

7. Home Furniture

- 7.1 Factors in selection of home furniture
- 7.2 Material used for furniture
- 7.3 General principles in furniture arrangement
- 7.4 Care and maintenance of furniture

Do you know?

Furniture is very important in home. Several varieties of furniture are available in the market. Some of them are costly, attractive and proportionate, while other type of furniture is cheap, lack of qualities and less attractive. The material used for furniture is wood, cane, metal, plastic, upholster and glass. While selecting furniture one should be careful and examine it for beauty, comfort, utility and multipurpose use. Furniture items also form integral part of decorating scheme in any room of the house. It enhances beauty of the interior and proves functional. Cost of maintenance also must be low and it should be easy to clean.

Definition :

The dictionary meaning of furniture states it as: **“The movable objects used to make a room or building suitable for living or working in.”**

Furniture is used for various activities such as sitting, sleeping, eating, dressing, etc. Furniture is basically intended for work, storage, comfort and rest.

7.1 Factors in selection of home furniture :

The number of furniture items that a family should have will depend upon the activities carried out in different areas of the house. Once the family has taken a decision, regarding furniture, the individual pieces must be examined and selected carefully on the basis of following criteria :

Use your brain :

List out the factors in selection of home furniture.

- **Comfort** : Comfort is a desired and expected characteristic from the furniture. The features of the furniture which make it comfortable to use are its weight, mobility, suitability and firmness. Furniture should be designed according to the anthropometric measurement of the user. Most of the furniture is made by using standard measurements for an average person. Before purchasing the furniture one should take a trial and feel the comfort for oneself to use it.
- **Family Preference** : While selecting furniture for the family, one should consider the preferences of the family members. Profession and social status of the family should also be considered. The selection of furniture should be done according to their need and use or utility of furniture. The families with transferable jobs prefer the light weight, easy to carry and folding furniture. The families residing in small home should use multipurpose furniture example: two in one furniture, sofa cum bed, sofa cum box etc.
- **Budget** : The cost of furniture depends on the material used, design and style,

colour of the furniture, and construction. One can buy essential furniture first and then add gradually. Compare the cost of furniture while selecting, by visiting different showrooms. One should be careful when buying on discount sales. Example, cost wise upholstered furniture is costlier than cane or metal furniture.

- **Construction and design :** Proper construction of furniture makes it sturdy, comfortable and increases its durability. No one should purchase a piece of furniture without making a complete examination of it. The purchaser should check the bottom, sides, back, inside and front of the each furniture piece. The leg and the frame should be usually joined with glue and also with dowels, screws, and clips or corner metal plates. A person may have difficulty in examining the whole joint but one can ask information from the seller.

The design of the furniture refers to its shape, size, weight, balance, and proportion. A simple design is better than a decorative design for furniture. Design should make the furniture easy to use, comfortable, easy to clean and maintain. The construction of furniture should be ergonomically good to get maximum comfort.

- **Durability :** Durability of furniture depends upon the material used, the type of joints used, design and style, and workmanship. Sturdy furniture, made of well-seasoned wood is more durable than cheap quality of wood. The furniture will be more durable if it is well maintained by dusting, polishing, repairing in time, handled with care and used properly. Durability is also dependent on the

construction of the furniture. Example: Proper finishing of surfaces etc.

- **Climatic Condition :** Atmospheric condition is an essential factor to be considered in buying furniture, for example metal furniture is not suitable in cities having humid condition. It tends to rust which affects its strength, beauty, and life. The wooden furniture is not affected by atmospheric condition and is suitable for all types of climatic condition.
- **Maintenance :** Maintenance of furniture is an important factor while selecting furniture. The maintenance cost should be less than purchasing cost. Proper care of furniture in terms of dusting, polishing, timely repairing is essential to maintain it in good condition. In general, steel furniture requires less maintenance than the upholstered and glass furniture.
- **New Trends :** While furnishing the house, selection of modern furniture is preferred. It is desired to have novelty in furniture. Proper selection of furniture will reflect the taste of the family. Hence, while selecting furniture, socio-economic status should be considered. Today, families prefer eco-friendly multipurpose use furniture and in built furniture to utilize the available limited space.

Find out new trends in home furniture.

- **Flexibility :** The use of multipurpose furniture is the best example of flexibility. Recently this type of furniture has become more popular. It should be easy to move from one place to other place and should have possibility to be used for multiple activities. Example : Sofa cum-bed, Folding Dining Table etc.

