

METHODOLOGY

The researcher has been seriously studying the numerous perceptions of the Indian sari and meanings conveyed by apparel in various fashion systems. She became aware that the study on non-verbal communications of the sari; have many underlying meanings which have transitioned from tradition, cultural affiliation, heritage, social acceptance, aesthetic appeal , comfort, national identity , modesty , sensuality, concept of modernity for the women who have worn this magnificent draped garment for almost 5000 years.

The broad objectives of the study were to trace the semiology of fashion apparel and the semiotic meaning of the Indian sari with the changing role of women in society. The study of the semiotic interpretation of the Indian sari: by trade organizations/ industry & designers. Analyze and interpret the semiotics of the sari for trend mapping and study its role in the Indian fashion system.

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. Case studies of sari designers and users were conducted using in-depth interviews and observations to explore their personal experiences, observations and have a description of those experiences in their own words. Several designers have been engaged in the sari trade and have been instrumental in creating alternative and innovative options and markets for them.

An interpretive research method, which relies heavily on 'thick' verbal descriptions of a particular aspect being studied, was used to study and analyze the non-verbal meaning conveyed by the sari in Phase III. This approach "illuminates the invisibility of everyday life", by making the familiar strange more examined and better understood.

The method of procedure followed to fulfill the aims and objectives of the study are as follows:

3.1 Operational definitions

3.2 Research Design

3.3 Phase 1 : Secondary research and survey.

3.3.1. Literature review

3.3.2. Area selections: preliminary data on the Indian fashion system.

3.4 Phase II: Primary Data collection

3.4.1. Focused group discussion

3.4.2. Questionnaire

- i. Educated women from middle and upper income group,
- ii. Women from lower income group
- iii. Male respondents

3.4.3. Case studies, photographic interpretations of primary images.

3.5 Phase III:

3.5.1 Analysis of Data

3.5.2 Worldview

3.5.3 Creation of model for the Indian fashion system

3.1 Operational definitions:

Semiotics /Semiology: Based on definition of (Barthes and Craik, 2009)

Semiology is science of the study of signs and symbols, their use or interpretation of forms and signs. In case of fashion, the forms relate to the garments, details, accessories and modes of wearing clothes. The 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 symbolic codes.

Sari - A garment consisting of a length of cloth, draped around the body, traditionally worn by women from South Asia. The Sari is a rectangular length of fabric 4.5 to 6 or 9 yards.

Nivi sari - This modern style of draping the sari was a neutral innovation to the regional sari draping styles: the **Nivi** sari style went on to become a national dress for Indian women from late 19th century till date, a classic example of unity in diversity. Its draped over a sari blouse and a petticoat, with front pleats facing the wearers left and pallu over the left shoulder.

Neo Sari -This is a sheer sari worn with variations of modest choli's adaptation to a slinky spaghetti strap, halter neck, corset, bustier, jacket inspiration, crop-tops. Customized petticoats for the sheer sari draped seductively. Belted sari, can be draped over trousers, skirts. The neo-sari is made up of knits and various unconventional fabrics for 21st century glocal women.

Fashion system -The fashion system comprises of individuals, groups, communities that relate to the fashion institutions and industries and how trade organizations are inter-related, it is uniquely defined by the area and its prominence is independent of Euro centrism that the western countries associate with. They are **glocal (global yet local)** in nature, yet the origins of the non-western fashion systems can be traced much before the phenomenon of globalization or even the industrial revolution which saw the emergence of the middle classes.

3.2 Research Design:

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.

