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# UNIT 1 UNDERSTANDING AND SOURCING OF FABRICS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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This is the first of the four units of Block 1 on understanding fashion industry in Course 3: Introduction to fashion industry. This unit provides an overview of the fabrics and their role in fashion design along with an understanding of the factors relevant to their sourcing. This Unit starts with an introduction to the methods of fabric construction followed by a brief overview of concepts related to understanding fabrics. It then deals with the steps involved in fabric sourcing in the context of the important role it plays in the fashion design industry. It also covers the commonly used fabric specifications that are necessary for communicating clearly and correctly with the fabric suppliers. Understanding this unit fully requires knowledge of fibres and yarns that go into the making of fabrics. Read the Unit on the ‘Concepts and Principles of Textile Fibres’ before studying this Unit.

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## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this Unit, you would be able to :

- Understand the purpose of fabric sourcing in the fashion design industry.
- distinguish various kinds of fabrics based on different yarns structures and processes of manufacture
- list the various steps in the fabric sourcing process
- define the commonly used terms in preparing fabric specifications;

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## 1.2 IMPORTANCE OF FABRIC SOURCING

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Fabric is an essential raw material for the fashion industry. The textile industry has been continuously adding to the list of fabric options available to the fashion

industry. The fabrics sector has benefited from both significant technology developments particularly and the area of man-made fibres and the revival of consumer interest in traditional fibres and ethnic clothing. Growing focus on Sustainable and eco friendly process and fabrics has further widened the fabrics options of the fashion industry. The fashion industry is always in search of the most appropriate fabrics for the design and construction of new and newer fashion garments. Historically, new and innovative fabrics have also served as the trigger for new fashion trends.

Anyone interested in the fashion industry would need an adequate understanding of the different kinds of fabrics and their properties. Since fabrics have a significant role to play in design of garments and also in their production and costing, there is a need to apply this knowledge of fabrics strategically for achieving commercial success in the fashion design industry. This Unit has a separate section on fabric sourcing steps and strategies that need to be borne in mind for making fabric sourcing an integral part of business success. Since fashion businesses source fabrics not only from textile mills and processors but also from jobbers and wholesalers, this unit also deals with the factors that determine from whom to buy. It also explains the common commercial practices involved in placing orders for fabrics.

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## 1.3 INTRODUCTION TO FABRICS

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### 1.3.1 Fabrics

Fabrics are the building blocks of fashion design. Not every type of fabric is suitable for every type of dress. Fabrics have evolved over time to meet both the functional and design requirements of different type of garments. The functional requirements include factors like suitability to different climatic conditions seasons or the tensile strength of the fabrics needed to cope with the physical movements of the body or breathability necessary for maintaining body comfort.

Prior to 20<sup>th</sup> century, fabrics were made only from natural fibres such as flax, wool, cotton and silk. However, a variety of man-made fibres were invented and commercialised starting with the introduction of rayon in 1910. Synthetic based fabrics brought with them newer properties like increased strength; greater resilience; wrinkle, shrink, abrasion and perspiration resistance, etc. The fashion industry was quick to adopt these fabrics.

#### Methods of Fabric Construction

Fabrics can be constructed either by weaving knitting or bonding/felting. The construction method used in the making of the fabric determines the properties, appearance and end use of the fabric.

#### Weaving

Weaving is the process of creating continuous intersection of two sets of straight yarns by letting them cross and interlace each other at right angles. The lengthwise yarns are known as warp yarns and width-wise yarns are known as weft or filling yarns and the fabric produced is known as woven fabric. Weaving is done on a *loom*, a device that holds the warp threads in place while filling threads are woven through them.

Warp and weft threads interlace in different ways to produce different types of weaves. The majority of woven fabrics are created with the help of three different basic weaves namely plain, twill or satin weave. Woven cloth can be plain in a single colour or pattern; or can have decorative or artistic designs using multiple yarns of different colours.

