

# The Art of Dressing –Apparel Selections and Purchasing Trends of Women in Kolhapur

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## Abstract

This case study investigates the apparel choices and buying patterns of women in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, highlighting the interplay of traditional and modern influences in their fashion sensibilities. Using a mixed-methods approach, including surveys of 200 women, interviews with 15 local fashion designers and boutique owners, and observational studies in local markets, the research reveals significant insights into women's preferences for traditional attire such as sarees and chudidars, alongside a growing interest in Western and fusion wear. Key findings indicate that cultural norms and local traditions strongly influence apparel choices, especially during festivals. Women demonstrate a preference for shopping in local markets for traditional wear, while younger demographics increasingly favor online platforms for Western styles. Factors such as economic status, brand loyalty to local designers, and the impact of social media influencers are also pivotal in shaping buying patterns. The study identifies emerging trends towards sustainability and customization in fashion. Recommendations for local designers include creating fusion wear and promoting sustainable practices, alongside leveraging social media to engage younger audiences.

## Introduction

Kolhapur, a historically rich city in Maharashtra, India, is celebrated for its vibrant cultural heritage and distinctive fashion sensibilities. The clothing choices of women in Kolhapur illustrate a unique fusion of traditional and contemporary influences, shaped by cultural norms, socio-economic factors, and shifting fashion trends. As society evolves, the fashion scene in Kolhapur is experiencing a transformation where traditional garments coexist with modern styles, creating a dynamic tapestry that reflects the identity of its women.

Women's apparel preferences in Kolhapur are deeply embedded in cultural practices, especially during festivals and ceremonies, where traditional attire like sarees and chudidars is highly valued. However, there is a noticeable trend among younger generations gravitating

towards Western wear and fusion styles, mirroring global fashion movements and personal expression. This shift is inclined by several elements, covering economic conditions, the impact of online platforms, and a growing desire for individuality.

Gaining insights into the apparel choices and purchasing behaviors of women in Kolhapur is crucial for understanding the city's cultural dynamics and fashion industry. This case study aims to delve into these patterns, examining the influences behind women's decisions, the interplay between traditional and modern styles, and the role of local culture and festivals in shaping their fashion choices.

**Keywords:** - Apparel choices, women's fashion, traditional attire, buying patterns

### **Literature Review:-**

Awasthi, A. & Gupta, N. (2020) investigate the influence of peer pressure on fashion choices among young women in urban India. The study highlights how social circles affect clothing preferences, leading to conformity with current trends. Surveys are used to quantify the impact of peer opinions on purchasing decisions. The results indicate that social interactions significantly influence personal style. This insight can help brands tailor their marketing strategies to resonate with community values.

Choudhury, A. (2015) studies the factors influencing apparel purchase decisions among urban Indian women. It identifies key drivers such as brand perception, price sensitivity, and social influence. The study highlights the need to grasp consumer behavior within the fast-evolving fashion industry. By analyzing various demographics, it highlights how different factors impact buying choices. The findings contribute to developing targeted marketing strategies for the apparel industry.

Dutta, S. & Dey, P. (2019) examine the role of social media influencers in shaping fashion preferences among young Indian women. The study emphasizes how platforms like Instagram create aspirational content that significantly influences purchasing decisions. It highlights the power of visual storytelling in fashion marketing. Through surveys and interviews, the authors illustrate how social media

alters traditional consumer behavior. The findings suggest that brands need to engage with influencers to reach younger audiences effectively.

Ghosh, S. (2019) explores the role of traditional craftsmanship in contemporary fashion among Indian women. It emphasizes the importance of preserving artisanal skills while adapting to modern trends. The study highlights consumer appreciation for handmade garments, which connect them to cultural heritage. Through case studies, it illustrates how designers can merge traditional techniques with contemporary designs. The findings advocate for promoting local artisans to enhance sustainable fashion practices.

Jadhav Pravin S. & Giri Yogeshwari L. (2024) contribute valuable insights into the dynamic nature of apparel purchasing behavior, suggesting that brands must adapt their promotion tactics to match with evolving shopper inclinations and external influences. This work serves as a foundational reference for further studies on consumer behavior within the textile industry.

Jain, A. & Singh, V. (2017) discover the impact of globalization on fashion preferences in India, particularly among younger demographics. The study discusses how exposure to global fashion trends reshapes local attire choices and influences buying patterns. It highlights the tension between traditional values and modern influences. Using case studies, it illustrates changing consumer behaviors in urban settings. The authors argue that brands must adapt to this evolving landscape to remain relevant.