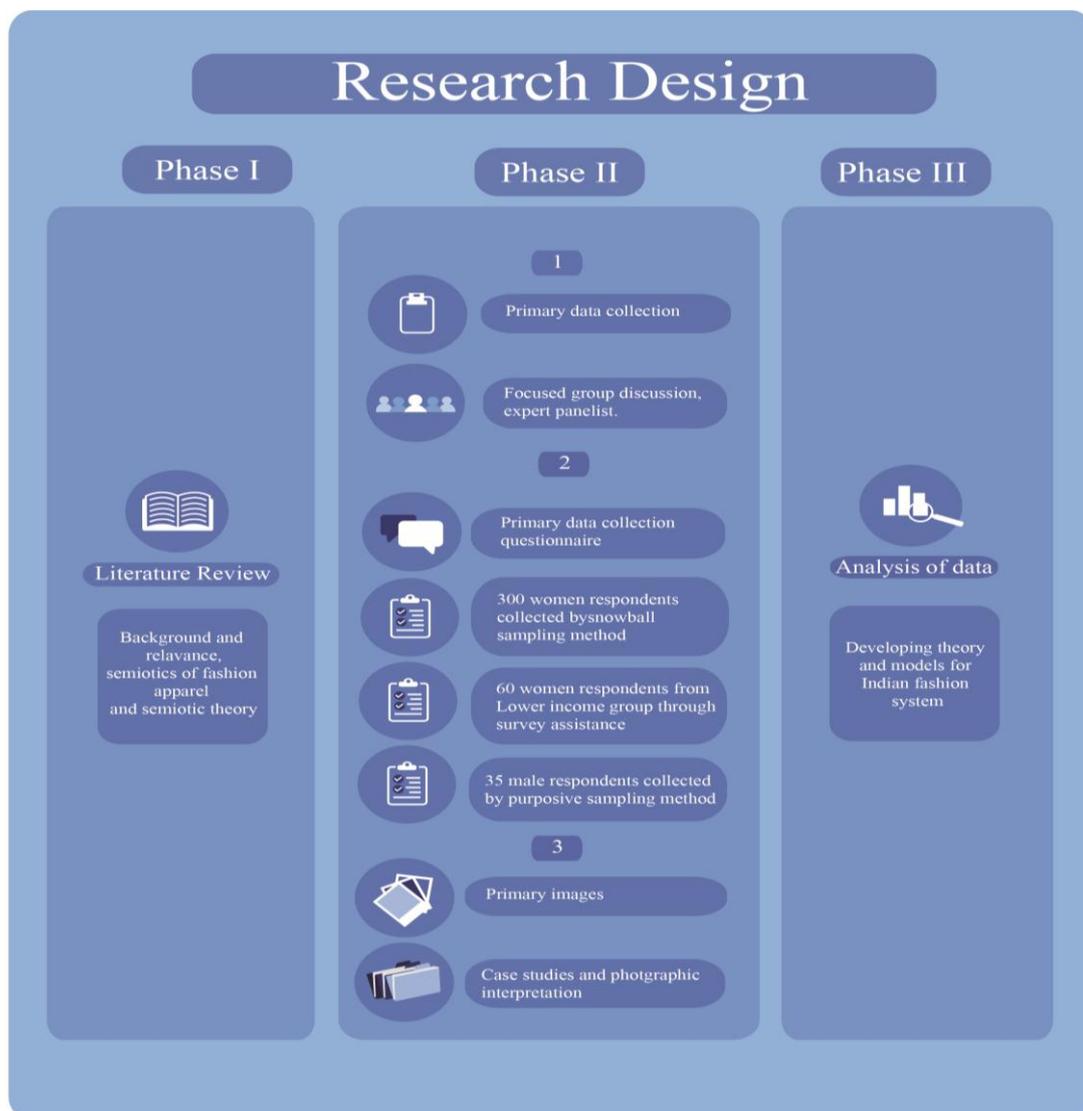


Plate 3. 1. Research Design

3.3 Phase 1 Secondary Research and survey

3.3.1. Literature review

3.3.2. Area selections: preliminary data on the Indian fashion system.

3.3.1. Literature review

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. This was helpful in meeting the objective and brought deeper understanding about the semiology of fashion apparel at the early stage of the study (from the year 2012 onwards) , which led to further stages of the study where primary information was to be elicited from the respondents.

