

Study of details and features of the pre-schoolers uniforms of Chandigarh schools

■ Lalita Rani and Jetinder Sohi

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■ **ABSTRACT** : A study on the uniforms of pre-school children of Chandigarh schools was taken up in order to find out the suitability of uniforms in terms of style, designs, details, colours and material; features required in the uniforms and opinions of mothers regarding the school uniforms of pre schoolers. All the preschool children in the study were in the age group of three to five years and were studying in the pre nursery, nursery or kindergarten class. Styles of summer uniforms for boys was almost same in all schools *i.e.* knicker with half sleeves shirt or T-shirt, there was however a slightly difference in the style of knicker as two schools had knicker with a bib. All schools had a belt but three schools had tie in uniforms. Commonly seen styles of uniforms for girls were- five schools had tunic/pleated skirt/pinafore and half sleeves shirt/T-shirt with belts, frocks and knicker with elasticated waistband with shirt/ T-T-shirt. The winter uniform was same for boys and girls in eleven schools. It was trouser and shirt with sweater, tie and jacket for boys, while girls had shirt, skirt with leggings, sweater, tie and jacket as their winter uniform. Five schools had tracksuits. Material of uniform of different schools was almost same *i.e.* terycot for shirts and trousers and acrylic for sweaters. Tracksuit and T-shirts were in hosiery material. Socks, belts and ties were of synthetic material. Black shoes were of leather and P.T. shoes were of canvas material.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Details, Features, Suitability, Pre-schoolers, Uniforms

See end of the paper for authors' affiliations →

Lalita Rani

Govt. Home Science College,
Chandigarh (U.T.) India

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Clothing plays an important role not only in an adults life but is equally important in the case of children who are little aware of their own needs. The space of time between a child's second birthday and his sixth seems to be relatively short, but it is a period in which great changes take place in the child. He develops from an almost helpless baby who is just learning to walk and talk into a relatively independent school boy. As scientific research has made available more information

concerning the way children grow and the part clothing plays in their growth, definite attention has been focused on children's clothing (Ryan, 1966).

Uniform is a symbol of discipline (Brunsma and Rockquemore, 1998), status, order, and sense of equality that leads to success. Uniform compels a person to work within the rules and regulations of the organization and uniform leads to consciousness and sense of responsibility. Uniform can help in building up a

nationalistic spirit as they remove caste differences. The introduction of uniform can lead to economizing on clothing expenditure as a limited number of clothes will be adequate. Uniform is a symbol or a dress (Merriam-Webster.com 2011) that represents a group a particular institute (*En.wikipedia.org/wiki/school-uniform*). Davidson (1990) reported that the uniforms as a way to impart discipline and obedience in the students. They were supposed to behave in a similar manner as the monks they resembled.

Ryan and Ryan (1998) examined that the gang conversation in schools may be prohibited with school uniforms. The identified school uniforms as a persuasive method to identify possible invaders or strangers in and around schools (Gursky, 1996). Taking an account of clothing requirements of pre-schoolers, their school uniform should be- patterned for growth; have ease and freedom yet it should not be too large; well constructed to stand hard wear and be comfortable; roomy neck opening; strong reinforcements at all points of strain such as placket-openings, pocket-corners, knees, elbows, armholes and under buttons; closely woven material which will remain fresh even after several washes; good workmanship, durable flat seams; simple, accompanied by becomingness of line and colour; fasteners sewn firmly to withstand tugging and pulling and button holes closely worked; school shoes should be comfortable with good fit and material of shoes should be durable (Gawne, 1969).

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study dealt with the uniforms of pre-school children which required meeting with teachers and mothers and observed the uniforms of children. Therefore "Survey method" was used that included interview and observation. According to the list of the school's total strength of the schools in Chandigarh was seventy-five. Out of 75, thirty-three schools had nursery and K.G. classes were selected. The schools were then categorized according to their location into different

zones. Thirty per cent of schools were then selected from each zone by the lottery method. The sample for the present study consisted of 200 mothers of pre-school children, hundred each of boys and girls. The total number of mothers by $n=200$, mothers of boys $n_1=100$ and mothers of girls $n_2=100$ (each) were selected for collection of data. A total of eleven schools were selected and the number of children from each school. Data were collected using structured interview schedule and analysed statistically.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study "A study details and features of the uniform of pre-schoolers of the Chandigarh" are presented and discussed in this section. Abbreviations used in the chapter are-

