

CUET · HOME SCIENCE · CLASS XI · CODE 315

Our Apparel

CUET unit: Understanding the Self and the Family (Childhood — Apparel for Children)

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Snapshot

- Chapter establishes the four core functions of clothing — modesty, protection, status & prestige, and adornment — and the factors (age, climate, occasion, fashion, income) that affect clothing selection in India.
- It details the eight general clothing needs of children: comfort, safety, self-help, appearance, allowance for growth, easy care, and choice of fabrics.
- It maps stage-specific clothing requirements across infancy (birth–6 months), creeping age (6 months–1 year), toddlerhood (1–2 years), preschool age (2–6 years), elementary school years (6–11 years), and adolescence (11–18 years).
- It closes with criteria for selecting clothing for children with special needs — comfort, reinforcements, easy openings (velcro/zippers with key chains), and aesthetic appeal.
- CUET tests direct recall of fabric suitability, age-stage features, self-help dress design, and matching of garments to functions.

Detailed Notes

2.1 Core concepts

This is the Class XI childhood-apparel chapter (titled 'Our Apparel'). It belongs to the Fabric and Apparel field of HEFS and complements the Fabrics Around Us chapter (kehe105). Clothing is not a peripheral life skill but a developmental-need intervention — appropriate clothing supports infant hygiene, toddler safety, preschool self-help, school-age confidence, and adolescent identity. CUET frequently tests stage-wise garment matching, fabric suitability, and self-help design features.

- Clothing serves four primary functions — modesty (taught socially, varies across communities), protection (from weather, pollution, fire, sports injury), status and prestige (clothes signal social/economic position; uniform clothing such as T-shirts and jeans serves as a social class leveller), and adornment (body decoration, an almost universal drive). (NCERT §9.1, pp. 171–173)
- Standards of modesty are socially shaped — in some communities women not covering heads is immodest, while in others not covering legs is immodest. (NCERT §9.1, p. 172)
- Specialised protective clothing includes fire-fighters' gear and sports gear such as arm guards, leg guards and wrist bands. (NCERT §9.1, p. 172)

- Factors affecting clothing selection in India are age, climate and season, occasion, fashion, and income. (NCERT §9.2, pp. 173–175)
- 'Fads' are short-lived fashions that highly exaggerate dress features or affect only a small section of society; children and adolescents are very prone to fads. (NCERT §9.2 Fashion, p. 175)
- Schools prescribe uniforms to de-emphasise socio-economic differences among students. (NCERT §9.2 Income, p. 175)
- Children's basic clothing needs are comfort, safety, self-help, appearance, allowance for growth, easy care, and suitable fabrics. (NCERT §9.3, pp. 175–178)
- Comfort: light-weight clothes of acrylic and nylon for winter; raglan sleeves give more freedom and growth than set-in sleeves; clothes hanging from shoulders are more comfortable than those from the waistline. (NCERT §9.3 Comfort, p. 176)
- Safety: loose garments catch fire more easily near cooking; hanging sashes/trims can get caught in tricycle parts; bright colours are advised because motorists spot them more easily; loose buttons are unsafe for infants. (NCERT §9.3 Safety, p. 176)
- Self-help: openings must be large; front openings are easier; front and back of the dress should look different; large buttons graspable by a child's hand are preferred — small snaps, hooks-and-eyes, bows tied at waist/neck, and small buttons with thread loops retard self-help. (NCERT §9.3 Self-help, pp. 176–177)
- Allowance for growth: provide length through cuffs on trousers and let-down hemlines; adjustable straps on skirts; raglan sleeves and tucks/pleats at shoulder line allow width increase. (NCERT §9.3 Allowance for growth, p. 177)
- Easy care: flat seams wear longer than plain seams; reinforce areas of strain — knees, pocket corners, elbows. (NCERT §9.3 Easy care, p. 177)
- Fabrics: soft firmly woven/knitted, avoid dryclean-only; cotton is most widely used (washable, comfortable); wool needs special care and may irritate; polyester/nylon must not be worn next to skin; cotton-polyester blend is more absorbent than pure polyester. (NCERT §9.3 Fabrics, pp. 177–178)
- Infancy (birth–6 months): warmth, comfort and hygiene are most important; avoid draw strings around the neck; baby flannel (wool-cotton or silk mix) is preferred over all-wool flannel; diapers are the first essential — soft, absorbent, easily washed, quick drying; cotton undershirts suit warm climates, wool-cotton blend for cold. (NCERT §9.4 Infancy, pp. 178–179)
- Creeping age (6 months–1 year): loose, non-interfering garments; knitted and bias-cut garments suit best because they stretch; rompers and sun-suits are most suitable; training pants used during toilet training fit snugly at the hip. (NCERT §9.4 Creeping age, pp. 179–180)
- Toddlerhood (1–2 years): the principal clothing concern is selection of shoes — flexible soled shoes with rough soles of 1/8 inch thickness; without heel or slight