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. Research on the non-western fashion systems and semiology of fashion apparel is of recent origin, pioneering works have been published in the twentieth century; these have laid the base for all present day studies.

The review forms an important chapter in this study, where its purpose is to provide the background to and justification for the research undertaken. The literature review documented here is a critical look, at the existing research that is significant to the work being undertaken. All the relevant research was summarized and further evaluation the as the collated work was commenced. Analysis was undertaken to study the relationships between different researchers' work, and their relevance to the present study was established.

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 and journals. The researches in this area have been published in some prestigious journals, their online data bases and few e-books on the fashion theory were referred. Since there have been very few; yet in depth studies undertaken with the socio-psychological aspects of the Indian sari, this involved visiting libraries of various academic institutions and online journals, research papers and private

photographs. The researcher explored personally in a number of libraries for the selected data related to the study, libraries like the Symbiosis, Institute of Design, Pune, MAEER's MIT Institute of Design, Pearl Academy, Mumbai, also the departmental library of the Clothing and textiles dept. and Smt. Hansa Mehta Library, Baroda, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara.

The first step in order to study and trace the origin, history and evolution of the Indian sari across the Indian states was by reviewing the work of several anthropologists, social scientists, textile curators have attempted to document the evolution of Indian costumes in terms of drapes, textile craft traditions, consumption patterns, etc. the review of existing sari styles and literature. 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.

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. 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.

Databases regarding personal preferences for clothing and consumption patterns have often been created using quantitative research methodology. This approach often overlooks the psychographic data and most importantly the stories which people convey through their clothes; thus have not been adequately documented to understand the semiotics of fashion apparel. The reference of various theories, qualitative research methods for case studies on fashion and dress adopted worldwide form the basis of formulating the methodology for this study. These studies were

examined in detail and sari preferences were analyzed to understand their evolution to the present styles and factors that affect these preferences. Comparisons were drawn with other sartorial practices. Apart from studying the links of these sartorial preferences across cultures and regions and similarities in nonverbal meanings conveyed was interpreted.

3.3.2 Area selections: preliminary data on the Indian fashion system.

Exploratory research or formulative research survey provided information about the possibilities of undertaking different types of research methods and has high degree of representativeness. The in-depth observations and case studies provided data about the present trends and preferences of the Indian women towards their apparel selection. For this study it was easy to get respondents; and information from respondents who often do not express their true reactions to the questions pertaining to personal matters concerning clothing choices and reasons behind them. The case study method was adopted to study, understand and document the semiotics interpretations of the Indian sari. This method was most suited to the study as it enabled the examination of the tacit meanings of the Indian sari in its socio cultural context and its evolution to the present day. The review of the selected areas in this research was summarized to the major factors and trends from diverse sources.

3.4. Phase II : Primary Data collection

3.4.1. Focused group discussion

3.4.2. Questionnaires

- i. Educated women from middle and upper income group,
- ii. Women from lower income group
- iii. Male respondents

3.4.3. Case studies, photographic interpretations of primary images.

3.4.1 Focused group discussion:

Initially a focused group discussion on the topic of **Essence of the Sari** was planned to initiate OFFline conversations with a group of people directly engaged with the issue. The outcomes was also used in exploring the depth and nuances of opinions regarding the sari, also in understanding differences in perspectives, factors influencing opinions or behavior, perspectives of target audience and in designing a large study. The panelists explored practical innovative solutions to construction, creation, usage and costume heritage, and contemporary styling of sari and to draw on and share experience gained from their relevant innovative projects. The focus was on practical knowledge, dissemination to the sector as well as developing deeper insights for this study.

