in “the State of the Indian Consumer (2001)” the right to consumer education means the right to acquire the knowledge and skills,
to be an informed consumer throughout one's life for taking actions which influence one's decisions.

Consumer education should enable the buyer to purchase those goods which maximize his satisfaction with minimum cost. *Justin Herald* says 'think right.' Therefore, consumer education should deal with quality, quantity, functions, cost-benefit, comparable elements, standardization, consumer guidance and protection so that the consumer can think right while purchasing.

In the opinion of Kardes (2002) consumer behaviour is the study of human responses to products, services and the marketing. Consumer heterogeneity is perhaps the most important reason for differences in consumer preference (Ramaswamy and Namakumari, 2005). They differ in their activities, interests, opinions and the products they buy. Some people are highly concerned about the appearance of a product, whereas others look for functionality.

Gupta *et al* (2005) reveal a consumer's purchase decisions are also influenced by personal characteristics namely the buyer's age and stage of life cycle, occupation, economic circumstances, life style, personality and self concept. As consumers, our behaviour often is affected by those with whom we closely associate. We may respond to perceived pressure to conform to the norms and expectations provided by others. Also, we value those around us for their counsel on buying choices. Consumer behaviour also gets affected by the concept of perceived risk. Any action on the part of the consumer or consumer behaviour and purchase will compete with the numerous alternative uses of the same financial resources. Despite, our differences the most important constant
among all of us is "we all are consumers" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2003). We use
or consume on a regular basis food, clothing, shelter, services and even ideas.

Ghosh (2007) declares communication as the sharing of meaning to
establish "commonness" of ideas with someone. With the communication
revolution, consumer education programmes can easily reach millions of people
in the rural and urban areas. Rao et al (2002) consider multimedia best suited to
the human beings complex perception and communicating behaviour, as well as
the way of acting. Communication media acts as a bridge between textile and
garment industry and ultimate consumers opines Sarkar and Animesh (2007).
It's applications in textiles, dyeing, printing, surface embellishments, tailoring,
fashion industry, knitting industry, home textiles are emerging at a fast pace.

Need for the study

Textiles and clothing offers a vast array of goods which are different in
kind and quality. This is an area for which a consumer is constantly exposed to
make a selection. As wide ranges of fabrics are available in the market and
hundreds of new products are added everyday, a consumer is totally confused in
making the right selection for the end use. Even literate consumers are facing
similar problem. They also face problems in identification of fibers, care of
apparel and home textiles. Hence education in this field is imperative. Moreover,
it is a topic of prime importance especially in developing countries like India.
Hence in the field of apparel and home textiles, there is a need for developing
educational material for consumer.

Scope of the study

The scope of the study was envisaged in the following terms to
• create awareness among women consumer on the art of becoming a skilled buyer

• protect consumers' through improved method of purchasing behaviour

• make the women consumers understand identification techniques of textile fibers and care of fabrics

• bring forth appropriate methods to teach various concepts on consumer issues with reference to apparel and home textiles.

In the present scenario, it is appropriate to develop an instructional package to educate the consumer in this field with components of a specific unit of programmed instruction, instructional materials, learning aids, instructor guide, pretests and post tests, validation data and objectives. Electronic media creates sustainable interest in the consumer and brings about right response. Modules developed on identification of textile fibers, fabrics, care of clothing, label information, quality assessment of apparel and home textiles are of greater help to the consumer. Hence, the present study “CREATING AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN CONSUMERS ON APPAREL AND HOME TEXTILES THROUGH INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE” is taken up with the following objectives.

Consumers are looking out to get the best product amongst a basket of choices that lies before them.
To support them in this aspect objectives of the present study are framed to

- study the awareness of women consumers with regard to textiles and apparel
- identify the need based areas that require consumer education
- develop instructional package for consumer education
- evaluate the impact of teaching before and after education on purchasing skills and
- evolve informative handbooks for consumer education.