

ASSESSMENT OF THE NEED OF PORTABLE “OUTFIT CHANGING MODULE” FOR WOMEN AT COMMUNAL HOLY PLACES

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ABSTRACT

Clothing is a form of nonverbal communication that conveys emotions, behaviour and differentiation. As a matter of ancient tradition, India may be called a land of spirituality. People flock to the ghats or steps, leading from temples down to the banks of the sacred Ganga in their search for an auspicious site for death, cremation or immersion of ashes. Bathing in these rivers is considered a praiseworthy act. However, changing an outfit with full dignity and respect at these places is a frequent problem faced by young females and women. In view of the above, the present research work on “Assessment of the need of outfits changing space for women at communal holy places” has been planned to assess the need of some portable changing module to facilitate them in getting dressed and undressed publicly. This study highlights the opinion of the women pilgrims regarding outfits changing space at holy or public places which is an inexpensive, durable, light weight and easily transportable form and which can also be assembled and disassembled in a timely manner. The researcher also designed a ‘Portable changing module,’ which was found very useful and practical for women while changing their clothes at open spaces or ghats.

KEYWORDS: Module, Outfits, Changing Space, Pilgrims, Holy Places.

Introduction

Clothing is one of the means of achieving social and economic mobility in a class system like the one prevalent in India. India is a potential spiritual superpower. As a matter of ancient tradition, India may be called a land of spirituality. Most of the important places of pilgrimage in India are located along the banks of the great rivers like the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Godavari and Kaveri. The most significant religious place is Varanasi, which is also known as Kashi in South Eastern Uttar Pradesh on the north bank of the Ganga, it is sacred to Hindus, Buddhist and Jains. People flock to the ghats or steps, leading from temples down to the banks of the sacred Ganga in their search for an auspicious site for death, cremation or immersion of ashes. Bathing in these rivers is considered a meritorious act. An important part of ritual purification in Hinduism is the bathing of the entire body, particularly in rivers considered holy such as the Ganges; it is considered auspicious to perform this form of purification before any festival, and it is also practiced after the death of someone, in order to maintain purity. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purification)

This study is also directed to explore the feasibility of designing a portable changing module that can be used in remote locations, campaign area, and spiritual rivers. The researcher personally feels and experiences the need of privacy and modesty, it become very awkward to getting dressed and undressed publicly during holy bath which emphasized the dearth of provision of suitable changing space for women.

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Methodology

The study was purposively conducted in the central area of Rajasthan state in saintly Pushkar town of Ajmer district, clusters around the Pushkar Lake. Here, the Brahma temple is a major attraction and around 52 Ghats cuddle the holy lake. Thus, based on the objectives of the study, Pushkar, primarily a pilgrimage spot was selected to get first-hand information from the women pilgrims for survey work. Total 60 respondents were purposively selected. A pre structured interview schedule was formulated by the researcher in order to explore information regarding views of women while bathing in public places and problem faced by them during dressing or changing outfits in communal places.

The researcher of the present study perceived the need of designing portable changing module in view of the women's need for changing clothes in some privacy. To accomplish the objectives of the present research work, the data was coded, tabulated and suitable statistical measure were applied for conducting the research work.

Findings

Back Ground Information

The researcher analyzed age, religion, working status, family type, family occupation and family income per month under general background information.

- **Age:** The researcher selected 60 respondents from City of Pushkar. Data portrays in Fig.1 clearly shows that most of the respondents (63.33%) were found in the age group of 40-50 years followed by 27 per cent respondents belonged to 30-40 years age group.

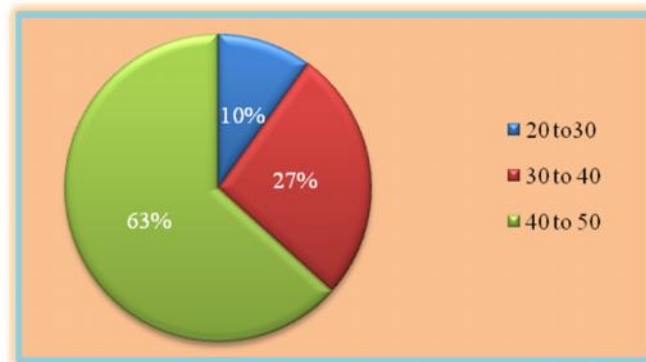


Fig.1

- **Education:** The distribution of respondents by educational qualification has been presented in Table-1. It was interesting to note that none of the respondents was found illiterate.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents by education

n = 60

Education	Respondents	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Primary	6	10
Secondary	12	20
Hr. Secondary	18	30
Graduation	24	40

The data pertaining to education revealed that 40 per cent of respondents were graduates followed by 30 per cent respondents who were qualified up to Higher Secondary. The respondents having primary and secondary education were found to be 10 and 20 percent respectively.

- **Family Occupation (main):** Figure-2 contented the aspect which is related to information of family occupation. It was found that the respondents were involved in various occupations. Regarding family occupation an equal number of respondents (40%) belonged to agriculture and business class each. Only 20 per cent respondents were belonging to service class.