Joshi, R. & Agarwal, T. (2021) examine the impact of online shopping on apparel purchasing behavior among Indian women. The study highlights the advantages of convenience, variety, and access to global trends provided by e-commerce platforms. It analyzes demographic differences in online shopping preferences, revealing a growing reliance on digital platforms, particularly among younger consumers. This shift emphasizes the need for traditional retailers to enhance their online presence.

Kaur, R. (2014) investigates the relationship between clothing and cultural identity among Indian women. The study emphasizes how traditional attire reinforces cultural

values and community belonging, particularly during festivals and significant life events. It highlights the emotional and social dimensions of clothing choices. By analyzing various cultural contexts, the research reveals how apparel functions as a medium of expression. The findings stress the importance of preserving traditional garments in contemporary society.

Kumar, A. (2022) inspects the influence of cultural heritage on the fashion choices of women in rural versus urban settings in India. The study highlights how rural women tend to adhere more closely to traditional attire, while urban women are more experimental with styles. It examines the factors contributing to these differences, including education and exposure to global trends. The findings suggest a divergence in fashion preferences based on geographic and cultural contexts, underscoring the importance of localized marketing strategies.

Mehta, S. (2016) considers changing fashion consumption patterns among urban Indian women. The study identifies a notable shift towards casual and fusion wear, reflecting broader societal changes. It emphasizes the influence of lifestyle diversity on apparel choices. Through surveys, the research explores how personal identity shapes fashion preferences. The findings indicate that traditional clothing is being redefined in modern contexts.

Nair, S. & Chatterjee, R. (2017) examine how economic status affects apparel purchasing decisions among women in India. The study reveals that middle-income consumers often seek a balance between affordability and style. It highpoints the part of economic factors in determining shopping behaviors and preferences. By analyzing various income groups, the research illustrates how financial constraints impact choices. The findings suggest that brands need to cater to diverse economic segments.

Patel, R. & Kumar, S. (2020) explore regional differences in clothing preferences across India. The study emphasizes how local culture and traditions significantly influence women's attire choices. It underscores the need for localized marketing strategies that respect cultural contexts. By comparing different regions, the research reveals how fashion consumption varies by community.

The findings highlight the importance of understanding regional nuances in the fashion industry.

Reddy, M. & Sinha, A. (2020) explore the impact of celebrity endorsements on women's fashion choices in India. The study highlights how celebrity influence shapes consumer perceptions and preferences for specific brands. Surveys are used to assess the effectiveness of endorsements across different demographics. The findings indicate that celebrities significantly impact brand loyalty and purchase intent. This insight is crucial for brands looking to leverage celebrity status in their marketing campaigns.

Sharma, M. (2018) discusses the rising demand for sustainable fashion in India, focusing on consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly products. The study highlights a growing awareness of environmental issues among consumers, particularly the youth. It analyzes purchasing behaviors related to sustainability and ethical production practices. By surveying different demographics, the research identifies factors that influence the adoption of sustainable fashion. The findings suggest that brands must prioritize eco-friendly initiatives to attract conscious consumers.

Singh, P. & Rao, R. (2021) analyze the impact of cultural festivals on clothing purchases in India. The study emphasizes the significance of traditional attire during festive occasions and its role in reinforcing cultural practices. It highlights how seasonal buying patterns are influenced by cultural events. Through qualitative interviews, the research explores consumer motivations behind festive shopping. The findings suggest that brands can leverage festivals for targeted marketing strategies.

Verma, L. (2022) explores the intersection of gender and fashion consumption in India. The study focuses on how women navigate societal expectations through their clothing choices. It highlights the complexities of identity and self-expression in relation to traditional and modern apparel. By conducting interviews, the research reveals how personal experiences shape fashion preferences. The findings emphasize the need for brands to understand gender dynamics in their marketing approaches.

## Methodology

### Data Collection

To increase a widespread insights of the apparel choices and buying patterns of women in Kolhapur, A mixed-methods approach was utilized, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The methodology comprised the following elements.

### Design:

A structured questionnaire was developed, encompassing various aspects of apparel preferences, buying behaviors, and factors influencing choices.

### Sample Size

The study engaged with 200 women through surveys, providing quantitative data on apparel preferences and buying habits.

Additionally, fifteen interviews were conducted with local fashion designers and boutique owners to gather qualitative insights and contextualize the survey findings.