N= Total number, f = Frequency, %= Percentage

The sample was represented as:

N= Mothers (200), n_1 = Mothers of boys (100), n_2 = Mothers of girls (100)

In India, pre-school is divided into two stages-lower kindergarten (LKG) and upper kindergarten (UKG). Typically, an LKG class would comprise children of three to four years of age, and UKG class comprises children from four to five years of age. After finishing upper kindergarten, a child enters class first or standard first of primary school. Often kindergarten is an integral part of regular schools, though sometimes they are independent units and are often part of a larger chain (*www.Definition of kindergarten/html*). It can be seen data from Table 1 that the preschool children were in the age group of 3-5 years. More number of girls *i.e.* 63% were in the age group of 3-4 years as compared to 54% boys. More boys (46%) were in the age group of 4-5 years than the girls (37%).

The data in Table 2 showed that style of summer uniforms for boys was almost same in all schools *i.e.* knicker with half sleeves shirt or T-shirt. There was however a slight difference in the style of knicker as two schools had knicker with a bib. Ten schools had a

Table 1 Distribution of the children on the basis of their age

(n= 200)

Sr. No.	Age of the children (Yrs).	Children			
		Boys ($n_1=100$)		Girls ($n_2=100$)	
		f	%	f	%
1.	3-4	54	54	63	63
2.	4-5	46	46	37	37

N= Total number, f = Frequency, %= Percentage

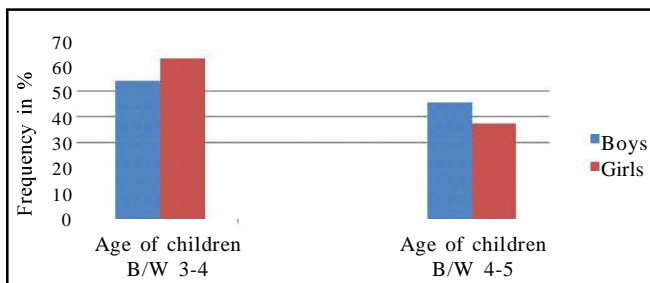


Fig. 1 : Different age groups of children

Sr. No.	Style of boys uniform	Number of schools (11)
1.	Knicker and T-shirt/shirt	9
2.	Knicker with bib and T-shirt/shirt	2
3.	Belt	10
4.	Tie	3

n₁= Mothers of boys (100)

belt but only three schools had tie in the uniform.

Table 3 showed that the schools had different style

Sr. No.	Style of girls uniform	Number of schools (11)
1.	Tunic and shirt	4
2.	Skirt and shirt/T-shirt	2
3.	Frock	2
4.	Knicker and T-shirt	1
5.	Pinafore and shirt/ T-shirt	2
6.	Belt	5
7.	Tie	2

n₂= Mothers of girls (100)

of summer uniform for girls. More number of schools (4) had tunic and half sleeves shirt as the uniform, two schools had pleated skirt with shirt/T-shirt and two schools had frocks with sailor's collar/ stand and fall collar as the uniform. Two schools had pinafore and shirt and one school had knicker with elasticated waistband and a round neck T-shirt as the uniform for girls. Five schools had belt and only two had necktie in their uniform.

The data in Table 4 that winter uniform of the eleven schools was different for boys and girls. It was trouser and shirt with the sweater, and jacket for boys; while girls had a shirt, trouser/skirt/tunic with leggings, sweater, and jacket as their winter uniform. Five schools, however, had same uniform *i.e.* tracksuit for boys as well as girls. In preschool though, girls wear skirts and blouses and boys wear short pants and shirts. In other parts like New Zealand and Australia where the British colonial rule was in effect, the uniform system was followed in the public school system. The dressing sense closely resembled with the English students. Though there have been modifications undertaken by schools as to in which type of schools the uniform is essential. Mostly in Catholic, senior secondary and private schools, uniforms are mandatory. The purpose of school uniform is to promote team spirit, discipline and enhance equality among all students (www.cbsenext.com/learners-portal/le).

Material/Fabric of uniform :

Material of uniform of different schools was almost same with slight variations.

