SUMMARY

The final chapter of this study encapsulates briefly the highlights of the systematic approach undertaken and duly presented for easy understanding of the elaborate study. It begins with a brief introduction to the semiology of the Indian sari, concise review of literature, followed by main objectives of the study, methodology employed to meet the objectives and scope of the study. The key findings of the study and the analysis and discussions are elicited. This led to formulating the key conclusions for the study undertaken.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The sari is a very versatile garment; one size fits all and has a sustainable life cycle. Ethnic craft sustenance design directions & vintage fashions have created a gradual shift towards the handloom and hand embroidered masterpieces of Indian crafts persons. The sari fashions have become more inclusive, where there is a fashionable sari to suit every pocket, taste and occasion; the party wear saris, the black cocktail saris, bridal saris, designer saris etcetera.

The sari has not only been iconic for the geographic region but also the material /fabric that it is made up of, also the degree of ornamentation on it or the very draping style convey the socio-economic status of the woman draped in that sari.There are at least 108 ways to drape a sari (Chisti,2010). It is safe to say that worldwide, no garment has stood the test of time as has the sari.

The sari symbolized womanhood in Hindu culture hence the coming of age was signified by a transition from a skirt-blouse (*Ghaghra-choli*) / Trouser-Tunic (*Salwar-Kameez*) to a more grown up garment; the sari. Even in contemporary India the sari is often a preferred ensemble for a school farewell party, the first cousin's or friends' wedding or to convey that a young lady is ready for courtship and or marriage.

When a woman wears a sari she looks and feels different(Goswami, 2010).As she walks,she sways her hips gently to negotiate walking within its loosely draped fold. She holds herself a bit straighter, emphasizing the curves of her bosom and her bottom. She definitely feels more feminine, more alluring and more pulled together. This is evident through literary findings, paintings, sculptures, films about the land of Kamasutra, the Khajuraho temples, and the miniature paintings to its transition

today.The sari is the most versatile garment because the wearer can show as much or as little as she likes.

Statement of Problem

What does the sari mean /signify for Indian women, Indian fashion system and economy/ industry?

This study has been taken forward based on the work of the scholars from diverse backgrounds like:**Communication theorist McLuhan** was ahead of his time, writing about technology in the 1960's, his arguments seems even more relevant today in the internet age. McLuhan argues that the proliferation of electronic technology has extended our biological senses of sight and sound beyond their normal range. He is saying that through technology such as the telephone or television we are able to communicate instantaneously across the globe, which consequently impacts by speeding up the global economy and social life. McLuhan argues that due to technology and its instant communication we feel as close to someone on the other side of the globe as if they were in our own village. Therefore we can understand why McLuhan says we are in a 'global village'. With easy access to internet, communication is real time without a lag.

The French Postmoderntheorist Jean Baudrillard in 1980'sstated we now live in a world increasingly dominated by images and signs, which have become our primary reality. They are **simulations** of reality and we therefore live in a state of hyper-reality, which has no reality beyond itself. We can use Las Vegas and Disney World as examples of hyper-reality as they do not reference reality.

SB Kaiser in the symbolic interaction (SI) theory of 1991, proposes that fashion change thrives on cultural tensions that contribute to individual articulations of styles that are at least initially ambiguous. These negotiations, they say, enable fashion subjects to grapple with ongoing cultural tensions in subtle but complex ways and because these underlying tensions are never completely resolved, the process of fashion change continues endlessly.

Sari remains the biggest clothing category: Indian women and the sari form the core of history and legacy that's what the numbers suggest. Saris dominate the women's ethnic wear segment by 53 per cent market share, while *salwar-kameez* constitutes 38

per cent of women's ethnic wear market. The remaining 9 percent is contributed by petticoat and blouse (Kumar,2013).

There are a few designers and brands that have experimented and taken this category to a newer level. Indian fashion designers have become popular across the world for their ethnic wear lines, their Indian bridal wear and Bollywood collections. Satya Paul was one of the first designers to come out with prints on saris, which were abstract, geometrical and completely in sync with regard to color and fabrics. Brands like Anokhi and Fabindia have greatly helped in popularizing the ethnicwear, which has been sourced from handloom clusters following the traditional methods of vegetable dyeing, hand block printing etcetera.

The preference for *salwar-kameez* and saris is a regional choice. In the northern regions of India, it is the preferred apparel for both regular and festive occasions as it has been a traditional garment across generations. Even other regions prefer saris for special occasions. While Tier-I cities tend to be strongly governed by a traditional usage of the sari, the ethic wear category is increasingly becoming the most sought-after category, as it offers both convenience and conformity. Thus, the focus tends to be on comfort fabrics, such as cotton, with the mid-fashion quotient.

5.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study was initiated by carefully looking at multi-discipline researches in area of anthropology, socio- psychological aspects of clothing, sociology, psychology, semiology of fashion, non-western fashion, historical references and evolution of the sari and fashion in India, business and trend reports of the sari industry.

For this research the study of Indian costume traditions and cultural practices around the Indian sari was undertaken, which revealed several variations in design through the influence of the socio-cultural ethos and local environment in its totality. The distinction of the Indian fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like, family albums, films, magazine articles, red carpets appearance etcetera, was gathered carefully. The data collected through visual and literary references on the costume traditions was studied in detail for non-verbal meaning making and specific communication.