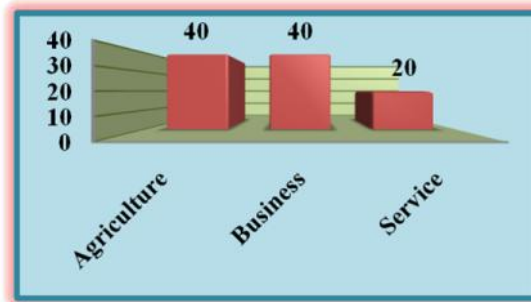


Fig. 2: Percentage of respondents by occupation

Further, it was found that majority of respondents (90%) were not having and subsidiary occupation.

Frequency of Visiting this Holy Place

The term “pilgrimage tourism” is travel to a sacred place. It is one of the most significant forms of religious behaviour. (Vijayanand, 2013). Table2 depicts the respondent’s frequency of visiting the holy places.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by frequency of visiting this holy place

n= 60

Frequency of Visiting	Frequency	Percentage
Once in a week	4	6.67
Every month	11	18.33
Once in two months	8	13.33
Every six month	7	11.67
Once in a year	18	30
Not fixed	12	20.01

Table 2 depicts the data related to frequency of visiting the pushkar holy place, it can be seen that 30 percent of the respondents used to visit once in a year especially during Kartik Purnima. It was worth noting that women pilgrims used to come once in a week (6.67%), every month (18.33%) and once in every two months(13.33%) respectively. Findings are in a line with Hotchandani et al. (2013) mentioned that Pushkar Lake has religious, holy and cultural importance. Every year almost 10 Lakh visitors come to Pushkar for holy dip.

Reason of Performing Holy Bath

The distribution of respondents by reason of performing holy bath can be seen in fig.-3.

The data highlights that majority of the respondents (48.33%) were always performing holy bath due to religious practices. Followed by 33.33 per cent respondents who used to perform holy bath due to family traditions. Remaining 18.33 percent of the respondents were performing holy bath due to their personal interest towards spirituality.



Fig. 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by reasons of performing holy bath

Opinion about need of Changing Space for Women at Holy Places

Data presented in Fig.-4 clearly showing that majority of respondents (91%) were affirmative in their opinion about the need of having adequate changing space for women at holy places to facilitate changing dress in privacy.

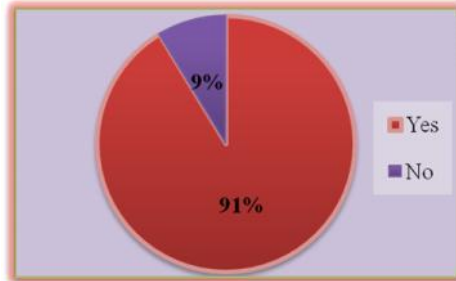


Fig. 4: Need of Changing Space for Women at Holy Places

Botekar (2015) reported that in Nashik district during the Kumbhmela, a number of additional bathing ghats downstream of Ramkund along the Godavari banks were added to enable more pilgrims to take the holy dip, but there was not a single changing room on the ghats for women.

Designing of Portable Changing Module

There are huge numbers of pilgrims visiting holy rivers for holy dip or for fulfillment of other rituals. Women pilgrims are also increasing day by day. Non-availability of changing rooms at the ghats is a very genuine problem faced by these women, which is often overlooked. The researcher of the present study conceived the idea to design the portable changing module in view of female need of privacy at holy places. The need of changing space at holy Ghats, river bank, etc. was strongly felt by the women folk as revealed during the data collection process during preliminary stage of the investigation. Respondents reported their problems that it becomes very awkward for them to change their clothes at open communal places due to lack of appropriate changing space. Girls also found themselves having the same issue and strongly felt the need of a changing space. Looking into this issue very empathetically, the realized the need to design an inexpensive, light weight, easily transportable changing module that is inflatable and can be assembled and disassembled in a timely manner. The researcher designed a prototype of 'Portable Changing Module' to make dressing- undressing easier at public places.

Details of the Portable Changing Module

The present portable changing module comprising of a rectangular frame with adjustable curtains on all four sides so that a person can change their clothes easily by standing in center of it. This rectangular structure was developed from the light weight PVC plastic pipes to make it adjustable. Fig.5 shows the line diagram of developed structure of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipes.

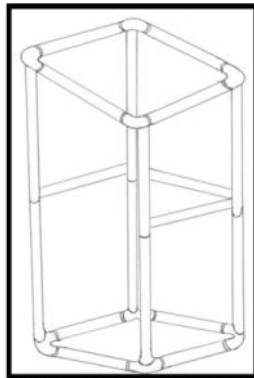


Fig.5: Line Diagram of Portable Structure of Changing Module

It has a support frame including a rectangular base portion and a rectangular top portion, a plurality of vertical sections being removable and attached in it. The height of portable changing module was kept equivalent to an average person's height. There are eight pieces of pipes joined with two in a pair and make all four sides of the changing module and these four of the pipes are fixed in the holes of top and bottom of the surface of the structure.

Conclusion

Based on the findings it can be concluded that majority of the respondents were frequently visiting spiritual places and ghats for holy dip and other religious pujas/customs/offerings. On the basis of the above findings it can be concluded that portable changing module is the need of hour, it must be commercialized. Further, researcher explored the possibility of developing a portable changing module and designed a prototype which is also a very practical solution for the women pilgrims.

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