The frameworks for OFFline conversations on **Essence of the Sari** were carefully created to find answers for the objectives of the study refer Appendix I. The questionnaire was mailed to the panelist along with telephonic briefing prior to the actual day of the focused group discussion. Expert panelists were identified on the basis of their widespread work on the sari and represent a range of diverse backgrounds in terms of profession, geographic location and age groups. This required meticulous planning and persistent follow-up for about 3 months (February-April 2016) to get right panelists' confirmations, logistics of travel, stay, venue setup, invitations, budget provisions, souvenirs etc. The hour long discussion was documented on video and later decoded and interpreted. The venue for this focused group discussion was at the Artisans Center, Kalghoda, Mumbai; as it is a renowned center for confluence of creative people who like to exchange and share ideas. The focused group discussion was conducted on 10 May 2016 between 6.00 to 8.00pm.

The eminent panelists for the focused group discussion were:

Padmashree Wendell Rodricks – Fashion design fraternity addressees him as Guru of Minimalism, he introduced Resort wear lines way back in 1995, authored the books with detailed research “The green room” and “Moda Goa” and Revivalist of the Goan –Kunbi Sari 2010. Honored Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Letters by the French government for his contributions to Art and design.

Rta Kapoor Chisti- Renowned Textile scholar and researcher. She was commissioned by Martand Singh to write the books on “The Saris of India” and “The

Sari: Tradition and Beyond”. Founder of **Taanbaan** and “The Sari School”. She advocates the woven sari through sari draping classes in Delhi and New York.

Bhamini Subramaniam- A veteran textile and fashion designer; a firm believer in *Ahimsa*, Vegetarianism, and Eco friendliness, to make the world a better place to live in. An Educationist and Design Thinker with a deep love for Art, Music and Literature.

Karishma Shahani Khan- Principal Designer & creative director Ka:sha Label, Handcrafted Sustainability. With Love from India. Story Telling. Shape Shifting. Colour Bombing, Change by Design. Featured in Forbes 30 under 30.

Nandita Abraham- Executive Vice President- then and now CEO Pearl Academy. Having a diverse Business and Design background. Charismatic corporate Power Dresser and an avid traveler.

The invite and photo of Offline conversations is given below. On the basis of the key outcomes of the focused group discussion further data collection was carried forward.



Plate 3. 2 Invite for Essence of the Sari- Focused group discussion.



Plate 3.3. Photograph of the panelist for focused group discussion.

Expert Panelist (from right to left): Rta Kapur Chisti, Padmashree Wendell Rodricks, Vaibbhavi Pruthviraj Ranavaade, Bhamini Subrmanium, Nandita Abraham, Karishma Shahani Khan

In a special video interview was recorded for this study with fashion designer and social activist Shaina NC's responses to the question on whether the sari continue to be a part of Indian women's bridal trousseau and what would it be like .(As she could not join the Focused group discussion).

The focus group interviewing was most instrumental in collecting a large amount of information in a comparatively short period of time. Furthermore it also allowed the researcher to observe interactions among participants. Such interactions are not observable in individual interviews. The focus group discussion was more successful as the topic was of the participants' concern rather than only the researcher's concern. Therefore, the discussion was very focused with little intervention from the researcher, who acted as the moderator of discussion.

The well involved and interactive audience for the panel discussion included a diverse group; textile curators, sari enthusiasts, connoisseurs, experts, designers, fashion students, entrepreneurs, academics etc.

After the initial introduction of the OFFline conversations -The Essence of the Sari and the panelist, the panelist were asked to give their responses to the questions pertaining to their iconic work on the sari and their reasons for the relevance of sari for almost 5000 years in terms of tradition, aesthetic appeal, comfort, national

identity. The panelist were requested to decode meaning conveyed by the sari; also share the purpose of sari wearing and to carry some examples of their work for sharing and enhancing audience engagements, they were assisted with student models and dress forms. Measures to the make the Indian sari relevant for changing lifestyles were discussed and debate on difficulty for young women to wear saris in India today as well as the advantages of wearing the sari. Points of discussion included relationship status, profession, self-image, ethnic group, maintenance of sari, finding a good blouse tailor, difficulty in commuting in public transport, ability to drape the sari. The panelists were asked to reflect on the sari's new found meaning for the Indian women across geographic and socio-economic strata in the postmodern era, different psychographic profiles were shared. Comments were requested on agreement and disagreement about the future of sari segment/industry ; relevance of the sari to daily wear, formal wear, workwear , bridal trousseau and further description of the future sari look. With many Indian women wearing sari only for the festive & formal occasion, explored its possibility to become the western equivalent of an evening gown.