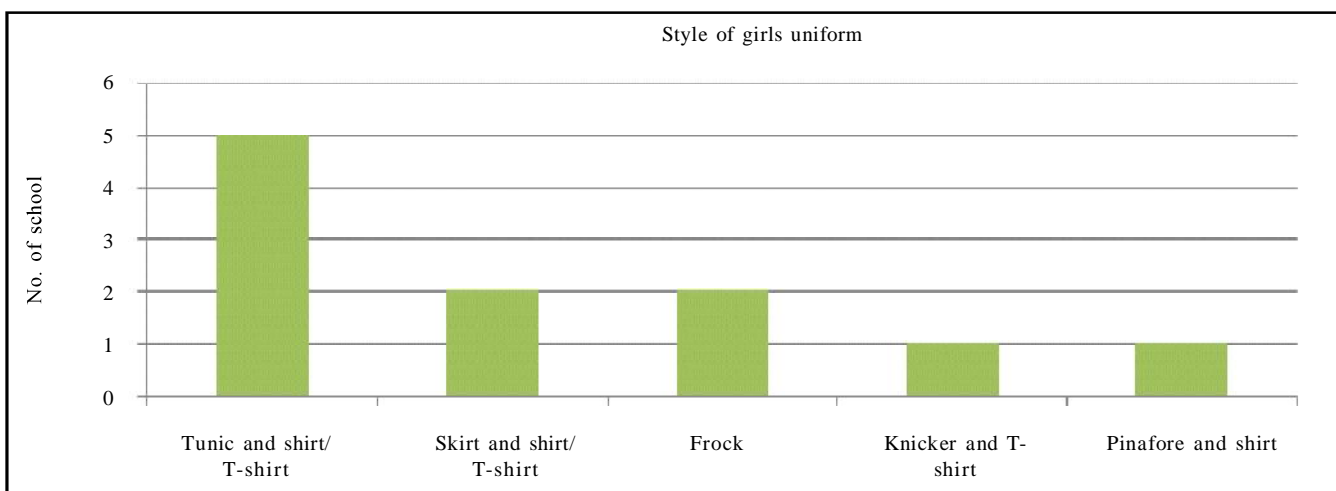


Fig. 2 : Distribution of schools to the style of the girl's uniform

Table 4 : Distribution of schools according to the style of children's uniform in winters			(n ₁ + n ₂ =200)
Sr. No.	Style of children uniform		Number of schools (n=11)
	Boys	Girls	
1.	Shirt, trouser with sweater, and jacket	Shirt, trouser/skirt/tunic with leggings, sweater, and jacket	11
2.	Track suit	Track suit	05

n₁= Mothers of boys (100), n₂= Mothers of girls (100).

Shirt:

The material used for shirt was a blend of cotton and polyester for summers.

Trousers/knicker:

The material used for trousers/knicker was terycot. One school had denim for knicker as well as trousers. Check/stripe material was used for trouser/knicker in two schools.

Skirt/pinafore and tunic:

The material used for skirt/pinafore and tunic was terycot and denim for summers. Plain or check or striped material was used for skirts/pinafore and tunics in some schools.

Frock:

The material used for the frock was terycot and lizzy-bizzy. Check material was used for the frocks.

Sweater:

The material used for sweaters was Acrylic.

Tracksuit:

The material used for tracksuits was hosiery. Combination of two colours was used for tracksuit.

Jackets:

The material used for jackets was polyester. The colour of jacket varied from school to school. Mostly jackets were in single colour.

Tie:

The tie was made of polyester fabric. Mostly schools had two or three colour striped ties.

Belts:

Belts were of synthetic material in two or three coloured stripes with a metallic buckle having the name and logo of the school.

Socks:

The socks were of blended cotton in the summers, whereas acrylic material was used in winters. The colour of socks varied from school to school. Socks had bands of different colours in the border.

Shoes:

The shoes were of black leather for summer as well as winter.

P.T. Shoes:

The P.T. shoes were of white canvas material.

Details of the school uniform :

Shirt:

Shirts had stand and fall collar, a patch pocket and were open in front. Sleeves were half in summers and full in winters.

T-Shirt:

T-shirts were either round neck or with collar.

Knickers:

Knickers were with or without bib and had elasticized waistband.

Tunic/pinafore and skirt:

All tunics had V- neckline with pleated skirt. Pinafore had straight or pleated skirt. A-Line frocks had stand and fall collar or sailor's collar with opening till waist in front and half sleeves. Skirts had box pleats.