Aesthetics (Beauty) :

Would you know this?

Elements of design like colour, texture, form, shape, and space play important role in aesthetics of furniture. Beauty of furniture is based on good designing with consideration to ergonomic factor, good construction, comfort in use etc. Furniture with variety of raw material in different shapes and designs bring in innovation which adds beauty to the room.

7.2 Material used for furniture :

Different types of materials are used for manufacturing furniture. Each material has its own quality and limitations. Good range of material is available in today's market. Cost of furniture depends on the type of material used for making furniture.

List out different types of materials commonly used in making furniture	
Heavy Weight	Light Weight

1. **Wood :** Wood is the traditional material used for making the furniture. Most of the time whole furniture or pieces of furniture can be made from wood. The wooden furniture has aesthetic value, durability, natural beauty, flexibility in use and also has utility. It is generally not affected by the climatic condition.

Woods are classified :

- a. Soft wood and hard wood
- b. Natural wood and Artificial wood.

Soft wood are used for housing construction, for panelling and for kitchen furniture. Namely;

Cedar, Fir, Pine. Where as hard wood are used for furniture, housing building, boat construction, and tool making. Namely; Beech, Chestnut, Ebony, Elm, Mahogany, and Maple.

The most common natural woods that are available in India are used for furniture. It includes Teak wood, Walnut, Sandal, Mahogany, Halda, Sal, Shisham, Deodar, Mango etc. Artificial woods as Plywood, Hardboard, Particle board, Fiber board, Willow, Rattan and Reed etc., are also used for furniture.

- **Teak Wood :** Teak wood is generally used for valued furniture in high class interiors. It is durable, water resistant, resistant to pests, disease, and rots and comparatively expensive. It is rich in appearance and its grains and rings are very clear and ornamental. It is moderately heavy and hard. It is easy to polish.
- **Walnut, Sandal, Mahogany Wood :** These are also used for furniture but are not available in abundance and are costly. They are useful for small decorative articles and small furniture pieces such as centre table, boxes, etc. Sandal wood furniture has its own value and beauty. It is impossible to use it for making furniture because, cutting of sandal wood trees has been banned by the government.
- **Sal wood and Shisham :** These are strong and heavy woods. Keeping quality of Sal wood is low compared to Shisham. Shisham has beautiful appearance but it is very costly. It is used for furniture and decorative articles.
- **Varieties like Halda, Bamboo, Mango and Neem :** These are used for low cost furniture. Durability and grains of such varieties cannot be compared with teak wood.

- **Willow, Rattan, Reed :** Furniture made from material like Willow, Rattan, Reed is called Wickerwork. Willow can be woven just like cane. Rattan is a kind of vine that does not take any colour but can be given a burnt effect by scorching it with a blow torch. Reed is the hard core, left after the outer rattan fiber is stripped away.



Fig. 7.1 Wooden Furniture

- **Plywood :** Plywood is artificial wood. It is available in the market with various sizes and thicknesses which can be selected as per the need. It is also available as dent proof, water proof and fire proof variety. It is used for a wide range of structural, interior and exterior applications in furniture.
- 2. Cane :** Bamboo slips of various diameters are used in making cane furniture. Fine slips of flexible cane make the weaving, coiling and plaiting easy for artisans. Cane furniture can be waxed, oil painted and polished to give desired finish. It is light in weight and cheaper than the wooden furniture.

Cane is traditionally being used with wooden base to make outdoor furniture. It is very popular because of globalization, better exposure and having exclusive look.



Fig. 7.2 Cane Furniture

Many homes, hotels and resorts have separate sections where only cane furniture is displayed. It is also used in bedrooms and living rooms for lavish appearance. The range of cane products has expanded to include lounge chairs, classy dining chairs and stylish sofa.

- 3. Metal :** Metal furniture is manufactured on large scale by using different metals and alloys for example; Iron (Wrought iron, Painted iron), aluminium, stainless steel, painted steel and Brass. To make furniture rust proof it is either painted or chromium plated.

Metal furniture is highly utilitarian, fireproof, durable and light in weight. Dry artificial heat does not affect it, but climatic conditions may have an effect on it. It can be easily moulded in various shapes. During manufacturing of metal furniture different parts are welded or riveted.