Observations were invited on postmodern avatar of the sari, whether innovation in the sari design has 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" are an assault on Indian sartorial aesthetics. The conversations were video recorded and were used for archiving, decoding and analyzed for further stages of the study. The focused group discussion gave in-depth qualitative data for further discussion and was instrumental in leading to framing precise questions for the surveys conducted later in this study.

3.4.2 Questionnaire:

Collection of information through preliminary questionnaires submitted to three groups:

- i. Educated Middle and Upper middle class women -300 Questionnaires
- ii. Lower middle class women -60 Interview schedules , through research assistance
- iii. Men respondents -35 questionnaires.

Sample Selection:

In order to get a broad overview of all the variations that have manifested in the Indian sari style, and willingness of respondents to share their personal clothing preferences the sample selection was based on the snow ball sampling technique. This chain referral process using the power of social media network allowed the researcher to reach populations that are difficult to **sample** when using other **sampling** methods. The process is simple and cost-efficient. This **sampling** technique needed little planning and fewer workforce compared to other **sampling** techniques and helped reaching out to the desired population.

Tools of Data collection:

Based on the findings of the focused group discussion, exhaustive survey was conducted, for which questionnaires were developed, for meticulous data collection from respondents from the three major stake holder groups of the sari consumption, representing major socio economic strata. Demographic details such as age, education, profession, industry sector, education level, marital/relationship status, income range were documented. Information related to the choice of sari for various occasions and types of sari, buying practices and reasons for the preferences was collected and scientifically analyzed using percentages and frequencies. The questionnaire design was based on collecting responses for specific objectives of the study understanding the semiotic meaning of the Indian sari with the changing role of women in society, interpretation by the trade organizations / industry and designers, further interpretation and analysis for sari trend mapping also the Indian fashion system.

Questions included were of multiple types: close ended/ fixed alternative questions, dichotomous, multiple option, cafeteria, rank order, rating, and checklist questions were also included in the questionnaire. Few common questions were also asked to all 3 groups of respondents regarding, age, marital/relationship status, frequency and reasons for preferring the sari for specific occasions: everyday, work, festivals, special occasions, weddings, parties' etcetra. Difficulties and advantages in wearing the sari, reasons for wearing the sari and the sari look most preferred for a specific occasion, source for sari to understand buying behaviour which affects the sari economy. Views

on the “Neo sari” and future of sari by different respondent groups were collected for further comparison and analysis which enabled trend mapping.

Pretest for the present study was framed as an online submission, to avoid any ambiguity in understanding the questions and technical glitches. Whether respondents could determine their sartorial preferences adequately, also to help the researcher to determine the questions could easily be answered by persons of diverse backgrounds. Results of the pretest indicated that; for all educated respondents the descriptions of sari and fashion terms were generally consistent and matched with visual references. All respondents interviewed supplied additional points on clothing preferences that could be included in the final questionnaire. The form of the questionnaire was workable. The words and phrases used were understood, although a few word changes were made following the pretest. Allowing the respondents to provide the answer, it was discovered during the design of the questionnaire and pre-test study that respondents' answers often went beyond our expectations.

Although many possible response options were included in the final draft of the questionnaire, one could never be sure that other respondents would not have other answers in mind. If one asked the respondents to respond to optional answers, one might still limit them to what was expected and miss those unexpected: therefore, open ended questions and options were included. These questionnaires served as the dual purpose of quantifying the responses of the respondents as well as cross referencing the qualitative observations and data and making the survey robust. The questionnaires are placed in the Appendices II, III and IV.