Research on the non-western fashion systems and semiology of fashion apparel is of recent origin, a large number of fashion scholars and costume historians have

researched on the non-western fashion, semiology of fashion, fashion systems, case studies on other fashion systems from the non-western countries like Japan, Morocco etc. and written extensive accounts, which are a rich source of information about the evolution of their costume traditions, influences of western fashion, globalization, supply chains, development of their unique fashion systems.The review provided the background to and justification for the research undertaken. All the relevant research was summarized and further evaluation the as the collated work was commenced. The review of literature focusing on the background, relevance and history of the Indian sari, semiotics of fashion apparel and semiotic theory, has been collected from books, journalsand private photographs.Some of these documents are available and serve as an important source of information on semiotic theories, nonverbal communications by the ethnic fashion systems. These accounts were studied and they formed a vital part of the secondary research to gain insight on the semiotic meanings conveyed by fashion apparel and interpreted by the onlooker.

5.2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are stated below:

1. To understand the semiology of fashion apparel.

2. To study the semiotic meaning of the Indian sari with the changing role of women in society.

3. To study the semiotic interpretation of the Indian sari by trade organizations/ industry and designers.

4. To analyze and interpret the semiotics of the sari for trend mapping.

5. To analyze the semiotics and interpret the Indian fashion system.

5.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to willingness of respondents to answer the survey on personal clothing choices, especially the saris.This study would provide a reference point regarding the current scenario of the sari and its semiotic interpretations. The sari is worn for almost 5000 years, across the Indian subcontinent and has been adapted to

the changing socio- political scenarios over centuries. It is essential to understand the semiology of garment which is woven in 2 dimensions and draped in more than(Chisti,2010) 108 ways in three dimensions; by women pan India and each sari is a unique expression of the wearer. The tacit meaning of the sari: a fabric, a garment, a cultural symbol, heritage textile, sheer utility, national identity, sustainability needed to be studied.

5.4 METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was used for this study on the semiology of the Indian sari since the paradigm of qualitative research includes a focus on process versus product or outcomes. The qualitative paradigm also focuses on an individual's experience and description of life, situations and since this study explored individual perception and non- verbal meaning making, the qualitative approach was best suited to this goal.A research design was developed in order to cover all aspects to be studied as identified in the objectives and scope of the research. An exploratory research which would be co-relational in its approach in order to study and establish relationships between varied aspects of factors influencing apparel selection was found to be most appropriate for the envisaged study. Such a derivative, descriptive and qualitative research would be able to provide the necessary insights and deeper understanding of the evolution of the drapes, grooming practices and styling of the Indian Sari and relate it to semiotic theory for fashion. From the viewpoint of application of findings, the research was more applied than conclusive, as the conclusions were a result of testing theories.

Phase 1 Secondary research and survey - Literature review and Area selections: preliminary data on the Indian fashion system.

Phase II: Primary Data collection

1   Focused group discussion with expert panelist.
2   Questionnaire for 3 groups: Educated women from middle and upper income group,women from lower income group and male respondent.
3   Case studies, photographic interpretations of primary images

Phase III: Analysis of Data,Worldview and Creation of models for the Indian fashion system.

In this exploratory research the secondary data was collected using literary references, visual references and case studies to understand the semiology of fashion apparel and

mainly the sari. For primary data focused group discussion with five expert panelists from diverse backgrounds was conducted on the basis of exhaustive interview schedule, to get qualitative and open ended input on **The Essence of the sari**. The findings from all these methods were instrumental in drawing detailed questionnaires for conducting survey with 3 distinct groups of respondents: Educated Middle and Upper middle class women -300 Questionnaires,Lower middle class women - 60, by way of conducting interview schedules, through research assistance and Men respondents -35 questionnaires.The findings of the Phase II questionnaires have been analyzed using percentages and frequencies. And responses to each question were mapped against the most relevant objective of the study and discussed respectively. Thereafter case studies, primary and secondary photographs were collected and grouped in 23 unique plates to be further analyzed and interpreted for accomplishing each objective of the study. The data was collated and analyzed to reach conclusions through theory building and theory testing approach.All the data was further analyzed and decoded for creating Models which supplement illustrating the robust the final outcomes of the study and formulating theoretical framework for the Indian fashion system.

5.5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study have been stated and discussed in the following subsections for better understanding:

5.5.1 Phase I) Review of Literature (The results have been most help in understanding the semiology of fashion and has been explained in 5.5.5.1. The review was crucial to formulating the base for this study; the subsequent robust methodology and the key questions for the focused group discussion, three surveys and also in enhancing the observations of the case studies and photographic references.

5.5.2 Phase II) Focused group discussion.

5.5.3. Phase II) Interpretation of the survey for all 3 groups.

     5.5.3.1. Survey Monkey Results for women from various industry sectors and middle and upper middle class backgrounds.

     5.5.3.2. Survey Results for women from lower income class.

5.5.3.3.Survey Results for men respondents.