- 1) **Plain Weave:** Also called even-weave or tabby weave, this fabric is made by passing one weft yarn over one warp yarn and then under the next yarn through the full width of the beam of warp yarns, with each row alternating. Chiffon, Buckram, Organdy, Crepe, Cambric, Poplin, Flannel, Taffeta, etc. are some of the fabrics made with plain weave.
- 2) **Twill Weave:** In this case, the yarns pass above and below each other along the length or breadth of the fabric in different patterns that create diagonal lines across the surface of the fabric. In the warp-faced twill, each warp yarn is made to jump over the weft one after another creating the effect of a diagonal line over the surface of the fabric. In the case of weft-faced twill weave, the weft yarn jumps over a block of warp yarns. Denim, Gabardine, Jean, Glen Check, Foulard, Whipcord etc. are made using the twill weave method.
- 3) **Satin Weave:** The satin weave is distinguished by its lustrous appearance. The satin weave is characterised by four or more weft yarns floating over a warp yarn or vice versa, four warp yarns floating over a single weft yarn. This explains the even sheen since there is no scattered reflection of light.

The simple plain loom can accommodate 8 to 10 harnesses for basic weaves. Special looms or special attachments to a simple loom are necessary for creating fancy weaves.

- **Dobby weaves:** It requires a special loom attachment and produces small, geometric, textured, frequently repeated woven-in designs, such as seen in bird's-eye pique.
- **Pile weave:** Pileweave is one of the fancy weaves and produces fabrics with raised, dense surfaces. They can be made by weaving extra warp yarns over wires, producing loops that are cut as the wires are withdrawn; by adjusting loom tension to produce loops that are frequently left uncut; by using extra filling yarns to produce floats that are cut after weaving; or by weaving two cloths face to face, binding them together with an extra set of warps that form the pile when the fabrics are cut apart. Velvet, plush, terry cloth, and synthetic furs are examples of pile weaves.
- **Jacquard weave:** It requires a special loom and is characterised by complex woven-in designs, often with large design repeats or tapestry effects. Fabrics made by this method include brocade, damask, and brocatelle.
- **Leno weaves:** It also requires a special attachment and creates lightweight, open and lace-like appearance. These are made by twisting adjacent warp yarns around each other, then passing the filling yarn through the twisted warps. Marquissette, tulle and mosquito netting are produced by this method.

## **Knitting**

Knitting is another important method of making fabrics - by looping a yarn and make it pass through the loop for creating a continuous chain of loops. The loops are also called 'stitches' and the horizontal chain of loops is also known as a 'row' or a 'course' while the vertical columns of loops are called 'wale'. The fabric is formed by the intermeshing consecutive rows of loops, which are joined together by pulling the loops of a new row through the loops of the already existing row. A new loop may be pulled through one or more loops of the last row.

Knitting is broadly classified into the following two categories:

- 1) Weft-faced Knitting or simply Weft Knitting
- 2) Warp-faced Knitting or simply Warp Knitting

### **Weft Knitting**

It is a type of knitting in which yarns run horizontally from side to side across the width of the fabric. Hand knitting is a weft knitting procedure. All stitches in a course are formed by one yarn. Weft knits are made as either flat or open width fabrics (like woven fabrics) on Flat bed knitting machines, or as tubular fabrics (like seamless vests or socks) on circular knitting machines. Plain Knit, Purl, Rib are some of the basic types of weft knits.

### **Warp Knitting**

In warp knitting, loops are made vertically along the length of the warp yarn. Each warp yarn is looped by a separate needle. The loops move in a zigzag way like a rock climber using the hands one at a time to cling on to the protruding structures on the right and left. Each warp yarn loop is pulled through the loops of the adjacent columns on the right and left one at a time. The movement of the looping yarns to the right and left creates the zigzag pattern of warp yarns. Tricot, Raschel, Milanese are some of the basic types of warp knitted fabrics.

### **Felting and Non-woven Fabrics**

Historically, fabrics were first made directly from fibres matted together and this process began before spinning and weaving started. Felting is the process of making fabric by entangling wool fibres with the help of heat, pressure, moisture or needling. In non-woven fabrics, other fibres are bonded together by an Mechanical or chemical methods such as adhesive binder, heat fusing or needle punching etc. All these non-woven fabrics have special uses such as interlinings and stiffeners for garments, disposable diapers or nappies, tea bags, bandages, hats, filters and carpets.

### **Lace**

Laces are made with a needle to form loops that are finished with a fine stitch. The techniques of lace making involve looping, knotting, braiding, twisting or stitching the threads into decorative open work patterns.