- i) An exhaustive questionnaire was designed for educated middle and higher income group women respondents to elicit quantitative data which was further compared with the qualitative observations. Detailed questionnaire (refer Appendix II) for educated middle and upper middle class women was designed and administered using online tool Survey Monkey (file:///C:/Users/vaibhavi.ranavade/Downloads/SurveyMonkey_81343336.pdf) during the period of August –November 2016. This elaborate questionnaire was customized for this study with a monthly fee for using the services of online tool on Survey Monkey portal. Personal email ID's of interested respondents were meticulously collected by snowball sampling procedure for sending the invite and

link for answering the survey and posting links to questionnaire on social media platforms like Facebook, sample size of 300 educated, middle and higher income respondents for this study. Of the 300 questionnaires duly submitted online by the respondents, 44 were discarded due to incomplete data. This left 256 for use for the present study. While the sample size of 256 was theoretically far from ideal the universality of certain responses regarding present sari preferences coming from women of widely divergent professional backgrounds, means that findings are likely to be applicable far beyond the sample. In regard to the sample, the respondents were all educated.

The age range was from below 18 to 75 years of age and profession ranged from student until senior management and retired too. The income range per annum of the respondents was from 3 to 15 lakhs and above. To include some senior respondents who were not comfortable with the online tool, hard copy of the questionnaire for conducting interview schedules; to get responses from as many respondents. Compilation of data has been done through interviewing sari wearers, designers, industry associates representation varied sectors like retail, hospitality, IT/BPO, academics, Financial services, healthcare, entertainment, aviation, apparel/textile which were identified after studying the maximum sectors in which women are employed.

- ii) Interview schedules were drawn up to collect data on the use and adaptation of the sari by different women. Since the earlier survey was not able to adequately cover the women from lower income groups, another survey (refer appendix III) was conducted using research assistance and responses documented using online Google forms in month of January 2017(it is free tool for Gmail users). (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf1J4yJAHdKavb2NJThNVjaj3l_-YsA_QJia_tBnpmS-wwSIQ/viewform).

The respondents in this group included, domestic helpers both part time and full time, beauticians, housekeeping and security staff. The age range was from 18 to 65 years of age and all were working outside their own homes. They were also asked about their response to the saris being gifted to them by main people in their life. Since the respondents of this group were having limited education and access to technology, a personal interview schedule was conducted by research assistants

for eliciting responses; by reading out options and translating questions, responses from 60 respondents were recorded online. Information regarding their own sartorial preferences was documented. Responses to popular photographs of a sari clad women were recorded and analyzed in relation to additional ethnographic data gathered in order to study semiotic interpretation by lower income group women respondents.

iii) Though the study focuses on women respondents, few men showed keen interest in the study and were willing to give responses on their interpretations of the sari. The men respondents were from the 4 major backgrounds: designer, manager, businessman and enthusiast. The age ranged from 18 to 65 years of age and profession from student until senior management. They were specifically asked about their sari gifting habits and reasons for the same, to understand the buying behavior even though they do not use it themselves. Also to understand the attitude of men towards women wearing saris at work and at other occasions and their preference levels and suggested sari looks for the women in their lives. For the men respondents a detailed questionnaire (refer Appendix IV) was designed and administered, information regarding their sartorial preferences for women's sari was documented. Responses to popular photographs of a sari clad women were recorded and analyzed in relation to additional ethnographic data gathered in order to study semiotic interpretation by men respondents. Responses from 35 respondents were recorded online Google forms in month of January 2017(it is free tool for Gmail users). (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeTJAm-M2SvyWri6yfW1AJuj8V9w0Zw32bypnO3pFIqww8IhA/viewform>)

3.4.3 Case studies and photographic interpretations:

Based on findings of the in-depth review of literature, case studies, focused group discussion, preliminary survey with 3 distinct groups, it was decided to undertake a detailed study of primary and secondary images of sari clad women.