heel; full and puffy in the toe area; overalls (with large crotch for diapers) are the most suitable dress. (NCERT §9.4 Toddlerhood, p. 181)

- Preschool age (2–6 years): cotton is the most suitable fabric — hygienic, absorbent, easy to launder; clothes must be pre-shrunk; key self-help features are one-piece garments, front long openings, large buttons, large armholes, comfortable necklines without collar. (NCERT §9.4 Preschool age, pp. 182–183)
- Elementary school years (6–11 years): middle childhood; clothing plays a role in social/emotional development; absorbent fabrics like cotton and voile to absorb perspiration; fitting is an important consideration. (NCERT §9.4 Elementary School Years, pp. 183–184)
- Adolescents (11–18 years): a minimal wardrobe is advisable in early adolescence due to rapid growth; the most important qualities are fit and style (not fabric quality or construction); adolescents are earnest followers of fashion and fads. (NCERT §9.4 Adolescents, p. 184)
- Children with special needs: comfort is the primary criterion — cotton for summer, velvet/corduroy/cotswool for winter; garments need reinforcements where calipers/braces touch; velcros and zippers with key chains aid fastening; wider necklines, elastic waistbands, front open plackets and front pockets are preferred; aesthetic appeal also matters. (NCERT §9.5, p. 185)

The four-function framework (modesty, protection, status/prestige, adornment) draws on classical clothing sociology — particularly the work of George Murdock and other anthropologists who showed that adornment is a near-universal human practice, while modesty is highly culturally variable. The example of school uniforms as a 'social class leveller' resonates with India's CBSE/state-board uniform policy and its democratising intent. Adornment in the Indian context covers jewellery, bindi, mehendi, embroidered borders, dupattas, turbans — culturally embedded forms whose study is part of HEFS' textile-tradition arc.

The five factors affecting clothing selection (age, climate/season, occasion, fashion, income) translate into practical Indian dressing patterns: cotton dominance in hot humid summers, woollens in north Indian winters, festival/wedding silks, school uniforms in cotton/poly-cotton blends, and the rise of casual wear in urban middle-class wardrobes. The fad-vs-fashion distinction is timely — children and adolescents are particularly susceptible to fads (cartoon-character print T-shirts, branded sneakers), a behavioural truth that family budgets must accommodate without surrendering to.

Children's eight (in NCERT, seven plus 'fabrics') clothing needs deserve careful enumeration: comfort (raglan over set-in sleeves, shoulder-hung garments), safety (loose-garment fire hazard, sash entanglement, bright colours for road visibility), self-help (front openings, large buttons, different front-back design), appearance (boost confidence), allowance for growth (cuffs, let-down hemlines, adjustable straps, raglan sleeves, tucks/pleats at shoulder), easy care (flat seams, reinforced knees/elbows/pockets), and fabric choice (soft, firmly woven/knitted; avoid dry-clean only; cotton

dominant; cotton-polyester blend more absorbent than pure polyester; wool needs care; polyester/nylon not next to skin).