5.5.3.4. Comparisons of findings from all the phase II survey data from all 3 groups

5.5.4 Phase II) Decoding Photographic references and case studies

5.5.5 Phase III) Analysis of data and model development

The key findings of all the stages of Phase II (5.5.3 to 5.5.4): Focused group discussion, interpretation of the survey for all three groups;women from various industry sectors and   middle and upper middle class backgrounds; Survey Results for women from lower income class and Survey Results for men respondents. Comprehensive comparisons of findings from all the phase II survey data from all 3 groups and meticulous decoding of photographic references and case studies. These were all inter-related to the objectives of the study and were further interpreted for each objective and models were developed for the Indian fashion system.

5.5.5.1 Understanding the semiology of fashion apparel.

5.5.5.2 The semiotic meaning of the Indian sari with the changing role of women in society.

5.5.5.3 The semiotic interpretation of the Indian sari by trade organizations/ industry and designers.

5.5.5.4 Interpreting the semiotics of the sari for trend mapping.

5.5.5.5 Analysis of the semiotics and interpretation of the Indian fashion system.

5.5.1. Understanding the semiology of fashion apparel.

Barthes's book and his theory of Semiology of fashion had a profound impact on the field (Barthes, 1990). Fashion he argues is the product of the social relations and activities that are involved in putting an outfit together. Fashion is actualized through the way the garments are worn. Barthes makes a distinction between three kinds of garments:

1. The Real garment
2. The Represented garment
3. And the used Garment, corresponding to the process of production, distribution and consumption.

To develop this Barthes (Barthes,2006) drew on the discipline of semiotics. **Semiology is the science of forms or signs**, and in case of fashion, the forms relate to the garments, details, accessories, and modes of clothes. If we conceive of **elements as signs,** we can see how they compose a **language** of clothes **(Langue) and the clothed body** of an individual constitutes a specific statement by way of the **choice and arrangement of clothing (Parole).** To understand this, we need to break down the idea of a sign into two components:

The signifier - Physical referent

The Signified – Mental concept implied by signifier

We apparently instinctively read a contextual grammar into our clothing encounters. This contextual reading is a code or set of shared rules that enables us to connect the signifier with the signified contextual codes might include primness, authority, formality, practicality, relaxation & hostility. Some codes may be localized, embedded in a subculture, adopted as national dress or worn across the globe. Thus we need to think of another level of signification: **Denotation and Connotation.**

Denotation - Refers to the straightforward meaning that we attach to clothing.

Connotation -The symbolic embedded meanings of an item of apparel or how it is worn.

A semiotic theory of fashion explains fashion as a system of signs, symbols and communicative meaning-making that sees items of apparel as a language with a grammar that is composed of symbolic codes. Understanding of internal and external fashion flows is central to the understanding of fashion cycles and systems.

Sladein his case study on Japan argues that modernity actually stimulates tradition, for in modernity progress is constantly sought, yet constantly questioned, undermined and remodeled. Modernity, he says everywhere repeatedly clothes itself in reconstructions of the past, recreating a national costume and inventing national traditions to authenticate the very idea of the nation itself. Simultaneously, the significance of place increases with globalization because it represents a threat due to the speed and flexibility with which ideologies and goods flow across national

boundaries(Slade,2009). These theories have been helpful in gaining the understanding of the semiology of fashion apparel.

5.5.2. The semiotic meaning of the Indian sari with the changing role of women in society.

Decoding of meaning conveyed by apparel to the observer was helpful in understanding the needs that apparel fulfill.Panelist for the focused group discussion were Rta Kapur Chisti -Textile Scholar and author, Padmashree Wendell Rodricks - Minimalist designer & revivalist , Bhamini Subrmanium -Textile and fashion designer, Karishma Shahani Khan- Founder and Principal designer Ka:sha design label, Nandita Abraham- CEO Pearl Academy, India. The panelists' responses to the purpose of wearing the sari was very enriching ; where the influence of Portugese inquisition and Christianity on the **Red Pottuna sari** in Goan culture and offering of sari to the Goan deity **Shanta Durga** *by the Hindu community*, significance of the sari for each function in Tamil Brahmin wedding . They also discussed the relationship of the Mythology and history and suggest that history has to become mythology to stay alive; something that resonates that we use it as history but put it into a mythological context. The panelist carried some examples of their work for sharing and enhancing audience engagements .Chisti gave wonderful demonstration on dimensions of the various handwoven saris and draping styles on live models.

The responses in the survey and the focused group discussion were further endorsed; in the interpretations of the case studies. Across age groups the preference was for the modern style of sari draping, 6 yard sari with tailored matching blouse. The women preferred draping their sari *pallu* in free falling single layer, pinned on the left shoulder. While at home or outside the home, at ease with their sari. The sari preference and draping style was unique to each woman and the most influential factor was profession; for one needed to portray the correct image for the profession. The sari has proven to be an iconic example of power dressing adopted by women CEO's, politicians, airhostesses, hospitality industry, sisters of missionaries etc. The gender stereotypes are broken in many ways and women are taking up jobs, which were at par or well-paying than their partner/spouses. The role the women played in society was understood from the semiotic meanings they conveyed regarding their age, profession, socio-economic status, etc.

The urban fashionistas have adopted interesting saris in practical drape with interesting and unconventional styling for daywear. The *Nivi* style, securely pleated sari worn with minimum 3 pins was secure enough for a practical fuss free commute to work and long work hours in office. The women who were not used to sari complained that they found it difficult drape or work with it at home. However many women led a relatively active and strenuous life and performed manual labor wearing sari. Few ladies draped in a 9 yard sari rode a motorbike with great ease.