This way to use photographs in ethnographic research, the method builds on earlier examinations of the unique properties of photographic articulation, interpretation and use, employing the inherent ambiguities of photographic imagery; which is combination of what the wearer wishes to convey, the way the photographer

visualizes it and how the viewer interprets the messages. Using pictures in social research requires a theory of how pictures get used by both picture makers and viewers. The idea of the sign was broken down into two components: **The Signifier** - The Physical referent and **The Signified** - Mental concept implied by signifier.

Photographs of sari clad women representing various socio-economic backgrounds, occasions, industry sector and age groups etcetera, were collected from primary sources, friends, families and respondents were requested to share their family pictures with short descriptions about the wearer, occasion and sari descriptions as per their understanding. A few secondary photographs were taken from magazines and the prominent internet sources like Google images, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, film screens shots, advertisements and proper references have been given.

Considering the above parameters pictures were selected using purposive random sampling method and grouping them in 23 plates. Each plate was further decoded for semiotic interpretation and analysis. The sari photos in each plate signifies unique semiotic codes for the regional drapes, profession, age, social role, profession, commercial interpretation, media & advertisement, Bollywood films' , media influences, men, celebrities, fashion system, Stylists and bloggers, sari shopping experience, Wedding ceremonies, inter caste marriages, *Pujas* and Festivals, dress code and uniforms, manual labor class, urban middle class, urban home makers. Visual methodologies and tools were developed specially for this study incorporating the Denotation and Connotation model to contrast the symbolism of how the sari has changed as a consequence of changing dress habits and emerging trends.

The review of literature, focused group discussion and results of the data collected through the questionnaire was co-related with the findings of the photographic interpretation for authentication of the results.

3.5 Phase III

3.5.1 Analysis of Data

3.5.2 Worldview

3.5.3 Creation of model for the Indian fashion system

3.5.1 Analysis of Data

The case studies of various textile scholars, designers, wearers and trade organizations led to a large body of information. The semiotic approach to decode the nuance of the Indian fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like: family albums, films, magazine articles, red carpets appearance etcetera across the 80's, 90's and 2000 onwards. This information was visual (images of women wearing saris), written (survey responses), experiential (responses to the experience of wearing a sari, tactile feel, ease and comfort), verbal and non-verbal and through observations (researchers own interpretations of the phenomenon). Techniques and procedures however necessary are only means to an end; their intent is to provide researchers with a set of tools that enable them to approach analysis with confidence and to enhance the creativity. It is the vision of new understandings and the building of useful grounded theory that is the driving force behind this methodology.

Understanding the semiology of fashion apparel has been achieved through exhausting deductions from the review of literature, for contextualizing it to the semiology of the sari.

The findings of the study from primary sources have been analyzed and discussed in the following subsections: Phase II) 1. Focused group discussion- All the verbal and non verbal responses to the questions were revisited by watching the video recording several times. Then further decoded and analyzed for each objective of the study.

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:

Phase II) 2. 1 Survey Monkey Results for women from various industry sectors and middle and upper middle class backgrounds.

Phase II) 2. 2 Survey Results for women from lower income class.

Phase II) 2. 3 Survey Results for men respondents.

Phase II) 3. Decoding Photographic references and case studies- The findings and observations from each case study and plate were mapped against each objective of

the study and enriched the discussion for the respective objective with references and aided in building the models

The findings of the Phase II are all inter-related to the objectives of the study and are further inferred for each objective: The semiotic meaning of the Indian sari with the changing role of women in society, tacit interpretation of the Indian sari by trade organizations/ industry and designers. Interpretation of the semiotics of the sari for trend mapping and the Indian fashion system was helpful for establishing its relevance to the Indian women and economy/industry. Specific models were developed for stimulating further research on the Indian fashion system by means of semiotic interpretations.

The data was collated and analyzed to reach conclusions through theory building and theory testing approach. Based on the observations and on the basis of data collected, certain theories and models were developed which could be generalized, as well as some models were contextualized for the Indian fashion system.

3.5.2 Worldview

There already exists a worldview on various aspects related to the semiotic meaning making of fashion apparel, which is now being contextualized to the Indian sari in this study.