### **Net**

Net is an open-mesh fabric that is held together by knots or by fusing the thermoplastic yarns in places where they cross each other. There are several

types of meshes such as square, hexagonal, and octagonal. They mesh sizes of net fabrics range from coarse and open to fine and shear. Netting may be made of any kind of fibre and may be given a soft or stiff sizing.

**Braiding**

Braiding is a simple form of narrow fabric construction. This began as a handicraft for the construction of decorative fabrics. A braid is made like a rope by interweaving three or more strands, strips, or lengths, in a diagonally criss-crossing and overlapping pattern.

**Check Your Progress 1**

**Note:** a) Space is given below for writing your answer

b) Compare your answer given at the end of the Unit

- 1) State whether the following statements are true or false
  - i) Interlacing of warp and filling threads is called weaving. (T/F).
  - ii) The simplest weave is a twill weave. (T/F).
  - iii) Non-woven fabrics are made by Knitting. (T/F).
  - iv) Satin weave is a fancy weave. (T/F).
  - v) Net is an open-mesh construction. (T/F).
- 2) Differentiate between Felt and Non-woven.
- 3) Give examples of fabrics made by:
  - i) Pile Weave
  - ii) Jacquard weave
  - iii) Leno weave

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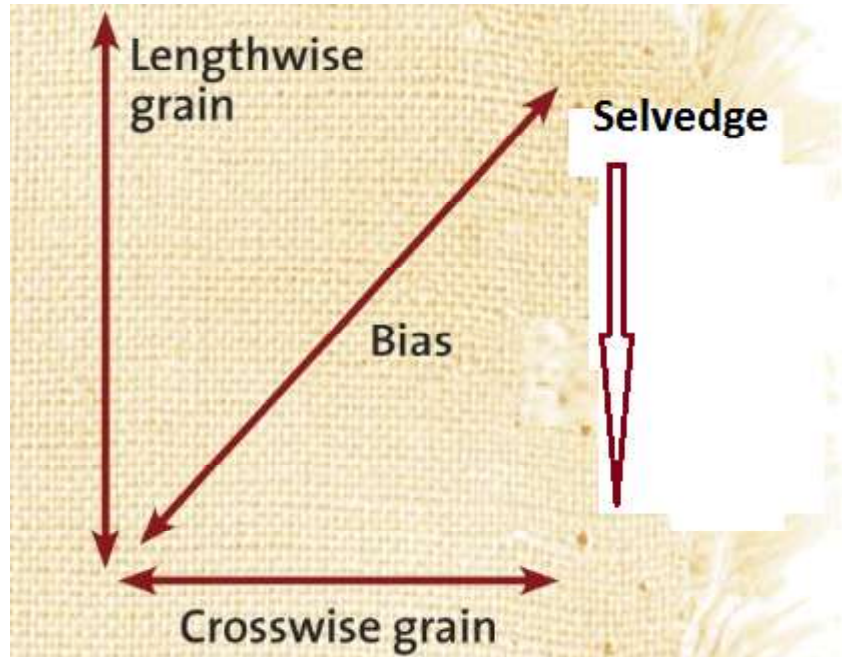
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**1.3.2 Key Elements of Fabric Specifications**

**Grain**

The direction of the alignment of yarns which runs parallel to the selvedge in a fabric is called grain. Fabrics cut at different angles across the grain will behave differently. The lengthwise grain of the fabric, runs in the direction of the warp yarns. The crosswise grain runs in the direction of the weft yarns. Any angle not in line with the lengthwise or crosswise grains is referred to as bias. The true bias of a fabric is the forty-five-degree angle between the lengthwise and crosswise grains. Fabric Grain affects the way fabric will hang and drape.



- **Lengthwise grain:** Since the warp yarns are fully stretched while weaving, the fabric does not stretch much along the lengthwise grain. Garments are usually cut with the lengthwise grain oriented vertically, perpendicular to the hem, so that they hold their shape and resist bagging and stretching.
- **Crosswise grain:** The cross-grain is generally placed horizontally around the body, because of its capacity to stretch, which allows the fabric to ease as the yarns flex with the body's movement. It is not usually placed vertically in a garment because of the possibility of the garment drooping as the yarns relax.
- **Bias** The fabric has the maximum stretch along the true bias and drapes well along the body contours. Designers often use this characteristic of the bias cut to create dramatic clinging effects in their garments. Patterns are specifically designed with the grain in mind so that the body can take advantage of the amount of stretch or lack of it in the fabric. The stretch and distortion of the bias make it necessary garment pieces cut on the bias to be handled with care during garment construction.