Satellite television has changed daily lifestyle and the soap opera characters have become very influential, their onscreen dressing became huge influence for sari fashion, they endorsed brands selling online as well as in local markets pan India. Social Media and Hollywood are huge influencers too.

Wearing a new sari (draped garments, stitching is considered to be impure) for religious ceremonies, offering *puja* at temples or on festivals at home, it continues to be considered auspicious. The major Indian festivals like*Holi, Ganesh Utsav,Navratri /Durga Pujo, Diwali* etcetera were occasions for family reunions and celebrations, so the best saris are worn even by women who have discontinued wearing saris on a daily basis.

The comparison of results from the three groups of respondents indicated that majority of men (46%) and middle and upper income group women (32%) were in the age group of 35-44 years, and majority of lower income group women (43%) were in the age range of 25-34year of age, which was almost 10 years younger than the other two groups. The results indicated that majority of the respondents in all the three groups were married.

Appraisals regarding the view on the practice of wearing the sari (29%) few men respondents said that sari will continue to be everyday wear and majority of men (66%) said it will worn for festive occasions and weddings; (49%) there was almost positive response towards women wearing sari to work by the men.

The responses of women in upper and higher income group; indicated that majority (88%) wore the sari. Regarding the practice of wearing the sari in future and the number of sari wearers reducing (53.1%) and number of sari wearers not reducing (46.9%) was found to be very close. Majority (72.7%) of respondents said it would

continue to be an integral part of the wardrobe. Majority (74.2%) also said the sari would continue to be a part of the Indian women's bridal trousseau.

The majority (60%) of lower income group women wore sari daily, majority of respondents from this group preferred wearing sari to work (72%) and the major reason they stated was that they found it to be comfortable. The responses regarding the "discomfort while working wearing a sari" were also substantial in all the three group, at the same time there was agreement on the major reasons attributed for women continuing to wear sari "It is a very graceful draped garment, "Very comfortable for the wearer" and "It is sensuous garment". This quantitative data supported the qualitative observations by the expert panelist and case studies that the Indian sari would continue to be worn across socio- economic group, for everyday wear as well as special occasions, the details and variations would be varied and unique to each woman. It was difficult to rely solely on the quantitative data in this study as cross referencing of data showed contradictory results when it comes to sari preference for each individual sari wearer.

5.5.3. The semiotic interpretation of the Indian sari by trade organizations/ industry and designers

The Indian sari has continued to be worn for almost 5000 yearsthe panelists shared some iconic sari stories which touched upon tradition, aesthetic appeal, comfort, national identity. Textile scholar, Chisti opined that sari is something about identity, being traditional, a way of remembering where we came from and paying a tribute to a garment which is conceived in two dimensions of warp and weft on the loom; and worn in three dimensions as draped garment. It is an ingenious garment in a country which is 10 months warm and one or two months of good weather. What is ingenious is that it is capable, unlike the kimono; of constant recreation and reinvention, it is not static.

Minimalist Designer Rodricks throughout his journey as designer, tutor, robust researcher and revivalist of the *Goan Kunbi Sari*, "Wendell Rodricks *kunbi sari* " which is white with Ikkat accents of red and black, weighs about 500gms, as he feels curvy Indian women , who he referred as "voluptuous goddesses" should not feel the weight of the sari. Wendell opines that the sari is a "very intelligent garment" as it

was invented to give length with the pleats, goes around on bias and hugging voluptuous Indian hips with a big cascade at the back which cuts the hips to half.

All the panelists unanimously agreed that thesari segment/industry is not a sunset industry and the sari will remain an integral part of wardrobe, despite the decrease in number of sari clad women in daily wear. The Indian sari as work formalwear will be more evident in comparison to the western suit. They stated reasons why they felt so. Abraham asenior corporate professional expressed that she started wearing a sari after her mid-forties when she switched gears from academics to the corporate world and realized the need to assert her femininity as a woman leader; in a sari at work amongst her peers who were predominantly men wearing suits and she took strong corporate leadership roles.

The Sari shopping experience was very unique, traditionally it was low seating on mattresses covered in white sheets in family-run shops. The salesman would keep spreading multiple saris till the ladies are flattered. The relationship with the customers and the convincing skills - glib of the salesman are unmatched. They helped the customer to drape the sari on the spot. Or draped it on own selves to help one visualize better and take a decision; much before the concept of a trial room came into practice in Indian ready to wear segment.

 Another interesting observation was that sari shopping was seldom a solitary experience; one would have the most trusted friend, partner along. If it was a group of women then it was more entertaining, usually the case for festive or wedding shopping. With the onset of online shopping a lot of women have considered that option, where one saw the draped sari in all angles before taking the final call, where convenience supersedes the sensorial experience.

The comparison of results from the three groups of respondents regarding their sari buying (sourcing) practices indicated that majority of men and women from middle and upper income group preferred the local shops and markets, malls and chain-stores. The data indicated that there were multiple type of preferences for each option of sourcing saris and there was no direct co relation between women from middle and upper income group and women from lower income group responses .There it was observed that the lower income group preferred shopping in the local shops and markets too and a good majority indicated that they did not buy from exhibitions,

malls, online or TV shopping mode was not very popular till the time of the studying the lower income groups. It is also noteworthy that the growing popularity and convenience of online shopping has led to co-existence of both "Brick and Click" mode of buying saris amongst the middle and upper classes. The qualitative data often has been helpful in verifying the soundness and cross referencing of quantitative data for gaining deeper insights on buying behavior.