Sweater:

All sweaters had V-neckline with two or three stripes in the waistband, neckband and wristband. One school had front open without sleeves sweater for both boys and girls.

Jacket:

All schools had single colour jacket. Only one school had double coloured jacket with hood.

The Table 5 revealed that regarding the style, more number (90%) of the mothers of boys were satisfied with the style of the summer uniform than that of winter uniform (70%). While 30% and 10% mothers were not satisfied with the style of the summer and winter uniform, respectively.

Regarding the design however, more mothers were satisfied with winter uniform (80%) than the summer uniform (70%) mothers. It can thus be said that design of winter uniform was more satisfactory than the summer uniform whereas style of summer uniform was more satisfactory than the winter uniform.

The style and design of winter uniform was found to be more satisfactory among the mothers of girls *i.e.* 80% and 90% mothers, respectively, than the style and design of the summer uniforms (72% and 80% mothers, respectively).

Twenty eight per cent and 20% mothers were not satisfied with the style and design of summer uniforms. In case of winter uniform 20% of mothers were not satisfied with the style, while 10% mothers were not satisfied with the design. The mothers who were not satisfied with the style and design of the uniform felt

that uniform was not designed according to the child's age and the style was not suitable for the summer season (Table 6). It can thus be said that style and design of winter uniform was more satisfactory than the summer uniform may be because it was designed according to the season.

As indicated by the data of Table 7, majority (93% and 90%) of the mothers were satisfied with the details like sleeves, fitting of collar, cuffs and elastic in knickers, while a few *i.e.* 7% and 10% were not satisfied with the details of summer and winter uniform, respectively.

Quality of stitching was seen to be more satisfactory in case of winter uniforms (90% mothers) than the summer uniforms (80%). Few mothers were not satisfied with the stitching of ties. Half of the mothers (50%) were not satisfied with colour of the summer uniform. In case of winter uniform more number of mothers (70%) were satisfied with the colour while (30%) of mothers were not satisfied with the colour of the uniform. Mothers were dissatisfied with the colour of uniforms because they were either too bright or too dark or the complete uniform in one colour was too monotonous. Suitability of the material was found to be satisfactory among more number of

Table 5 : Distribution of the mothers on the basis of the satisfaction/dissatisfaction regarding the style and design of the uniform for boys (n₁=100)

Sr. No.	Features	Summer uniform		Winter uniform	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
		f	f	f	f
1.	Style	90	10	70	30
2.	Design	70	30	80	20

n₁= Mothers of boys (100), f=Frequency

Table 6 : Distribution of the mothers on the basis of satisfaction/dissatisfaction regarding the style and design of the uniform for girls (n₂=100)

Sr. No.	Features	Summer uniform		Winter uniform	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
		f	f	f	f
1.	Style	72	28	80	20
2.	Design	80	20	90	10

n₂= Mothers of girls (100), f=Frequency

Table 7 : Distribution of the mothers on the basis of satisfaction/dissatisfaction regarding the details and quality of stitching of the boys' uniform (n₁=100)

Sr. No.	Features	Summer uniform		Winter uniform	
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
		f	f	f	f
1.	Details <i>i.e.</i> collars, cuff, sleeves and Elastic in knickers/trousers	93	7	90	10
2.	Quality of stitching	80	20	90	10
3.	Colour	50	50	70	30
4.	Material	70	30	80	20

n₁= Mothers of boys (100), f=Frequency

mothers for summer as well as winter uniform (70% and 80%), respectively. Mothers found material for winter uniform more suitable than that for summers.

Conclusion :

Preschool is a time when kids are learning about the world, shapes, patterns and colours, including those on clothes. A child's self-image can be affected by the clothing he wears. Clothes for the preschool child should be made to encourage him to dress himself and thus grow in independence. School uniforms are also an important part of the children's clothing. At this stage of life, the child is very active. He keeps on running, jumping and playing so his uniforms should be comfortable, protective, easy to maintain and easy to wear, economical and durable. Keeping all these points in mind, they should be selective school uniforms according to their ages. Schools should be selecting their uniforms very carefully as the uniforms affects their physical, social and mental development. Therefore, the present study was planned to study the uniforms and their required features *i.e.* comfort, style, durability, with self help features and economical for preschoolers.

Authors' affiliations:

Jetinder Sohi, Govt. Home Science College, Chandigarh (U.T.) India

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