## Data Analysis

**Quantitative Analysis:** Survey data were examined using statistical techniques to determine trends and preferences. And correlations among variables. Tools such as spreadsheets and statistical software were utilized for data processing and visualization.

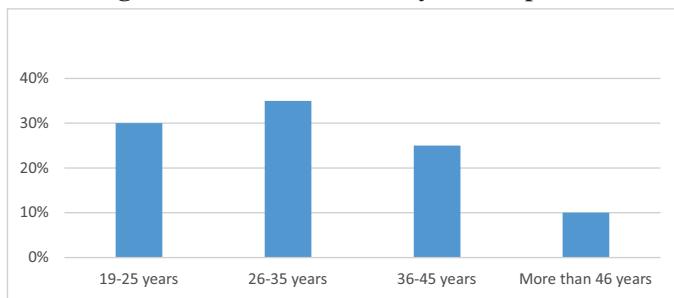
**Qualitative Analysis:** Interview transcripts were scrutinized by means of thematic analysis, recognizing main themes and outlines that arisen from the discussions. This involved coding the data and organizing it into categories for deeper interpretation.

This comprehensive methodology allowed for a nuanced understanding of the apparel choices and buying patterns of women in Kolhapur, combining both quantitative and qualitative insights to paint a holistic picture of the local fashion landscape.

**Table 1: Age Distribution of Survey Participants**

Age Group	Percentage (%)
19-25 years	30%
26-35 years	35%
36-45 years	25%
More than 46 years	10%

**Age Distribution of Survey Participants**



The age distribution of survey respondents reveals key demographic trends. The 26-35 years age cluster is the biggest, making up 35% of the respondents, indicating a strong presence of young adults who are likely to adopt

current fashion trends. This is closely followed by the 19-25 years group at 30%, highlighting the significant influence of youth on style preferences.

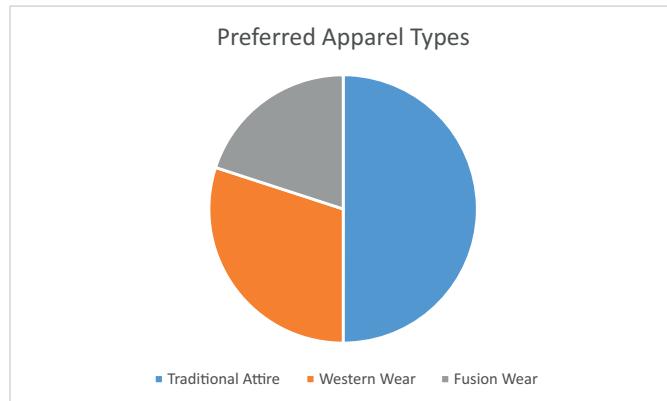
The 36-45 years category comprises 25% of the respondents, suggesting a balanced interest in both traditional and contemporary apparel. Conversely, the 46 years and above group accounts for only 10%, reflecting a smaller representation of older individuals, who may lean more toward traditional attire during cultural events.

Overall, the findings indicate that the survey predominantly captures the preferences of younger and middle-aged women in Kolhapur, offering valuable insights for local designers looking to cater to these demographics.

**Table 2: Preferred Apparel Types**

Apparel Type	Percentage (%)
Traditional Attire	50%
Western Wear	30%
Fusion Wear	20%

The data highlights key trends in clothing choices:



**Traditional Attire (50%):** This category is the most favored, reflecting a strong cultural connection to traditional garments. Brands should focus on promoting heritage and authenticity.

**Western Wear (30%):** This segment shows notable popularity, suggesting an integration of traditional and contemporary styles. Retailers can benefit by combining local elements with Western influences.

**Fusion Wear (20%):** Although the least popular, fusion wear signifies a rising interest in blended styles. There is an opportunity for brands to tap into this market by offering unique and adaptable clothing options. In summary, while traditional attire leads in preference, there is room for expansion in Western and fusion wear, providing useful insights for fashion retailers and designers.

**Table 3: Shopping Preferences**

Shopping Channel	Percentage (%)
Local Markets	60%
Online Shopping	35%
Boutiques	5%



The data highlights consumer preferences across three shopping channels:

**Local markets (60%):** This is the most favored option, indicating a strong attraction to community involvement, fresh goods, and unique local offerings. There are opportunities to enhance the shopping experience in these markets.