5.5.4. Interpreting the semiotics of the sari for trend mapping.

Designers shared their approach for making the Indian sari relevant with changing lifestyles and trend mapping. Panelist were of the belief that each individual needs to explore their unique way of dressing and agreed that the sari allows the wearer that freedom to express their aesthetic, whether it is the Bollywood kitsch, opulent Rajasthani Maharani look, minimalist look, postmodern neue sari, traditional hand spun and handloom or the flashy mill made knock offs. The classic traditional sari, incorporating vintage styling and heirloom pieces were found to be trending. This eclectic mix was helpful in defining the neo sari as the phase of flux passed by. They suggested that women search inside and find the essence of where Indians are especially at times of weddings and celebrations because India is the only country in the world which has the legacy of almost 5000 years of wearing our legacy.

In the Post Modern era, the sari has found new meaning for the Indian women across geographic and socio-economic strata. The preference of women in Indian villages and cities differs. The two predominant classic looks were the chiffon and pearl elegance in the business community and handloom sari in the elite and educated classes. The affordable imitations for both the looks as well as Bollywood interpretations were available for the urban working class and now it has reached the rural centers too.

Majority (74.2%) of respondents indicated that the sari would continue to be a part of Indian women's bridal trousseau. The inter-caste marriages were on rise and one can see a good mix of customs from both the communities and the influence of changing lifestyles, grooming practices in the bridal fashions. When asked how will the Bridal trousseau sari be like, multiple responses were received ; majority said traditional and family heirlooms to keep the traditions and customs alive, some suggested *lehanga* and sari would co- exist, unusual new designer looks, some said it would not change

and some said it could be pre-stitched. The pinned sari or a semi stitched sari may have practicality, but it makes the sari very stiff; so not many recommended a cut and sew sari.

More Indian women were likely to wear sari only for the festive & formal occasion; they recommended that we brought saris in daily wear, often people found it difficult to wear a sari, but suggested that familiarity would make it easier. The sari continued to be one of the most sensuous garments in world and can make a thin girl look voluptuous and a fat woman look sensuous; emphasized that the sari continues to be a better option to western gown.

Various reasons regarding difficulty in wearing the sari by the contemporary women saw the following scores, highest score 3.93 was for finding a good sari-blouse tailor, followed by 3.47 for Difficulty in commuting in public transport,3.17 for Difficulty in Maintenance, 2.93 for Difficulty in finding a good matching blouse, and 2.86 Difficult to drape the sari. However a lot of respondents found one or more parameter not applicable to them. Despite the above reasons majority (53.1%)of respondents said the number of wearers of saris would not reduce and would remain (72.7%) an integral part of the wardrobe, and also suggested it could be the fusion style, classy , pre-pleated, or partywear. Majority (47.7%) responded that it was more difficult for young women to wear Saris in India today when asked the reasons for their response multiple reasons were given which broadly were about not used to wearing one , busy lifestyle , comfort, difficulty in commuting, draping, maintenance.

With reference to emerging trends in saris the vocabulary, the type and level of engagement with sari were varying for all the respondent groups hence quantitative comparison was thought-provoking and photographic references were provided to maintain objectivity. Each group had indicated their preference for the type of sari look for various activities and combined preference is shown in(Model 3 on page no.180)**Model 3: Trend prediction for type of sari for various looks.**

Assessment of results for the future of the sari by all three groups, expert panelist and the case study data indicated that sari would continue be an integral part of the Indian women's wardrobe and the interpretation could be many; traditional and fusion style, pre- pleated and partywear looks, the panelist however were not in favor of the cut and sew sari. There was neutral response to the "Neo-Sari" by the experts and women

however the men gave no preference to the neo sari look. Thus the semiotic interpretations of the sari for future trend predictions are likely to be complex yet at the same time exploratory with the changing concepts of self-image for women and the lifestyle factors.

5.5.6. ANALYSIS OF THE SEMIOTICS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE INDIAN FASHION SYSTEM

The panel unanimously agreed that innovation in the sari design had been helpful in reaching out to a larger population of women. "The Neo Sari" variants like "the Divided trouser sari", "Sarini" (bikini sari), "Sarong sari", and "Gown sari" were not an assault on Indian sartorial aesthetics and they can co-exist and the average response was 3- neutral on a 5 point scale. Chisti mentioned that there should be no "should" in dress, as garment or dress is never a moral question; it was something that one felt comfortable in, that you felt yourself in. Bhamini also welcomed the new sari versions and said that they may lure the youngsters to the sari and educating them about the cultural heritage, learning about own culture and also learning to compare cultures would bring more acceptance.

The *Nivi* style sari drape represented modernism, postmodern avatar of the sari would be more revealing; a celebration of thewearer's body. There were many advantages of wearing the Indian sari, the highest score 4.7 for a. Individual style, 3.08 for e. Versatile garment, 2.79 d. Same sari can be worn even when the body size changed ,2.68 for b. Allows to flaunt body curves and 3.38 for c. Social acceptance.