### Fabric Hand

The “hand” of a fabric refers to how the fabric “feels” against your skin. The hand or feel factor determines the softness, crispness, dryness, silkiness, etc. of the fabric. It also plays a role in the perception of the texture, drapability, stretch, wrinkle resistance, etc. of the fabric.

Hand of the fabric also doubles as the “drape” of the fabric. A soft hand is a soft drape and is fluid, like a piece of silk or a fine worsted woollen that would be a comfortable cloth to wear. A hard hand is rough to touch and typically less comfortable to wear.

### Fabric Width

Most fabrics come in standard widths and the most common widths for fabric bolts include 36, 38, 42, 44/45, 48, 54, 58, 59, 60, 72 and 108 inches, with 45, 54

and 60 inches being the most common. The width is often listed on a label at the end of a flat fabric bolt. The amount of fabric needed for a garment depends on the width of the fabric. In general, the wider the fabric is, the lesser of it would be needed. However, ideal width is dependent upon end uses and some of the popular widths include the following:

- Inter facings 24" to 45"
- Linings 36" to 60"
- Most clothing related fabrics come in 36" to 60"
- Upholstery and drapery fabrics 54" to 60"
- Muslin 36" to 108"

### **Fabric Weight**

Fabric weight is the outcome of how a fabric is woven, its finish and sometimes the fibre type. Fabric weight is measured in terms of how many Grams, in weight, a Square Meter of fabric is (GSM). The higher the GSM, the denser the fabric will be. These fabrics generally fall into these categories:

- Lightweight fabrics (30-150 GSM): chiffon, linen, organza, cheesecloth, lace, voile, mesh. Lightweight fabrics are suitable for underwear and summer items such as dresses and shirts.
- Medium weight fabrics (150-350 GSM): Sateen, oxford, velvet, taffeta, etc.
- Heavy weight fabrics (350+ GSM): Upholstery fabric, canvas, brocade, poplin, denim.

### **Fabric Blends**

Different fibres are blended together for a variety of reasons such as cost, durability, availability, and how readily the fabric accepts dye. There are various ways of combining different fibres. The most basic method is to mix fibres before the yarn is spun. Yarns can also be composed of plies of different fibres. Another variation is to spin the yarn with a core of one fibre and an outer wrapping of another. The fibres can also be combined at the weaving stage by using yarns made of different fibres in the warp and the weft. Combinations of these methods can also be used to create blended fabrics. Terecot, Terewool, Cotswool are few examples of blended fabrics.

### **Fabric Coloring**

The process of dyeing a fabric as a whole is known as piece dyeing. Resist dyeing is a method in which portions of the fabric are blocked out with a dye-resisting agent or process before it is dyed. Batik method uses melted wax. Tie dyeing relies on constraining the fabrics with strings. Shibori is a Japanese techniques in which folds, pleats, tied string, and/or stitches are used to compress the fabric. Ikat is a complex technique in which the warp yarns of a fabric are painted and/or resist dyed before the weft yarns are woven in.

Printing, which includes the techniques of block printing, roller printing, and screen printing (also known as silk-screening) is another popular method. Simple to complex designs can be printed onto the surface of the fabric, using any number of different colours. Fabrics can also be hand-painted, again with any number of colours.

### Finishes and Decorations

Most fabrics are given different types of finishing treatments during their manufacture to create special effects or to impart specific properties. Sometimes sizing is added to aid in some part of the production of the fabric, but more often it is added to alter the appearance and texture of the fabric, in an attempt to make the fabric more marketable or appealing to the consumer.

Some fabrics have physical processes performed on them to affect their appearance or texture. Beetling is a process in which the fabric is hammered to create a lustrous finish. Calendering is a process in which fabric is passed through heated rollers under high pressure for giving it a smooth or glossy finish. Brushing the surface of a fabric makes the fibre ends to pull loose from the fabric and create a fuzzy surface. Brushing is used for creating flannels from woven fabrics and fleece from knitted fabrics. Heat or chemicals can also be applied to alter the surface texture or appearance of fabric. Designs can be embossed on the surface of fabrics like velvets or satins. Caustic chemicals can be also applied in patterns to the surface of the fabric. These can cause the fabric to shrink unevenly, producing puckered fabrics such as plissé. Alternately, chemicals can be used to selectively remove, or burn out, certain areas of the fabric. Devoré velvet is an example of a fabric created in this manner.

