

Unit 9

HOUSEHOLD TEXTILES

- *In which ways do you use various textiles in your daily life other than apparel?*
- *Which are the textiles that can be termed as household textiles?*
- *What do you keep in mind while buying household textiles?*

The main area of use of textiles is as apparels but the other most significant area in which textiles are used by all of us on a daily basis is at the household level. All around us we see different kinds of fabrics being used as curtains, sofa covers, bed sheets, cushion covers, towels, napkins, blankets, dish clothes, rags, mops, carpets and many other similar uses. All such fabrics are called **Household Textiles**. Proper selection, use and care of these textiles is important as it will help them last long, (give us full value of our money) and serve us well. In this chapter we will be learning about four major household textiles namely **Towels & napkins, Bed sheets & pillow covers, Curtains & draperies and Carpets & rugs**.

9.1 TOWELS AND NAPKINS

- *Why do towels and napkins have so many loops on their surface?*
- *What are the criterial you consider when you are buying a towel?*

Towels are used to absorb moisture from body after a bath, so they are made using absorbent fibres and weaves. These towels are known as **Terry Towels** or **Turkish Towels**.

- **Selection of Towels :** While selecting towels, following points should be kept in mind :
 1. **Material & Construction :** In India, mainly cotton is used for making towels. In western countries, linen is used. **Pile weave is mainly used for making towels.** Piles (loops) increase the absorbency.
 2. **Colour & Design :** In western countries, bath towels are always white and plain. In India, we get all sorts of colours and designs. Young children prefer bright colours and cartoon prints in their towels.
 3. **Texture :** Some people prefer very soft towels while some other may prefer slightly crisp and rough texture. For very young and very old persons, towels should be of very soft texture as rough texture can damage their skin.
 4. **Workmanship :** The two open sides of the towel should be properly folded and stitched otherwise thread will keep coming out and the towel will not last long. Interlocking is best.

- **Types of Towels :**

1. **Bath Towels :** These are regular towels found in everybody's bathrooms. In western countries they are white and plain, while in India we get all kind of colours and designs.
2. **Beach Towels :** These towels are used only at the beach in western countries. They are brightly coloured and have beautiful designs on them. They are much bigger in size than bath towels so a person can lie on them to take sun bath (see picture no. 9.1)



Picture No. 9.1 Beach Towel

3. **Hand & Face Towels (Napkins) :** These are small sized towels which can be individual or can be one for the entire family, hanging by the wash basin. The standard size for napkins is 18"x12".
4. **Dish Towels :** These are usually made by simple weave and strong, tightly twisted yarns so that there is not **lint** formation.

They should be kept clean and dry. These towels are used for wiping utensils.

Do you know?

Lint are the very small fibres on the surface of fabric. If the dish cloth has lint, it can stick to the wet utensils.

9.2 BED SHEETS AND PILLOW COVERS

- Have you ever shopped for bed sheets? What were your criteria?
- How do you wash and take care of bedsheets?
- Why do pillows get dirty than bedsheets? What can we do to preserve them?

Bed sheet is the material which is spread over the mattress and tucked beneath. It is made of a thinner material and has matching pillow covers. **Bed cover** is a thicker material which is spread over bed sheet during day time to protect it.

- **Selection of Bed sheets :** The following criteria should be considered :
 1. **Material & Construction :** In India we usually have cotton bed sheets while in most countries abroad, they are made of linen. Mostly they are made of plain weave.
 2. **Colour & Design :** In western countries, the bed sheets are always white and plain. In India, they are available in different colours and designs. Light coloured bed sheets have a soothing effect on the

person sleeping on it. Dark colours should be avoided because if there is any insect on the bed, it will not be seen.