The brides often were found to be unfamiliar to the fit and feel of the traditional costumes and adorned their designer bridal dresses only once or very rarely repeatedit later in life. They were not used to carrying the heavy costume, drapes and jewelry. It was therefore accepted that the wedding dress has become a costume with the expansion of the Indian fashion system over the decades. The wedding dress simulated the strongest construct of the hyper reality that the neueIndian women seek.

One more very significant interpretation of the Indian Fashion System wasvia popular culture in terms of Mumbai Film Industry popularly known as Bollywood and the satellite television post the 90's when the movies came to every living room, before the cable TV one had to go to the cinema theater's to get the latest fashion updates or

read filmy magazines. Bollywood entertainers continued to be incomplete without the female protagonist- heroine (represented beauty, grace, romance), the mother (Drama and sacrifice), the vamp (Demanding Matriarch/ Scheming Seductress); and off course the glamour of dance and music was the responsibility of the screen goddesses.

Bollywood continued to be one of the biggest fashion influencers in Indian fashion system. Despite the many success stories for women in every walk of life, a good number of Bollywood films ended up sexually objectifying women in the on screen portrayal. Theywere dressed scantily and the sari allowedto show as much as hide. The saris used for these item songs were often made of sheer fabrics, pre-stitched to avoid excess bulk fabric and also coming undone during vigorous dance moves. The debate about commodification of these emancipated girls is endless. The sari was also a preferred red carpet dress for many Indian celebrities who are Bollywood actors, filmmakers, star wives etc. for its grace and stood out in the crowd of evening gowns worn by other celebrities and have received very good reviews from the international fashion press. Many Indian celebrities have been recognized as fashion icons and arebrand ambassadors of multinational fashion brands. **Model 4 : Model for Indian Fashion System Everyday wear and Occasion wear.** (Refer page no: 185 and 186).

The comparison of results from the three groups of respondents regarding the view on purpose of wearing the sari indicated that majority of men (43%) and Lower income group women (53%) gave first preference to "social acceptance", whereas only (14.1%) few women from Middle and Higher income group gave that preference, majority (57%) of these educated women indicated the reason as "ornamentation". All three groups gave the least preference to "Modesty" as the purpose of wearing the sari. There was similarity in the order of preference between the Men and Middle and higher income group women regarding reasons why the Indian sari has continued to be worn for more than 5000 years major reasons stated were "tradition", "aesthetic appeal" and "comfort" , however the preference for "national identity" and "other reasons" were not in same order. There was specific quantitative data on the difficulties faced while wearing a sari, but at the same time substantial data was available to enumerate the advantages of wearing the sari. Thus there were opportunities for the Indian Fashion system to overcome the challenges faced for wearing the sari. (Refer Graph 4.16 on page no.104& Refer Graph 4.19 and on page

no.107)**Model 5 and 6: Discussion about advantages and difficulty in wearing sari.** (Refer pg. no. 187 and 188.)

5.6CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive study of the semiotics of the Indian sari has yielded very thought-provoking results, on that basis the major conclusions of the study have been stated below:

1. Majority of (88.3%) respondents continued to wear saris and this percentage was higher than the percentage of respondents who were married, hence it wasconcluded that the sari preference is not directly related to marital status and other socio cultural factors as well as individual preferences influence the choice of wearing saris.

2. The responses regarding the "discomfort while working wearing a sari" are also substantial in all the three group, at the same time there is agreement on the major reason attributed for women continuing to wear sari "It is a very graceful draped garment, "Very comfortable for the wearer" and "It is sensuous garment". This quantitative data supports the qualitative observations by the expert panelist and case studies that the Indian sari will continue to be worn across socio- economic groups, for everyday wear as well as special occasions, the details and variations will be varied and unique to each woman.

3. It is difficult to rely solely on the quantitative data in this study as cross referencing of data shows contradictory results when it comes to sari preference for each individual sari wearer.

4. The Sari sourcing practices established that majority of men and women from middle and upper income group prefer the local shops and markets, malls and chain-stores. There was no direct co-relation between women from middle and upper income group and women from lower income group responses, it is observed that the lower income group prefer shopping in the local shops and markets too and a good majority indicated that they do not buy from exhibitions, malls.

5. Online or TV shopping mode was not very popular till the time of the studying the lower income groups. The growing popularity and convenience of online

shopping has led to co-existence of both "Brick and Click" mode of buying saris amongst the middle and upper classes.

6. Comparison of results for the future of the sari by all three groups, expert panelist and the case study data indicates that sari will continue be an integral part of the Indian women's wardrobe. The interpretation can be many; traditional and fusion style, pre- pleated and partywear looks. There was neutral response to the "Neo-Sari" by the experts and women. Thus the semiotic interpretations of the sari for future trend predictions are likely to be complex yet at the same time exploratory with the changing concepts of self-image for women and the lifestyle factors.

7. The sari will continue to be a part of Indian women's bridal trousseau; the Bridal trousseau sari will betraditional and family heirlooms ; to keep the traditions and customs alive, the **Lehenga** and sari will continue to co- exist, unusual new designer looks will also be evident, it could be pre-stitched in times to come.

8. The sari was found to be a better option to western gown.Promotion of the sari on international platform instead of being referred to as Indian Costume where it continues to an option to a cocktail gown; a twisted sari, sari worn on leggings or *ghaghra or chudidar*with bustier, double sari is recommended.