A variety of decorations can be also created the surface of the fabric. Embroidery can add a variety of designs, and may incorporate yarns of varying texture, thickness, or colour. It can also be combined with cut-work, producing fabrics like eyelet lace. Beads or sequins can be sewn to the surface of the fabric. Flock (loose fibers) can also be glued to the fabric. Tufting is a process in which lengths of yarn are punched through the surface of the fabric, creating a pile.

#### Check Your Progress 2

**Note:** a) Space is given below for writing your answer

b) Compare your answer given at the end of the Unit

4) State whether the following statements are true or false

vi) Bias has the minimum stretch. (T/F).

vii) Calendaring gives smooth finish to the fabric. (T/F).

viii) Terewool is a blend of polyester and wool. (T/F).

ix) Voile is a heavy weight fabric. (T/F).

x) Batik is a resist dyeing technique. (T/F).

5) List the different fabric grains.

6) Define GSM.

7) Give one example of fabrics with a soft and hard hand.

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### 1.3.3 Glossary of Commonly Available Fabrics

- **Batiste** - A lightweight, plain weave fabric, semi sheer and usually made of cotton or cotton blends.
- **Brocade** - A heavy jacquard type fabric with an all over raised pattern or floral design.
- **Buckram** - A plain weave fabric, usually made from cotton or linen, that is stiffened with starch during the manufacturing process. Buckram is typically used in bookbinding and millenary.
- **Burlap** - A loosely constructed, heavy weight, plain weave fabric. It has a rough hand.
- **Calico** - A lightly woven cotton type fabric with an all over print, usually a small floral pattern on a contrasting background color.
- **Cambric** - A lightweight plain weave cotton or linen cloth, slightly heavier than muslin, that is closely woven and calendered to give a slight sheen on one side. The material was originally a linen fabric woven in Cambrai in northern France.
- **Canvas** - A strong, durable, closely woven cotton fabric.
- **Casement** - A light weight textile made in a combination of fibers usually dyed in light neutral colours.
- **Cashmere** - A natural fibre obtained from the soft fleecy undergrowth of the Kashmir goat. A luxury fibre with a very soft hand.
- **Cheesecloth** - A lightweight, sheer, plain-woven fabric with a very soft texture. It may be natural coloured, bleached, or dyed.
- **Chiffon** - Lightweight, extremely sheer and airy fabric, containing highly twisted fibres.
- **Corduroy** - A cloth made with cut pile ribs (or wales) running the length or width of the fabric. The ribs are produced by wefts yarns that are carried over the fabric face and then cut.
- **Crepe** - Used to describe all kinds of fabrics; wool, cotton, silk, rayon, synthetics and blends that have a crinkle, crimped or grained surface.
- **Damask** - A heavy reversible fabric typically made from cotton, silk, linen, wool or synthetic yarns using satin weave, typically used for draperies and home decor.
- **Denim** - A twill weave cotton fabric made with different colored yarns in the warp and the weft. Due to the twill construction, one color predominates on the fabric surface.
- **Double Cloth** - A fabric construction, in which two fabrics are woven on the loom at the same time, one on top of the other. In the weaving process, the two layers of woven fabric are held together using binder threads. The woven patterns in each layer of fabric can be similar or completely different.
- **Drill** - Strong, medium to heavyweight, warp faced, twill weave fabric.
- **Dupioni Silk** - A crisp fabric with irregular slubs.