Stage-wise apparel is the main organising structure. Infancy (birth–6 months): warmth + hygiene + comfort dominate. Baby flannel — wool-cotton or silk mix — is preferred over all-wool flannel because all-wool can irritate sensitive new-born skin. No draw-strings around the neck (strangulation hazard). Diapers must be soft, absorbent, easily washed, quick-drying — homemade gauze or bird's-eye fabric or pre-shaped diapers. Cotton undershirts in warm climates; wool-cotton blends in cold. Creeping age (6 months–1 year): mobility starts; clothes must not interfere; knitted and bias-cut garments stretch and accommodate movement; rompers and sun-suits are the gold-standard garments; training pants begin during toilet training and must fit snugly at the hip. Seersucker — a crimped striped fabric — is excellent because it does not require ironing.

Toddlerhood (1–2 years): independent walking begins; ill-fitting shoes can permanently damage soft foot bones, so shoe selection is the principal clothing concern. NCERT specifies flexible soles, rough soles 1/8 inch thick, no heel or only slight heel, full puffy toe area. Overalls with a large crotch (to accommodate diapers) are the most suitable garment. Preschool age (2–6 years): cotton is the most suitable fabric; clothes must be pre-shrunk; self-help features matter most — one-piece garments, front long openings, large buttons, large armholes, comfortable necklines without collars. Elementary school years (6–11): clothing now plays a social and emotional role; absorbent fabrics (cotton, voile) handle the sweat of active children; fitting becomes more important. Adolescence (11–18): rapid growth means a small wardrobe is wise; fit and style outweigh fabric quality or construction; adolescents are intense followers of fashion and fads.

Children with special needs (intellectual or physical disabilities) need a holistic clothing strategy: comfort first (cotton in summer, velvet/corduroy/cotswool in winter), reinforcement at points where calipers or braces touch the garment, velcros and zippers with key-chain pulls (since fine motor control may be limited), wider necklines, elastic waistbands, front-open plackets, and visible front pockets. Aesthetic appeal is also given importance — disabled children's self-esteem benefits from looking attractive, not merely 'functional'. This reflects the broader Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 framework of dignity in design.

2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Modesty	Socially shaped idea that bodies must be covered; varies across communities	172
Adornment	Decoration of the body to enhance appearance; a near-universal drive	173
Fad	A very short-lived fashion that exaggerates dress features or affects only a small section/area	175

Term	Definition	Page
Raglan sleeves	Sleeves cut continuous with the bodice, allowing more freedom and growth than set-in sleeves	176, 177
Diapers	Soft, absorbent, easily-washed, quick-drying first essential garment for infants	179
Training pants	Snug-fitting (at the hip) garments worn when toilet training begins	180
Overalls	One-piece garment with large crotch (to allow for diapers); most suitable dress for toddlers	181
Rompers / Sun-suits	Most suitable garments for the creeping age	180
Seersucker	Crimpled striped fabric — excellent for crawling-age clothes because it does not require ironing	180
Modesty	Socially shaped notion that bodies must be covered; varies by community	172
Protection	Function of clothing against weather, pollution, fire, sports injury	172
Status and prestige	Function of clothing as signal of social/economic position	173
Adornment	Body decoration — near-universal human practice	173
Fashion	Broader currently-popular style	175
Set-in sleeve	Sleeve cut and stitched separately into the armhole	176
Self-help feature	Design feature enabling child to dress/undress independently	176
Allowance for growth	Design feature enabling garment to last as child grows	177
Flat seam	Seam type that wears longer than plain seam	177
Reinforcement	Extra fabric layer at strain areas (knees, elbows, pocket corners)	177
Baby flannel	Wool-cotton or silk mix flannel preferred over all-wool for infants	179
Bird's-eye fabric	Fabric used for homemade absorbent diapers	179
Voile	Light absorbent fabric suitable for elementary school years	184
Cotswool	Cotton-wool blend fabric suitable for winter wear of children with special needs	185
Velcro	Hook-and-loop closure preferred for children with special needs	185

2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- Figure 1: Clothes for Infants — front-open and simple-to-put-on designs (p. 178).
- Figure 2: Pre-shaped diapers — alternative to homemade gauze/bird's-eye diapers (p. 179).
- Figure 3 & 4: Comfortable clothes and apparel designs for crawling age (p. 180).
- Figure 5: Correct fit of shoe — checking length, width, height of toe space and heel fit (p. 181).
- Figure 6: Apparel for preschoolers — sleeveless tops, pinafores, shorts, overalls (p. 182).
- Figure 7 & 8: Sporty/comfortable dresses for 5–8 years and elementary school age (pp. 183–184).
- Figure 9: Apparel designs for adolescents (p. 184).