Fig. 7.3 Metal Furniture

Various range of metal furniture are available in market i.e., chairs, tables, rack, cupboards and cabinets etc. Metal tubes and light angles are also used in vivid and attractive colours.

- 4. Plastic :** Plastic can be molded in various shapes and sizes. It is very attractive because of various colours. Molded plastic furniture is made by premixed chemical like Urethane. Urethane has good cushioning properties. Hence it is good for making molded plastic furniture and it is rigid, dent proof, unbreakable, light in weight, easy to move and easy to clean. Plastic cane is also very useful for making back and seat of the chairs.



Fig. 7.4 Plastic Furniture

- 5. Upholstery :** Generally because of hardness wooden and other material furniture may not be found comfortable to use and hence it is finished with cushioned surface. This is called “upholstering”. Permanent upholstered furniture consists of four parts i.e., frame, belts instead of springs, filling material such as cotton, coconut coir, pieces of fabrics and foam with various density.



Fig. 7.5 Upholstery Furniture

The frame of the upholstered furniture is made of wood and metal material. Belts are used instead of springs for proper supporting. Foam of various densities is used for proper stuffing for filling and comfort. For finishing, select rexin fabric or leather fabric, different types of woven and non woven fabric according to colour scheme of the room. Different types of fabric and leather fabric are more durable as compared to rexin fabric. Finishes of upholstered furniture should be done by using nails and phenol resin glues which is very strong and is heat and water resistant. Legs should stand squarely and firmly on the floor and give proper support to the top of the upholstered furniture. Proper construction of a furniture piece makes it sturdy, comfortable and increase its durability.

- 6. Glass :** Recently the use of glass is becoming popular in making furniture. It is available in various colours and decorative forms. Glass tops are often used for writing tables and dining tables. Glass is commonly used for partitions, large exterior and interior sliding doors and for windows. Glass furniture is dent proof, water proof and is easy to clean.



Fig. 7.6 Glass Furniture

Fiber glass, made of fine threads can be woven in cloth and nets which are very hard wearing and inflammable. Glass fibers can also be mixed with plastic to make very strong and lightweight

furniture. It is commonly seen in the form of brightly coloured, molded chairs in public places like airports, restaurants and auditorium.

Use of ICT :

Search for pictures of various types of furniture from the internet.

7.3 General principles in furniture arrangement :

When decision of purchase of furniture is made, one should decide size and number to be bought according to the availability of space to avoid overcrowding of rooms. One can think of how and where the furniture is to be arranged.

Always Remember :

General principles in furniture arrangement.

- Furniture size should be proportionate to the room size. Small room should have small pieces of furniture and large rooms with large furniture.
- Furniture itself and its relation to wall space should be in good proportion. For example, arrange bigger or heavy furniture parallel to large wall and small furniture can be placed at an angle, to match the architecture of the room.
- First bigger furniture should be arranged and then small furniture, to maintain balance by using similar furniture or different furniture.
- Do not accommodate too much furniture which may reduce space of the room.
- Arrange the furniture out off “traffic lanes” to avoid household accidents.
- Opening of doors and windows should be considered while arranging furniture. So that proper ventilation will take place and sunlight will enter the room.
- In every room, rhythm should be obtained by repetition of accent through either by furniture arrangement, or by the use of colour, design, texture of the furniture so that the eye is carried from one point to another.
- Any defect in construction can be reduced through proper arrangement of furniture. For example, if room is too large, then the corner should be arranged with large furniture.
- There should be enough space around the furniture so it can be easy to clean and maintain the walls of the room.
- Functional consideration of arrangement is more important than aesthetic considerations in furniture arrangement. For example, sociability in living room, relaxation and privacy in bed room.

7.4 Care and maintenance of furniture :

Before purchase of any furniture family members must know how to take care and maintain it. Care and maintenance of the furniture is an essential part, as it retains appearance and beauty of the furniture. Care and maintenance should be taken according to the material used for furniture.

1. **Care of wooden furniture :** Furniture should be rubbed and dusted often with soft cotton cloth. Carry out weekly cleaning with a mixture of vinegar in luke warm water and dry it properly. As a preventive measure the wooden furniture



Fig. 7.7 Furniture Arrangement

should be always kept dry. Precaution should be taken to make it termite proof. Apply wooden polish for maintenance of wooden furniture.