3. **Texture :** The texture of the bed sheet should necessarily be smooth and soft so that a person can rest on it peacefully.
4. **Workmanship :** The two raw edges should be folded and stitched firmly so no loose thread comes out of them. Interlocking is best.
5. **Size :** The bed sheet should be big enough to cover the mattress and its sides completely as well as to tuck underneath. There are two standard sizes available in market –Single bed sheet and Double bed sheet

Pillow Covers : Mostly a bed sheet comes with two matching pillow covers made from the same material. Ready made pillow covers are also available in market in all colours, design and size. The size of the pillow cover should be 2 inches more in width and 4 inches more in length than the pillow. A slip should be used to protect the pillow covers.

Always remember

A **slip** is a piece of old sheet or towel spread over the pillow cover on the area where our head touches it. It helps in protecting the pillow covers from getting dirty.

- How many different types of curtains are available in the market?
- What points will you keep in mind while selecting curtains?

Curtains and draperies are an integral part of home decoration today. They are basically there to cover and frame windows but they also make a room look more beautiful. Curtains and draperies are two different things and should not be misunderstood as one and the same. The difference between curtains and draperies is given in table no.9.1 :

Table No. 9.1 Difference between curtains and Draperies

Curtains	Draperies
1. Made up of light and thin material.	1. Made up of heavy and thick material.
2. Short in length and reach up to window sill.	2. Quite long and reach up to the floor.
3. Hung next to window glass.	3. Hung over the curtains.

● Aims of hanging Curtains :

1. **To make a room look attractive :** Curtains make interiors beautiful and interesting. For ex. - Curtains in living rooms, restaurants, reception areas of offices etc.
2. **To avoid excess sunlight :** Curtains in bedrooms are often hung with this purpose.
3. **For privacy :** Bedrooms, hospitals and bathrooms have curtains mainly for this purpose.

9.3 CURTAINS AND DRAPERIES

- Why do we hang curtains in our home?



Picture No. 9.2 Curtain

4. **To avoid dust and dirt :** Houses on ground floor, near main roads or near open fields need curtains to keep the dust and dirt away.



Picture No. 9.3 Draperies

5. **As partition :** Mainly in offices and hospitals. Sometimes even in homes a big room is divided into two with the help of curtains.

- **Selection of Curtains :** The following criteria should be considered -

1. **Material & Construction :** Cotton, linen and polyester curtains are most durable.

Silk and rayon curtains as well as lace and net curtains are less durable. Curtains made from glass fibre are considered excellent as they are very durable and easy to care.

2. **Colour :** The colour of the curtains should be matching to the colour of walls and other furniture in the room. In warm climates, cool colours like white, blues, greens are preferable. In cold climates, warm colours like yellows, reds, oranges are preferable.

Light coloured curtains will help a small room look bigger.

3. **Design :** For low ceiling rooms, curtains with vertical designs are more suitable as they create an illusion of height. In big rooms, curtains having big designs look good. For small rooms, curtains with small prints or plain curtains should be selected. They make a small room look bigger.

4. **Use of the room :** For different rooms, selection of curtains have to be done differently.

Living Room / Hall : Beautiful and attractive curtains perfectly matching with the furniture should be selected for living room.

Bedroom : Curtains of soothing colours and thick material should be chosen for

bedrooms to provide rest and privacy. The choice of the person occupying the bedroom should also be considered.

Bathroom : Mostly plastic curtains also known as **Shower curtains** are used for bathrooms. They do not get damaged due to moisture and can be cleaned easily.

Kitchen : If possible fire resistant cloth should be used for making kitchen curtains.

5. **Style of Furniture :** The type of material, colour and designs of curtains should be selected keeping in mind the style of furniture.

Wooden carved furniture : Silk, satin or velvet curtains will look better.

Modern steel and glass furniture : Net, lace or synthetic curtains with modern abstract designs will be more suitable.

Cane furniture : Cotton curtains with earthy colours and designs will look good.

9.4 CARPETS AND RUGS

- Why do people use carpets?
- Which different types of carpets are available in market?
- Do you find it difficult to clean the carpet?