- **Flannel** - Usually a 100% cotton fabric that has been brushed on one or both sides for softness.
- **Gabardine** - A worsted twill weave that is wrinkle resistant.
- **Gauze** - A sheer, open weave fabric usually cotton or silk.
- **Georgette** - A drapery woven fabric created from highly twisted yarns creating a pebbly texture.
- **Jersey Fabric** - Usually thinner or lighter weight than interlock knit with less stretch.
- **Lawn** - A light, fine cloth made using carded or combed linen or cotton yarns. The fabric has a crease-resistant, crisp finish.
- **Madras cotton**- A lightweight plain weave cotton fabric with a striped, plaid, or checked pattern. A true madras will bleed when washed. This type of fabric is usually imported from India.
- **Merino** - A type of wool that originates from pure bred Merino sheep. The best Merino wool comes from Italy.
- **Mesh** - A type of fabric characterized by its net like open appearance and the spaces between the yarns. Mesh is available in a variety of constructions including woven fabrics, knits, laces, or crocheted fabrics.
- **Mohair** - Hair fibres from the Angora goat.
- **Muslin** - An inexpensive, medium weight, plain weave, low count (less than 160 threads per square inch) cotton sheeting fabric. In it's unfinished form, it is commonly used in fashion design to make trial garments for preliminary fit.
- **Organdy** - A stiffened, sheer, lightweight plain weave fabric, usually cotton or polyester.
- **Organza** - A crisp, sheer, lightweight plain weave fabric, with a medium to high yarn count, made of silk, rayon, nylon, or polyester.
- **Oxford** - A fine, soft, lightweight woven cotton or blended with manufactured fibers in a 2 x 1 basket weave variation of the plain weave construction.
- **Plisse** - A lightweight, plain weave, fabric, made from cotton, rayon, or acetate, and characterized by a puckered striped effect, usually in the warp direction. The crinkled effect is created through the application of a caustic soda solution, which shrinks the fabric in the areas of the fabric where it is applied. Plisse is similar in appearance to seersucker.
- **Plush** - A compactly woven fabric with warp pile higher than that of velvet. Made of cotton, wool, silk, or man-made fibre, often woven as double face fabric and then sheared apart. Higher pile gives bristly texture. Usually piece dyed but may be printed.
- **Poplin** - A fabric made using a rib variation of the plain weave. The construction is characterized by having a slight ridge effect in one direction, usually the filling.

- **Seersucker** - A fabric with a woven pucker, this fabric is traditionally cotton, but can be polyester.
- **Sheer** - Any very light weight fabric (e.g. chiffon, georgette, voile, sheer crepe). Usually has an open weave.
- **Taffeta** - With a crisp hand, taffeta is typically used for formal wear like gowns and fuller skirts.
- **Tapestry** - A heavy, often hand woven, ribbed fabric, featuring an elaborate design depicting a historical or current pictorial display. The weft-faced fabric design is made by using coloured filling yarns, only in areas where needed, that are worked back and forth over spun warp yarns, which are visible on the back.
- **Tarpaulin** - A waterproofed canvas sometimes made of nylon or other manmade fiber.
- **Terry Cloth** - Unclipped, looped pile, 100% cotton terry cloth is highly absorbent.
- **Tweed** - A medium to heavy weight, fluffy, woolen, twill weave fabric containing coloured slubbed yarns.
- **Velour** - Usually with a knitted back, velour resembles velvet, but has some stretch.
- **Velvet** - With a longer pile, velvet is the most luxurious fabric. Stretch velvet has some Lycra, it can be machine washed and will not create a shine in the seat or elbows.
- **Velveteen** - A cotton or cotton blend fabric with a short, dense pile. It lacks the sheen and drape of velvet.
- **Voile** - A crisp, lightweight, plain weave cotton like fabric, similar in appearance to Organdy and organza.

### Check Your Progress 3

**Note:** a) Space is given below for writing your answer

b) Compare your answer given at the end of the Unit

8) State whether the following statements are true or false

- i) Brocade has Jacquard weave. (T/F).
- ii) Seersucker fabric has a puckered finish. (T/F).
- iii) Crepe fabric has low twisted yarns. (T/F).
- iv) Mohair wool comes from Rabbit. (T/F).
- v) Gauze is an open weave fabric. (T/F).