2.5 Key data / apparel stage table (Indian context)

Stage	Age range	Most suitable garment	Most suitable fabric	Key concern
Infancy	Birth–6 months	Diapers, front-open shirts	Baby flannel (wool-cotton or silk mix)	Warmth, hygiene, no draw-strings
Creeping age	6–12 months	Rompers, sun-suits, training pants	Seersucker (no ironing)	Stretch, non-interference
Toddlerhood	1–2 years	Overalls (large crotch)	Cotton	Shoes — flexible sole 1/8 inch, no/slight heel
Preschool	2–6 years	One-piece, front-open	Cotton (pre-shrunk)	Self-help — large buttons, large armholes
Elementary school	6–11 years	Sporty/comfortable, fitted	Cotton, voile	Perspiration absorbency, fitting
Adolescence	11–18 years	Minimal wardrobe, fashion-forward	Varied	Fit and style; growth
Special-needs children	Any	Front-open, elastic waistband, wide neck	Cotton (summer), velvet/corduroy/cotswool (winter)	Comfort; reinforcements; velcro/zipper key chains

Item	Value / fact	Source
Four functions of clothing	Modesty, Protection, Status & prestige, Adornment	NCERT pp. 171–173

Item	Value / fact	Source
Five factors of clothing selection	Age, Climate/season, Occasion, Fashion, Income	NCERT pp. 173–175
Children's basic clothing needs	Comfort, Safety, Self-help, Appearance, Allowance for growth, Easy care, Fabrics	NCERT pp. 175–178
Sleeve type preferred for children	Raglan (over set-in)	NCERT pp. 176, 177
Bright colours advised because	Motorists spot them more easily	NCERT p. 176
Cotton vs polyester (next to skin)	Cotton only; polyester/nylon NOT next to skin	NCERT p. 178
Shoe sole specification (toddler)	Flexible, rough, 1/8 inch thick	NCERT p. 181
Primary criterion for special-needs clothing	Comfort	NCERT p. 185

2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- Fashion vs Fad — fad is the short-lived, exaggerated form; fashion is broader contemporary appeal. (p. 175)
- Set-in sleeves vs Raglan sleeves — raglan (not set-in) allows growth and freedom of movement. (pp. 176–177)
- Rompers/sun-suits belong to creeping age; overalls belong to toddlerhood — students often swap these. (pp. 180–181)
- The principal clothing concern of toddlerhood is shoe selection, not garment fabric. (p. 181)
- Polyester and nylon should not be worn next to skin; cotton-polyester blend is more absorbent than pure polyester. (p. 178)
- For children with special needs the primary criterion is comfort, and openings should be easy — velcros and zippers with key chains (not buttons or hooks). (p. 185)
- Baby flannel for infants is **wool-cotton or silk mix**, NOT pure wool — pure wool can irritate new-born skin.
- Bright colours are advised for safety (visibility to motorists), NOT mainly for aesthetics.
- Loose buttons are unsafe for infants because they can be swallowed — a choking hazard.
- 'Modesty standards vary by community' — NCERT does not endorse any one standard.
- For self-help, **front-back of dress should look different** to enable correct orientation.

Practice MCQs

PYQ Alignment

CUET Home Science routinely draws 5–7 questions per year from the apparel/clothing block, with a strong preference for stage-wise garment matching (infancy/creeping/toddler/preschool), fabric suitability (cotton vs polyester vs wool), and design features for self-help and growth allowance (raglan sleeves, front openings, cuffs, adjustable straps). Definition-based items on "fad" and assertion–reason items on comfort/safety are recurring formats.