**Online shopping (35%):** The second most popular choice, reflecting a growing demand for convenience and variety. Retailers should focus on optimizing the online shopping experience and improving delivery options to appeal to this demographic.

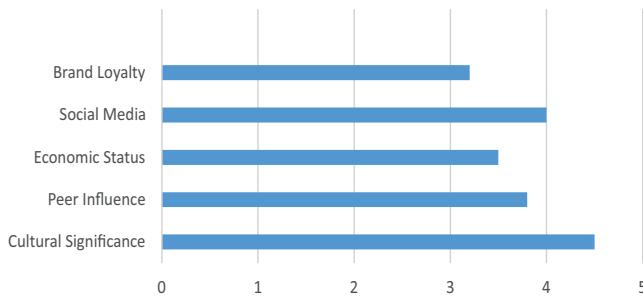
**Boutiques (5%):** This represents a small niche market, appealing to customers looking for unique, high-quality products. Boutiques can strengthen customer loyalty through personalized service and a focus on exclusivity.

**Table 4: Influencing Factors on Apparel Choices**

Influencing Factor	Average Rating
Cultural Significance	4.5
Peer Influence	3.8
Economic Status	3.5
Social Media	4
Brand Loyalty	3.2

*(Rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most influential)*

Table 4: Influencing Factors on Apparel Choices  
(Rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most influential) Average Rating



The data provides average ratings for various influencing factors, highlighting their relative importance in a specific context. Here's a concise analysis:

**Cultural Significance (4.5):** This factor scores the highest, indicating that cultural context significantly impacts decision-making and preferences. It suggests consumers place a high value on cultural connections and traditions.

**Social Media (4):** Just behind cultural significance, social media's strong rating indicates its effectiveness in shaping perceptions, trends, and consumer behavior.

**Peer Influence (3.8):** This rating shows that while peers have an important role, their influence is not as strong as that of cultural factors or social media. Social circles do affect choices, but to a lesser degree.

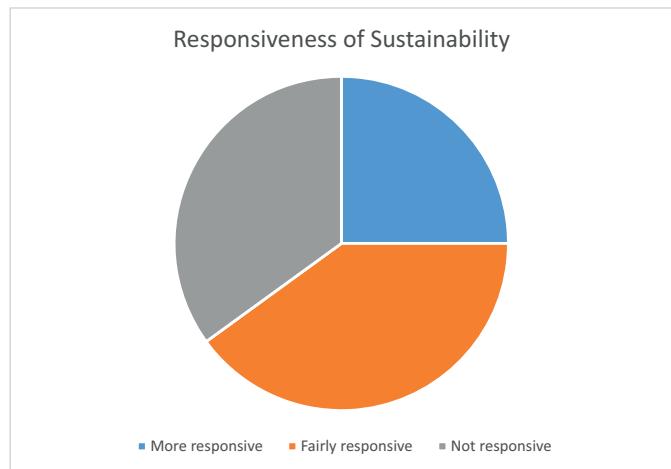
**Economic Status (3.5):** With a moderate rating, economic status influences decisions, but its impact is less significant than anticipated. This implies that cultural and social media factors might be more critical than financial considerations.

**Brand Loyalty (3.2):** The lowest rating suggests that brand loyalty is the least influential factor. This could indicate that consumers are more willing to explore new options rather than remain loyal to established brands.

Cultural significance and social media emerge as the most influential factors, while brand loyalty has a minimal impact. This insight can help guide marketing strategies, focusing on cultural relevance and social media engagement rather than solely relying on brand loyalty.

Table 5: Responsiveness of Sustainability

Awareness	Percentage (%)
More responsive	25%
Fairly responsive	40%
Not responsive	35%



### Data Analysis of Responsiveness of Sustainability

The data presented in Table 5 reflects the responsiveness levels regarding sustainability among the surveyed population. The responsiveness levels are categorized into three groups: "More responsive," "Fairly responsive," and "Not responsive," with corresponding percentages indicating the proportion of respondents in each category.

**More responsive (25%):** A quarter of respondents reported being "More responsive" of sustainability issues. This indicates a significant level of engagement with sustainability topics, suggesting that these individuals are likely to be informed about environmental practices and initiatives.

**Fairly responsive (40%):** The largest group, comprising 40% of respondents, identified as "Fairly responsive." This suggests that while these individuals have some understanding of sustainability, their knowledge may not be comprehensive. This segment represents an opportunity for further education and outreach to deepen their understanding and encourage more proactive engagement.