Carpets and rugs are considered an integral part of home decor nowadays. Most of us tend to use these two terms interchangeably but actually there is a difference. ***A carpet is always wall-to-wall, covering the entire floor***

while a rug is small in size, covering only a certain part of the floor. They are usually found in living rooms and many times in bed rooms, dining rooms, lobbies, staircases too. They are also found in hotels, restaurants, offices, stores, airports, auditoriums, hospitals, schools etc.

- **Aims of using Carpets :**

1. They make a room look beautiful.
2. They give warmth and comfort. In cold climates, carpets are primarily used for this purpose.
3. They absorb floor noise as well as other noise in a room.
4. They prevent slipping while walking on the floor.

- **Selection of Carpets :** The following criteria should be considered -

1. **Material & Construction :** Traditionally carpets were made by wool, cotton, jute and sometimes silk. Nowadays all kinds of synthetic fibres are used. Carpets made from glass fibre are considered very durable and easy to maintain. Carpets are usually made of Pile weave.
2. **Colour :** Traditional carpets and rugs are available in earthy colours like red, maroon, orange, brown, black, blue, cream, white etc. Nowadays they are also available in light pastel colours, fluorescent colours as well as silver and gold. A carpet should be matching or complementing to the colour of walls and furniture.



Picture no. 9.4 Traditional Carpets

3. **Design :** Traditional carpets have floral designs usually with a border or an entire scene made on them. These carpets are usually hand made and the designs are pretty intricate. Modern carpets have traditional as well as modern, abstract designs.
4. **Texture :** Traditional carpets were made mostly of wool and so had a rough texture. Modern carpets use synthetic fibres and so can be extremely soft in texture.



Picture no. 9.5 Modern Carpets

5. **Ease of care :** Traditional carpets made from natural fibres are more difficult to take care as they tend to get spoilt or eaten up by insects very easily. Cleaning them is also more difficult. Modern carpets made from synthetic fibres have a longer life as these fibres are not easily affected by any natural element. They get cleaned also easily.

6. **Price :** Carpets are usually a costly item amongst furnishing and so we should invest in them wisely. Traditional woollen carpets like Kashmir or Iranian carpets are expensive because of the pure wool used as well as the fact that they are hand made with intricate designs. Modern carpets use synthetic fibres and are mostly made by machines so they turn out to be cheaper.

With intricate designs. Modern carpets use synthetic fibers and are mostly made by machines so they turn out to be cheaper.

Do you know?

The world's largest hand-woven carpet measures 60,000 square feet. It is installed in Sheikh Zayed mosque in Abu Dhabi. It took weavers two years to make and is reportedly valued at \$5.8 million.

- *How can we take proper care of household textiles?*
- *How often should we wash/clean the household textile.*
- *How can we prevent their spoilage?*

9.5 CARE OF HOUSEHOLD TEXTILES

Proper care and maintenance of household textiles will make them last longer, serve us better and give us value for money. Following points should be kept in mind –

1. Wash it before it gets too dirty.
2. If any repairing is needed, it should be done immediately.
3. They should be stored only after they are completely dry.
4. Scrubbing brush and iron should not be used in case of towels.
5. A fabric softener should be used from time to time to keep towels soft.
6. During day time, a bed cover should be used to protect the bed sheet from getting dirty.

7. A **slip** should be used to protect pillow covers.
8. Velvet, silk, satin curtains should be dry cleaned.
9. Carpets should be brushed and vacuum cleaned regularly.
10. Special carpet shampoos are available in market. Trained persons are also available to clean it.
11. A **rug cushion** should be kept below the rug to reduce the wear.
12. Carpets and rugs should be rolled for storage and some insecticide should be used.

A rug cushion is a mat or piece of old bed sheet spread below the rug to protect it from wear –n-tear.