Apart from the documentation and detailed research on traditional Indian textiles, there exists philosophical/ phenomenological view by art and textile historians and anthropologists about cultural practices of clothing selection. This reflects the thought process and understanding of the very existence and evolution of the Indian sari and its meaning in the global context. Banerjee (Banerjee, 2006) and Chisti (Chisti, 1995 and 2010) amongst the leading scholars who have explored the multiple facets of the Indian sari beyond the tradition and textile practice. Barthes' study on; the semiotic theory and the fashion system (Barthes, 1984, translated in 1990 and 2006) have been taken forward in this study and established its relevance to the Indian sari.

The ideologies, philosophies and theories put forth by these great researchers and thinkers allowed the researcher to identify, understand and analyze all the influencing factors which have contributed to significance and the semiotic interpretation of the sari in the post-modern context, though its origin can be traced back to almost 5000

years ago. Not only were these views cited to explain the theories concluded by the researcher, but also helped the researcher to develop and put forth her view.

3.5.3 Creation of Models

The researcher in the course of her study has documented various sartorial preferences, especially the sari as well as various reasons and factors that affect their preferences in drape, fabric, detail and the message they wish to convey. These findings were represented in visual format using info graphics for better clarity for the readers.

Model . 1 : Sari Connotation and Denotation Model. It was created by using literary references, photographs, paintings, sculptures, films etcetera. Highlighted how the sari has reinvented its drape, embellishment, fabric besides the coordinating garment and grooming practices.

Model . 2 : Communication of Sari in context of society and culture. This framework was built for this study by using literary references on Hall's matrix on "Matters of interpretation" (Hall, 2012) also visual references of the sari through robust review of literature and observations.

Model . 3 : Trend Mapping for type of sari for various looks. It was created on the basis of detailed comparison and findings from all stages of research regarding the preference of a specific sari look for specific occasions across the 3 groups of respondents; with detailed description on sari material and aesthetic expression and the average number of saris in their own respective collections.

This model highlights impact of the Indian Fashion system on the Indian society and its meaning. There is continued interest for classical Indian dress silhouettes, heritage textile crafts, accessories; this model concentrates on outcomes through the lens of history, culture, and sociology of fashion. The neue urban tribes and fashion social movements in the post- modern era led emergence of the two major apparel categories:

1) Occasion wear; reserved for weddings, festivals, formal evening wear for parties. There is opportunity for exploring the hyper reality through the represented garment simulation in the occasion wear category.

2) Everyday wear; including work wear , active wear, leisure wear and casual clothing where the code of fashion seems to blend in and emergence of independents style of dressing to suit individual requirements.

The multicultural identities and the inferred communication of sari was presented in this model. The frequency of wearing has varied periodically but it remained in vogue and women in each fashion era continue to decode it in their own unique way. The versatile draped silhouettes & heritage craft traditions redefined for contemporary connoisseurs; have further led to the rising acceptance of Indian ethnic/ fusion fashion as a paradigm shift for India to discern and emphasize local inimitability, to create a sense of belonging and stimulate consumption of a culturally promoted “*Global-Desi*” fashion dictum across cultures. This study presented major factors contributing to the Indian fashion system interpreting its engagement with the Indian society and also the world. The semiotic approach to decode the nuance of the Indian fashion system embedded in popular culture through visual media like, family albums, films, magazine articles, red carpets appearance etcetera. , across the 80’s, 90’s and 2000 onwards. The sari styles and textiles ranging from traditional to contemporary, and occasion specific needs have been compiled in a tabular **Model no.4: Model for Indian Fashion System Everyday wear and Occasion wear**. The different apparel categories of the Indian fashion system were classified under separate headings.

Recommendations for further opportunities for overcoming challenges, based on literary references, detailed observations and reflections by the researcher for the Indian Fashion system were tabled in **Model . 5: Discussion about advantages in wearing sari** and **Model . 6: Discussion about difficulty in wearing sari**.