9. Most brides will continue to wear the traditional costumes for the wedding ceremony. The degree of ornamentation has increased over a period of time. The overall presentation of the fashion look seems to represent the exhibitionism of the economic boom in the 21st Century; synonymous to the Big Fat Indian wedding, which was much simpler in closed economy of the 1980's.

10. The bridesmaids and the brides for other pre and post wedding functions (occasions) besides the actual wedding: over the years will be more experimental and adopt the fusion space of Indo western fashion or atleast adopt a more generic Indian Ethnic fashion trend like an *Anarkali* suit, pre stitched sari gowns, *salwarkameez*; androgynous take on the *sherwani* jacket teamed with straight pants or *Dhoti* pants, *Jodhpur* breeches; sexy *choli and lehenga* /designer saris. Thus the wedding dress has a positive relationship with the attitude of the Indian society towards fashion is proven.

11. Few women were not accustomed todrape a sari regularly many women were not able to drape it comfortably by themselves. Hence special sari draping experts were in significant demand either for conducting workshops/ demonstration or for customized draping for clients before the occasion for that "**perfect sari drape**"; which is matter of individual perception under the effect by visual media influencers like celebrities, actresses, designers, bloggers etcetera.

12. The festive saris will continue to be dressier and elaborate compared to dailywear or workwear sari. The festive saris helped them to be rooted to tradition and customs, regional drapes and jewelry were worn. Women shallcontinue to buy and gift saris during the festivals and wedding season.

13. There is lot more education available online on the sari ; it will continue to be an integral part of Indian woman's wardrobe, more Indian women will continue to wear a sari to weddings or an event as they get more comfortable and adapt to wearing the saris, which are lighter and airy.

14. Cultural acceptance forms a pertinent perspective; considering the history of various saris, just speaking of the contemporary isinsufficient and far reaching awareness at grass-roots level at home, school and media will be impactful. Television' and Bollywood's influence on fashion styles was evident; it will be a proven game changer, if most popular celebrities wear a handloom sari. Social media has seen a new trend of Stylists/ Bloggers posting interesting interpretation of the sari styled for the postmodern women to make heads turn and yet give that edgy or quirky look.

15. The warm hues of the Indian color palette have been tweaked as per fashion trends by the fashion forward, while many still preferred the traditional colors and textiles. It is interesting to note that color preferences have changed over time. Another prevalent practice of: adapting trends in western fashion to Indian ethic apparel: in terms of color, fabric, surface ornamentation techniques, cut and silhouette. Many efforts to apply western trend forecast for Indian ethnic apparel, without much tweaking and understanding of Indian consumer preferences have resulted in poor acceptance of those styles.

16. Some good examples were a modest *choli* adapted to a slinky spaghetti strap, halter neck, bikini top, corset, bustier, jacket inspiration, leaving nothing to imagination. Customized petticoats for the sheer sari draped seductively.

Many Indian women are fitness conscious & work out hard and are unapologetic about flaunting their assets in a flirtatious sari drape or may be at times they may succumb to peer-pressure in pursuit of the elusive size zero. This is one of the reasons for the trend of diminished use of Indian heritage textiles in saris for the young Indian women, which requires innovative options in terms of fall, drape, weight, visual appeal etc. which they will prefer to include in their wardrobe.

17. The sari was found to be very popular amongst the rural women as well as women in the lower socio economic groups of the urban areas; for dailywear as well as occasion wear. Due to the affordability, ease in maintenance and durability of synthetic saris which were readily available in many trendy styles across the market segments. The sari aided these women in conforming to traditions and wearing the most popular fashion trend projected on television soaps.

18. Increased familiarityand introduction to various varieties and drapes will aid in selection of the sari that suits their requirement the best and this will prove to be helpful to bring saris in daily wear, even for women who found it difficult to wear a sari.

19. "The Neo Sari" variants like "the divided trouser sari", "Sarini" (bikini sari), "Sarong sari", and "Gown sari" are not an assault on Indian sartorial aesthetics. The contemporary interpretation of the belted sari, sari paired with trousers, shorts, jackets, pre stitched –gown like , incorporating new age materials and finishing techniques have given a new lease of life to the historic draped garment, the sari.

20. Indian fashion system has incorporated the global calendar of Spring/summer and Autumn/ winter. India being a tropical country which experiences summer for almost 6 months and winter for 2 months and the other 4 months are the major festive period as most of the market prepared the major stock for this season. The monsoon/ festive lines essentially catering to festive requirements and occasion wear. Autumn/winter continues as an extension of occasion wear and winter wear which was region specific. The collection for this season was a mini capsule collection just to add on the stock flowing from monsoon/festive.

21. The comparison of results from the three groups of respondents regarding the view on purpose of wearing the sari indicates that majority of men and Lower income group gave first preference to "social acceptance", whereas very few Women from middle income group gave that preference, majority of these educated women indicated the reason as "ornamentation". All three groups gave the least preference to "Modesty" as the purpose of wearing the sari. There was similarity in the order of preference between the Men and Middle and higher income group women regarding reasons why the Indian sari has continued to be worn for almost 5000 years major reason stated was "tradition", "aesthetic appeal" and "comfort" the preference for "national identity" and "other reasons" were not in same order.