Use Your Brain Power

1. Fill in the blanks using letters given below. Use each letter only once -

U	E	O	A	I	S	P	E	K	E	T	T	A
D	R	I	E	A	H	O	U	E	E	C	W	E
I	S	E	X	E	U	A	L	O	W	S	I	S
L	H	S	I	N	L	I	R	O	R	A		

- a) C ___ R ___ ___ I N S
- b) R ___ G S
- c) B E ___ S ___ ___ E T ___
- d) T ___ ___ E L ___
- e) N ___ P ___ ___ N S
- f) S ___ ___ P
- g) D R ___ P ___ R ___ ___ S
- h) C ___ R P ___ ___ S
- i) P I ___ L ___ ___ C ___ V ___ ___
- j) W ___ ___ K M ___ N ___ H I ___

2. Name the household textile based on the clues given below –

a) Window sill - next to glass - thin material

→ _____

b) Warmth - stop slippage - absorb floor noise

→ _____

c) Pile weave - cotton fibre - different sizes

→ _____

d) Next to wash basin - small size - hand & face

→ _____

e) Smooth texture - next to mattress - light colour

→ _____

f) Tightly twisted yarn - clean - dry

→ _____

g) Wool fibre - more care - intricate designs

→ _____

h) Over the pillow - under head - small in size

→ _____

i) Jute or cotton - to protect rug - facing floor

→ _____

j) Very big - colourful - for lying down

→ _____

EXERCISE

Objective Type Questions

I. (A) Match the following :

A	B	
1. slip	a)	below the rug
2. dish towels	b)	towels
3. rug cushion	c)	silk
4. pile weave	d)	plastic curtains
5. shower curtains	e)	jute
	f)	protection for pillow covers
	g)	tightly twisted yarns

II. Select and write the most appropriate answer from the given alternatives for each question :

1. Weave used in making towels

a) Twil b) Plain c) Pile

2. Colour of bed sheets in western countries

a) Light b) Dark c) White

3. Design suitable for curtains in low ceiling rooms

a) Vertical
b) Horizontal
c) Plain

4. Term for a small floor covering
 - a) Carpet
 - b) Rug
 - c) Mat
5. Clothes used for drying utensils.
 - a) Hand towel
 - b) Beach towel
 - c) Dish cloth
6. Fibers used for making carpets are easy to maintain.
 - a) Cotton
 - b) Wool
 - c) Glass

III. Write whether the following statements are True or False :

1. Beach towels are bigger in size as compared to other towels.
2. Bed sheets should be light in colour.
3. Carpets made from synthetic fibres require more care than woolen carpets.
4. Thick material is used for draperies.
5. Dish clothes should be loosely woven.
6. Plastic curtains are suitable for bathroom.

IV. Name the following :

1. Piece of cloth used below the rug.
2. Piece of cloth used on pillow covers.
3. Small towel used for wiping hand and face.
4. Weave used in towels.
5. Wall to wall floor covering.
6. Curtains used in bathrooms.

7. Very small fibres on the surface of fabric.
8. Cloth used for wiping utensils.

Short Answer Type Questions

I. Give reasons :

1. Glass fibres are considered good for making curtains.
2. Plastic curtains are suitable for bathrooms.
3. Pile weave is used for making terry towels.
4. A rug cushion is required while spreading a rug on the floor.
5. A slip should be used along with pillow cover.
6. Scrubbing brush should not be used while washing towels.

II. Differentiate between:

Curtains and Draperies

III. Write short notes on the following :

1. Aims of hanging curtains.
2. Selection of bed sheets (any 2 points)
3. Selection of towels (any 2 points)
4. Care of household textiles (any 4 points)
5. Selection of carpets (any 2 points)
6. Selection of curtains (any 2 points)
7. Aims of using carpets.
8. Napkins.

IV. Define the following terms :

1. Lint
2. Slip
3. Rugs
4. Carpet
5. Beach towel
6. Drapery
7. Napkin
8. Dish cloth

SELF STUDY/PROJECT

- Do a market survey on the various types of house-hold textiles.
- Find out the methods used by home-makers to take care of their household textiles through a survey.