Let's do this :

Turpentine	: 2 Parts
Methylated spirits	: 1 Part
Linseed oil	: 2 parts
Vinegar	: 1 part

- Take the above ingredients in a beaker
- Shake well to form an emulsion

Use this homemade polish for wooden furniture.

2. Care of Cane Furniture : It can be cleaned daily with dry and soft cotton cloth. Never use soapy water as it become yellowish. Occasionally it can be cleaned with the mixture of one litre water and one table spoon salt. Dry it immediately.

3. Care of Metal Furniture : It can be cleaned with warm soapy water. Rinse the piece of furniture with clean water. Dry with a towel or keep in sunlight. It is either painted or chromium plated to prevent rusting.

4. Care of Plastic Furniture : Remove the dust daily with soft flannel cloth. It can be cleaned with soapy water or with non-greasy cleaner spray.

5. Care of Upholstery Furniture : It can be cleaned with soft brush or vacuum cleaner to remove dust. Small stains can be removed by using petrol or using vinegar by rubbing it in one direction with soft cotton cloth. If stain is identified, it can be removed by particular stain removal method. The maintenance of leather fabric is easy as it can be cleaned with vinegar or lime juice.

6. Care of Glass Furniture : Dusting of glass furniture should be done daily. Wipe it with soft flannel cloth to avoid scratches. Cleaning material like soap solution, cleaning solution and brightening solution is available in market for cleaning the glass furniture. Sliding glass should be cleaned by using wet newspaper with whitening powder. A little ammonia can be added to the water to clean greasy glass furniture. Methylated spirits can be used for removing stains.

Can You Recall?

- Furniture is very important in home. Several varieties of furniture are available in the market.
- Furniture is an essential element of interior decoration.
- It adds aesthetic value to the room and improves status of the family.
- Furniture makes home furnishing comfortable and convenient to the each and every member of the family.
- Furniture is used for the performance of various activities such as sitting, writing, relaxing, eating, sleeping and working for various activities.
- Furniture is made from different materials such as wood, metal, plastic, upholstery, glass and combination of these materials.
- Points need to be considered in the selection of furniture are comfort, family preference, budget, construction and design, durability, climatic condition, maintenance, new trends, flexibility, aesthetic value etc.
- Different materials used in furniture require different type of care and maintenance.

Exercise

• Objective questions :

1) Multiple choice questions.

1. Heavy furniture pieces should be arranged _____ to the wall.
a) Opposite b) Infront c) Parallel
2. Metal furniture is used for making _____ weight furniture.
a) Heavy b) Light c) Moderate
3. Wood is one of the _____ material used for making furniture.
a) Common b) Regular c) Traditional
4. Furniture is basically intended for work, _____ and rest.
a) Comfort b) Luxury c) Fashion
5. Families with transferable jobs prefer the _____ furniture.
a) Light weight b) Heavy c) Narrow

2) Match the following.

A	B
a. Wooden Furniture	i) Heavy weight
b. Metal Furniture	ii) Comfort
c. Plastic Furniture	iii) Painted Polish
d. Furniture	iv) Flexible
e. Glass Furniture	v) Soap Solution

3) Identify whether the following statements are True or False.

- a. Furniture for small houses should be multipurpose.
- b. Plastic furniture is more flexible.
- c. Glass furniture is hard to clean.
- d. Comfort is dependent on construction and design of the furniture.

• Short answer questions :

1. Give reasons for the following :

- a. Plastic furniture is preferred for office.
- b. Furniture is fundamental part of home decoration.
- c. Multipurpose furniture is suitable for small houses.

2. Write short notes on the following :

- a. Method of preparing furniture polish at home.
- b. Cleaning glass furniture.
- c. Any two types of furniture.
- d. Maintenance of furniture.
- e. Soft wood and hardwood.
- f. Wooden and glass furniture.

• Long Answer questions :

- a. What are the essential points that should be considered in selection of furniture?
- b. Explain different types of materials used for furniture.
- c. Write the general principles considered in arranging furniture.
- d. Explain care and maintenance of different types of furniture.

• Project :

- a. Examine the classroom furniture with respect to design, material, construction and finishes.
- b. Collect pictures of various types of furniture. Classify them on the basis of various rooms and material used. Prepare a scrapbook.
- c. Visit a furniture showroom or well furnished house and write report on type of furniture, material used and its cost.