22. There are specific difficulties faced while wearing a sari, and on the contrary manifold advantages of wearing the sari, thus providing diverse opportunity for the Indian Fashion system to overcome the challenges faced for wearing the sari.

Model 5 : Discussion about advantages in wearing sari.(Refer pg. no. 187)

The ranking for parameters indicating advantages of wearing the Indian sari, are given below in descending order and respective reasons are also discussed. (Refer Graph 4.16 on page no.104)

Individual style-Independent fashion statements, no stereotyping

Social acceptance -Familiarity of the sari as traditional costume, and variations are easier to accept even for the more conservative sections of the society.

Versatile garment - Trans-seasonal and multi occasion, universal adaptations are possible, few handcrafted masterpieces are timeless. Day to evening transition, work to socialization transitions, home to work transitions etc. is possible.

Same sari can be worn even when the body size changes -No sizing issues, longer lifespan of wearing, easy to share and pass on heirloom saris.

Allows toflaunt body curves -No body shaming and acceptance of real beauty of women just as they are.

Ranking regarding difficulty in wearing the sari by the contemporary women are given below in descending order and discussions on possible opportunities to overcome the challenges for robust Indian fashion system.(Refer Graph 4.19 and on page no.107) .

Model 6: Discussion about difficulty in wearing sari. (Refer pg. no.188)

"Finding a good sari-blouse tailor"- Opportunity for ready to wear blouses. Better sizing and fit for mass customization, formal training for blouse patternmaking and construction incorporating traditional techniques and newer methods of construction too.

"Difficulty in commuting in public transport"- Fashion communication of looks with practical sari drapes. Often the issue is not about commuting wearing the sari, but the notion of "Draping the perfect sari made of sheer, scratchy fabrics for sari or revealing drapes and blouses styled with high heels", which are not most suitable for Indian weather. Better public transport and connectivity is required in most parts of India irrespective of the clothes one wears, this is beyond the purview of the Indian fashion system.

"Difficulty in Maintenance" – With the busy lifestyles hand washing and applying starch for cotton saris is rare chore for homemakers, most dressy sari fabrics and embellishments are not suitable for machine washing, hence there is need to sustain affordable and professional dry cleaning services in most neighborhoods. It will be good to return to the good old ways of hand washing few color fast cotton and silk sari varieties. The most practical machine washable variations can be used on a regular basis and the most exclusive one can be sent to the local laundry. Fashion communication around caring for "good quality saris" with timeless appeal and heritage value; over a period of time is a sustainable practice.

"Difficulty in finding a good matching blouse" - Sari manufacturer and retailer to give matching blouse pieces of ready to wear blouses and petticoats along with the sari .The more expensive saris can have two blouse pieces , which can be stitched for women (family or friends) of different size but similar taste for sari.

"Difficult to drape the sari" - It is matter of practice, to gain confidence in draping a sari in short time, encouraging the sari to be worn for various occasions. Till then the

sari draping experts are available to offer services and also offer sari draping tutorial in-person as well as on online video. If all this is not working then offer a few pre-stitched options to the sari novices!

23. Undoubdetly the sari qualifies to be the most apt ambassador / icon for the textile trade across the socio-economic pyramid in India, with its diverse manifestations in design, material and drape. What is more relevant today is that it also has a very sustainable life cycle. When no longer wearable as a sari, it can be re-purposed for decoration or other use (made-ups). Traditional embroidery like the Kantha of Bengal or Sujani of Bihar are excellent examples of sustainable practices ro convert saris into useful made-ups like quilts, bedcovers , throws, purses etcetera. Traditionally the infant's layette was made from used soft cotton saris, as new fabric would be too rough on its tender skin. Worn out saris were also re-purposed to make scarves, bandages, fliter cloth for water, fabric to cover pickle jars, rags, wipes and mops. Thus every piece of the sari would be put to good use till finally it could be easily biodegraded. Traditionally the saris were woven from breathable natural fibres like cotton and silk, which are appropriate for the humid climate of the Gangetic belts and the coastal regions, the traditional weaves produced on handloom and powerloom are the second largest means of employment , after agriculture in India. By opting for traditional saris we support ethnic craft sustenance by endorsing the masterpices of the Indian craft persons. The need of the hour therefore is to innovate and establish efficient supply chains and sustainable product life cycles. Sourcing of fibres from surrounding areas, and regional consumption results in shorter and sustainable supply chains. Opting for hand woven organic cotton saris, ahimsa silk(Peace silk- where silk worm are not killed for silk reeling) and natural silk saris (Eri, Tussar and Mug are 3 varieties of wild silk availabel in India) will sustain ethical practices and responsible fashion for the Indian Fashion system.

24. The vast compendium of costume and textile heritage in each Indian state has immense opportunity for developing new fashionable interpretations and techniques to share across the world; while assimilating the practices worldwide the respect for authentic craftsmanship needs to be maintained and branded appropriately. Sustaining a heritage drape the Sari and the heritage craft tradition of handwoven textiles and its merits, while synthetics are coming in. While

sustaining the drape; the concern of losing out on the heritage weaves; this is a thought to ponder upon. Sustaining cultural heritage of the sari and unfolding the new interpretations in times to come will take us a long way for building a fascinating eco system for the sari traditions.