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## 1.4 INTRODUCTION TO FABRIC SOURCING

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### 1.4.1 The Role of Fabric Sourcing

Fabric is the most important raw material for the fashion design industry with the exception of the creative talents of the designers and the sources of their inspiration. Fabric serves as the medium through which fashion designers express their creativity. The non-availability appropriate fabrics might become a limiting factor on their creative designs. Fabric sourcing needs to take into account all the different roles that fabric plays in the fashion design industry. The following are some of the significant roles that fabrics play in the success of fashion businesses:

- 1) **Role in Designing:** As the primary medium of creative expression, fabrics continue to be one of the important sources of design inspiration. Structural designs require fabrics with high degree of dimensional stability. Aesthetic designs also require fabrics that express not only the colours and hues correctly but also provide the necessary lustre and shine. A fabric swatch library can also be source of inspiration for innovative designs.
- 2) **Role in Trend Setting:** In the history of fashion, there have been long term trends that had their origin in new fibres, new fabrics and finishes. The Art Deco movement of the 1920, which gets revived, in some form or other, even now was rooted in the richness of the colours and fabrics of that period. In the recent period, Spandex and Lycra fabrics had also set in motion fashion trends of their own. Currently, the sustainability focus in fashion is also creating new trends based on new types of natural fibres.
- 3) **Role in Sample Making:** Sourcing multiple fabrics with similar properties and testing their suitability at the time of sample making helps in implementing the designs in the best possible manner. Sample making is also an important step in fabric selection.
- 4) **Role in Quality:** While design and styling enhance the visual appeal of the dress, the fabrics will always be the basis on which the customers would evaluate the dress through their touch and feel experience. Although cut and stitch are very important aspects of fashion garments, any fabric defect would catch the eye of the customer first and divert their attention away. The fabric quality would also play an important role in determining the comfort the customer experiences while trying out.
- 5) **Role in Customer Targeting:** Availability of suitable fabrics is an important factor in developing garments aimed at specific target groups of customers. The fabric choices also vary among income groups and age groups. It would be, therefore, necessary to find the fabrics that meet the preferences of the targetted customer groups.
- 6) **Role in Pricing:** Price points are equally important for meeting the price expectations of the targetted customer groups. Even in the case of fashion garments aimed at rich customers buying fabrics at the best possible prices would help increase the profit margins.

- 7) **Role in Variety:** Fabric options play a critical role in determining the scope for variety under any specific garment design particularly in the case of mass fashion or pret-a-porter garments. Customer who like a particular design or cut and style may want it in their preferred colour or texture.
- 8) **Role in Wash and Care:** The ease of wash and care is another important requirement for mass fashion and pret-a-porter garments. It would become, therefore, necessary to choose fabrics that suit the design but also possess the appropriate wash and care attributes.
- 9) **Role in Branding:** Branding is a high priority requirement of fashion businesses. The quality of fabric used would always be a key factor in determining the brand image. Brand image would also get a boost, if any fashion business is able to procure good quality fabrics but is also able to use additional processes that makes the fabrics stand out and speak up for the brand.
- 10) **Role in Sustainability:** The sustainability theme is increasingly popular in the fashion industry. By increasing the sustainability quotient of the fabrics used, it would be possible to demonstrate the commitment towards sustainability and build good will for the brand.
- 11) **Role in Retail Marketing:** Fashion garments are being sold increasingly by both mall-based and online multi-brand retailers. Reorders from these stores are determined by their merchandisers. Fabric sourcing would be a key requirement for readily responding to such reorders and fulfilling the specifications of such orders.
- 12) **Role in Export Orders:** Exports would be governed by garment and fabric specifications based on international standards and other mutually agreed terms and conditions along with follow-up inspections and tests. Sourcing the correct quality of fabrics would be a prerequisite for complying with quality requirements of export contracts.

#### Check Your Progress 4

**Note:** a) Space is given below for writing your answer

b) Compare your answer given at the end of the Unit

8) State whether the following statements are true or false

- i) Brocade has Jacquard weave. (T/F).
- ii) Seersucker fabric has a puckered finish. (T/F).
- iii) Crepe fabric has low twisted yarns. (T/F).
- iv) Mohair wool comes from Rabbit. (T/F).
- v) Gauze is an open weave fabric. (T/F).

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## 1.4.2 Steps and Strategies of Fabric Sourcing

**Step 1:** Work with the designer from the very start.

**Step 2:** Make full use of the sample development opportunity

**Step 3:** Decide on the Technical & Commercial Specifications

- Delivery Date
- Quantity
- Places of Origin & Destination
- Price
- End Use
- Sample Yardage
- Reorder Requirements

The following are some of the technical specifications that are relevant to fabric sourcing:

- Fibre type
- Colour and Design
- Width
- Weight
- Launderability and Compatibility

**Step 4:** Select the appropriate category of vendor

- Mill or Manufacturer:
- Mill or Manufacturer Representatives (Rep):
- Convertors:
- Primary Fabric Suppliers/Jobbers:
- Secondary Fabric Suppliers/Wholesaler:

**Step 5:** Prepare binding order documents

Placing a production or purchase order is a legally binding contract and will be governed by the Indian Contract Act. The order must, therefore, include clearly identifiable and definable items and unambiguous terms and conditions.