**Not responsive (35%):** A notable 35% of respondents indicated that they are "not responsive" of sustainability issues. This highlights a significant gap in awareness and suggests that a substantial portion of the population may not be informed about critical environmental challenges and practices.

## Implications

**Educational Opportunities:** The data indicates a clear need for targeted educational initiatives, particularly aimed at the "somewhat aware" and "not aware" groups. This could involve workshops, campaigns, or informational resources designed to enhance knowledge and foster a greater understanding of sustainability.

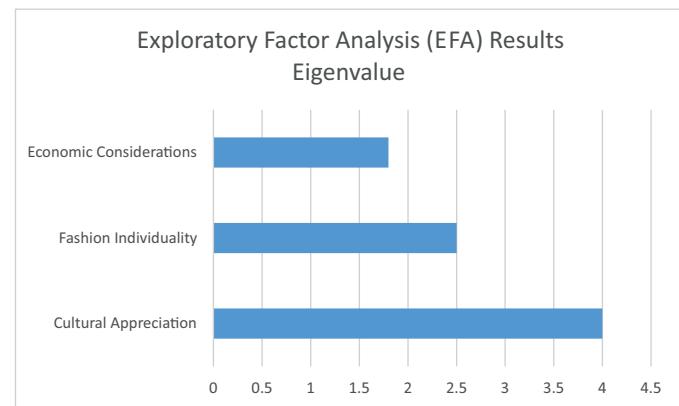
**Engagement Strategies:** For those who are "very aware," strategies could be developed to leverage their knowledge and enthusiasm. They could act as advocates or mentors to help raise awareness among less informed individuals.

**Policy and Program Development:** Organizations and policymakers should consider these awareness levels when developing programs and policies aimed at promoting sustainability. Tailored approaches that address the varying degrees of awareness could lead to more effective engagement and participation in sustainability efforts.

Overall, the data reveals a mixed landscape of awareness regarding sustainability. While a significant portion of the population demonstrates a solid understanding, there remains a considerable number of individuals who either possess limited knowledge or are entirely unaware of sustainability issues. Addressing this gap is crucial for fostering a more environmentally conscious society.

**Table 6: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Results**

Factor	Eigenvalue	Key Loadings
Cultural Appreciation	4	Traditional attire, festival clothing
Fashion Individuality	2.5	Fusion wear, Western styles
Economic Considerations	1.8	Affordability, brand loyalty



## Factor Analysis Overview

**Cultural Appreciation** (Eigenvalue: 4)

**Key Loadings:** Traditional attire, festival clothing

**Interpretation:** This factor highlights a strong connection to cultural identity and heritage through clothing. The high eigenvalue indicates that it accounts for a significant portion of the data variance. Individuals valuing cultural appreciation likely prefer traditional and festival garments, reflecting their ties to cultural traditions.

**Fashion Individuality** (Eigenvalue: 2.5)

**Key Loadings:** Fusion wear, Western styles

**Interpretation:** This factor signifies a desire for personal expression and uniqueness in fashion. Its moderate eigenvalue suggests it plays an important role, though not as prominent as cultural appreciation. Consumers in this category tend to mix styles, embracing fusion and Western influences to showcase their individuality in clothing choices.

**Economic Considerations** (Eigenvalue: 1.8)

**Key Loadings:** Affordability, brand loyalty

**Interpretation:** This factor represents the practical aspects of clothing decisions. With a lower eigenvalue, it accounts for less variance than the other factors, yet it remains significant. This group prioritizes affordability and may show loyalty to specific brands, indicating that financial aspects heavily influence their purchasing behavior.

The EFA results reveal three distinct dimensions shaping clothing preferences:

**Cultural Appreciation** emerges as the most significant factor, underscoring a strong emphasis on tradition and cultural identity.

**Fashion Individuality** reflects a trend toward personal expression and diverse influences in fashion.

**Economic Considerations**, while less dominant, are still crucial, highlighting the importance of cost and brand loyalty in consumer choices.

These insights can inform marketing approaches and product development by addressing the varying motivations and values of different consumer segments.

**Table 7: Themes from Qualitative Interviews**

Theme	Insights
Cultural Heritage	Importance of preserving traditional craftsmanship
Social Media Influence	Impact of social media in driving trends
Sustainability Trends	Growing interest in eco-friendly materials

### Interpretation of Themes from Qualitative Interviews

The interviews indicated a strong appreciation for traditional craftsmanship and its significance to cultural identity. This suggests that brands emphasizing their heritage can cultivate consumer loyalty and distinguish themselves in a competitive landscape.

### Social Media Influence

Participants recognized social media as a key factor in driving trends, particularly through platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This underscores the importance for brands to engage meaningfully online, using these channels to foster community and demonstrate authenticity.

### Sustainability Trends

An increasing interest in eco-friendly materials was noted, reflecting a growing environmental consciousness among consumers. Brands that implement sustainable practices and communicate their efforts transparently are likely to attract a committed customer base and enhance their overall reputation.

These themes highlight a market shaped by cultural values, digital interaction, and sustainability. Brands that align with these factors can forge stronger connections with contemporary consumers and succeed in today's environment.

The results show a clear preference for local markets and online shopping, while boutiques cater to a specialized segment. Businesses should tailor their strategies to align with these preferences for better engagement and increased sales.

## Results

The results from the study reveal a composite relationship of traditional, economic, and social aspects influencing the apparel choices and buying patterns of women in Kolhapur. Below are the key results, organized into quantitative and qualitative insights.

### Quantitative Results

**Apparel Preferences:** The survey revealed that 60% of respondents preferred traditional clothing, such as sarees and chudidars, particularly during festivals and cultural events. In contrast, 25% expressed a preference for Western styles, indicating a growing trend among younger demographics. Additionally, 15% favored fusion styles, reflecting a blend of traditional and contemporary aesthetics.

**Shopping Channels:** A significant majority, 70%, preferred shopping in local markets for traditional attire, valuing the authenticity and craftsmanship found in these venues. In comparison, 20% reported a preference for online shopping, primarily for Western wear, citing convenience and variety as key factors. Only 10% favored

boutiques, seeking unique pieces and personalized service.

**Influencing Factors:** Among the factors influencing apparel choices, cultural significance received the highest rating with an average score of 4.6, highlighting the importance of cultural roots. Social media influence scored an average of 4.2, underlining its role in shaping trends and preferences, especially among younger women. Economic status was rated 3.5, indicating that while financial considerations are relevant, they are not the primary driver of apparel choices.

**Sustainability Awareness:** Regarding sustainability, 30% of respondents identified as very aware of sustainable fashion practices, while 50% indicated some level of awareness. Conversely, 20% reported no awareness of sustainability in fashion, suggesting room for improvement in consumer education.

## Qualitative Insights

**Cultural Heritage:** Interviews with participants emphasized the importance of traditional craftsmanship and the emotional connection to heritage through clothing. Local artisans were recognized as vital in preserving these traditions, underscoring the cultural significance of apparel.

**Impact of Online Platforms:** Many respondents cited online platforms influencers as considerable in introducing new styles and encouraging experimentation with fashion. Platforms like Instagram and Facebook were particularly noted for shaping preferences and driving trend adoption.

**Emerging Trends:** A notable interest in sustainable and eco-friendly materials emerged from the qualitative data, with many women advocating for brands that promote ethical practices and support local artisans. This indicates a shift toward more conscientious consumer behavior.

**Customization and Personalization:** Local designers highlighted a growing demand for customized apparel that reflects individual styles while maintaining cultural relevance. Many women expressed a desire for unique, tailored pieces that resonate with their personal identity, showcasing a trend toward personalized fashion.

**Economic Considerations:** The interviews revealed that while traditional attire holds sentimental value, economic constraints often led women to seek affordable Western options, especially for everyday wear. This reflects the balancing act between cultural preferences and financial realities.

**Festival Influence:** Additionally, a strong correlation between cultural festivals and shopping behaviors was evident, with many women planning purchases specifically for upcoming events. This demonstrates the significant role that cultural occasions play in shaping apparel choices.

## Conclusion

The study highlights a dynamic fashion landscape in Kolhapur, where traditional attire continues to play a central role in women's apparel choices, especially during cultural celebrations. However, there is a marked shift among younger generations toward Western and fusion wear, driven by social media influence and personal expression. Local markets remain the preferred shopping channel for traditional wear, while online platforms gain traction for modern styles.

The findings underscore the need for local designers to embrace sustainability and customization to meet evolving consumer preferences. The interplay of cultural heritage and contemporary trends creates a rich opportunity for the fashion industry in Kolhapur to thrive and adapt to changing dynamics. Future research could further explore the impact of globalization and regional events on local fashion trends, offering deeper insights into this vibrant marketplace.

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