A Purchase Order is placed for fabrics that the supplier has offered to sell and it would contain the following minimum information along with all other relevant details:

- Fabric quality name and style number
- Fibre content type
- Fabric width
- Fabric weight
- Colours or design colourways
- Price per meter or yard as applicable

- Quantity being ordered
- Shipping destination
- Delivery date and location details

**Step 6:** Receive the fabric and carry out the quality tests

**Step 7:** Prepare for reorders as necessary

There is no way to predict with certainty how a garment would fare in the market. However, the process for reorders must be started immediately after receiving the fabrics so as to minimise lead time required for producing additional quantities of any garment.

**Check Your Progress 4**

**Note:** a) Space is given below for writing your answer

b) Compare your answer given at the end of the Unit

9) What role does fabric sourcing plays in the quality of garments?

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10) What is the significance of fabric sourcing in the pricing of garments?

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11) What is the role of fabric sourcing in retail marketing?

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12) What are the commercial factors that are important in the fabric sourcing process.

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technical documentation. This chapter provides the foundation on which you will keep on adding latest knowledge for becoming a successful fabric sourcing personnel.

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## 1.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: THE KEY

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- 1) State whether the following statements are true or false
  - i. True
  - ii. False. It is Plain weave
  - iii. False. Non-woven fabrics are made directly from fibres.
  - iv. False. It is a basic weave.
  - v. True
- 2) Felt fabrics are made from wool fibre through heat, pressure and moisture. Non-woven fabrics can be made from other fibres using mechanical and chemical methods such as adhesive, heat bonding, needle punching etc.
- 3) Give examples of fabrics made by:
  - i) Pile Weave - Velvet, terry cloth
  - ii) Jacquard weave - brocade, damask,
  - iii) Leno weave – Tulle, mosquito netting
- 4) State whether the following statements are true or false
  - i) False. Bias has the maximum stretch.
  - ii) True
  - iii) True
  - iv) False. Voile is a light weight fabric.
  - v) True
- 5) Lengthwise grain, Width-wise grain, Bias
- 6) GSM is weight in Grams of a Square Meter of fabric. The higher the GSM, the denser the fabric will be.
- 7) Silk has a soft hand, wool has a hard hand.
- 8) State whether the following statements are true or false
  - i) True
  - ii) True
  - iii) False. Crepe fabric has yarns with a very high twist.
  - iv) False. Mohair wool comes from Angora Goat.
  - v) True
- 9) The fabric plays a very important role in the touch and feel based quality perceptions of customers. The touch and feel experience would also influence customer's perceptions about the comfort factor of the garment. Fabric defects would catch the attention of the buyers and divert the attention away from the other valuable aspects of the garments.

- 10) Fabrics account for a large part of the production cost of garments. Sourcing of fabrics at the right price is necessary to meet the price point expectations of customers. Sourcing fabrics at economical prices would also increase the profit margin.
- 11) Retail stores buy garments on the basis of trends in sales. Reorders from these stores are determined by their merchandisers. Fabric sourcing would be a key requirement for readily responding to such reorders and fulfilling the specifications of such orders.
- 12)
  - 1) Delivery time
  - 2) Order quantity
  - 3) Places of origin and destination
  - 4) Price
  - 5) End-use
  - 6) Sample yardage
  - 7) Reordering possibility
- 13)
  - 1) Mills/Manufacturers
  - 2) Representatives of Mills/Manufacturers
  - 3) Convertors/Processors
  - 4) Jobbers/primary fabric suppliers
  - 5) Secondary Fabric Suppliers/wholesalers
- 14)
  - Fabric quality name and style number
  - Fibre content type
  - Fabric width
  - Fabric weight
  - Colours or design colour ways
  - Price per meter or yard as applicable
  - Quantity being ordered
  - Shipping destination
  - Delivery date and location details