

# Designing Fashionable Functional Clothing for Pregnant Women

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**Abstract**—*Technical textiles have evolved as new textiles in world market encompassing smart, intelligent textiles that have broken the traditional boundaries as well as usage of textiles. Functional clothing is one exciting segment of technical textiles that includes clothing or accessories intended to deliver specific or pre determined usage to user, over and above its normal use. Functional clothing today, has a wide acceptance and usage in varied fields and covers products ranging from protective clothing to medical or sports clothing. The following research paper focuses on designing fashionable functional clothing for pregnant women. Improper clothing in public may be a cause of embarrassment for some ladies as it may draw unnecessary attention towards them. Thus suitable clothing is inevitable for such ladies. The present paper highlights how fashion can be integrated in functional clothing so that resulting apparels have wide approval and application among end users.*

**Keywords:** *Technical textiles, Smart textiles, Intelligent textiles, Functional clothing, Protective clothing*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A technical textile is a textile product manufactured for non-aesthetic purposes, where function is the primary criterion. Technical textiles include textiles for automotive applications, medical textiles (e.g., implants), geotextiles (reinforcement of embankments), agrotextiles (textiles for crop protection), and protective clothing (e.g., heat and radiation protection for fire fighter clothing, molten metal protection for welders, stab protection and bulletproof vests, and spacesuits)

Technical textiles represents a multi-disciplinary field with numerous end use applications. The production of different items of technical textile industry has been slowly but steadily increasing in the country. One such area lies in field of functional clothing. Functional clothing is one exciting segment of technical textiles that includes clothing or accessories intended to deliver specific or pre determined usage to user, over and above its normal use. Functional clothing today, has a wide acceptance and usage in varied fields and covers products ranging from protective clothing to medical or sports clothing.

However, fashion does not need to take a backseat during pregnancy. Choosing right kind of fabric along with design features that flatter the body type during this period is all that

is needed to make maternity wear functional as well as fashionable.

## 2. WHY FUNCTIONAL CLOTHING FOR PREGNANT WOMEN

Maternity clothing is worn by women in some cultures as an adaption to changes in body size during pregnancy. In this connection it is essential to point out that comfortable casual clothing is normally at the top of the checklists of expectant ladies.

Pregnancy involves certain physical changes as changes in breast size, abdomen, etc. A pregnant woman may also face problems as swelling of hands and feet. Thus, clothing requirements change accordingly as one becomes pregnant. In the old days, most pregnant women choose to wear their old clothing, and did not even consider buying maternity clothes. Concerning about their appearances was less, mostly because they tend to feel 'out of shape' during the pregnancy stage.

However, this is not the current case, where many pregnant women work, socialize and sometimes even travel internationally, and do need to stay both comfortable and attractive. Naturally, the proper clothing requirements of today's expecting mothers are different.

## 3. DESIGN FEATURES

- Maternity clothes should not compress abdomen and breasts but should hang from the shoulders.
- The garment should accommodate probable bodily changes that occur during this period.
- Maternity dresses must feature convenient fly fastenings and high waistbands with elasticized panels to adjust to the growing size of abdomen.
- High quality straight pull on skirts may feature functional side pockets, under bump jersey panels for added comfort and may be worn during and after pregnancy due to perfect fit.

- Garments must be form fitting to expand as necessary. High tech fabrics such as elastane may be material of choice for such garments.
- Some women prefer to maintain a much greater sense of modesty when it comes to maternity wear. SO, Garments for such ladies must be less fitted with longer hemlines and higher necklines.
- Features such as button hole elasticized waistbands, belly support, adjustable clothing, stretchable, breathable fabrics and nursing openings must be considered while designing maternity wear.
- Following garments may be included by pregnant women to remain comfortable as her abdomen grows firmer and she gains extra weight that goes with healthy pregnancy:
  - Leggings
  - Stretch denim pants
  - Roomy shirts
  - Pants and skirts with elastic or drawstring waistbands
  - Dresses with no waist or empire cut waist
  - Sleeveless, loose kurtas which are cool and comfortable will suit for summer wear.

#### 4. FABRIC

- Fabrics with brighter colors and bolder prints must be selected for concealing body shape.
- One must avoid itchy or synthetic items where possible as hormones may help the lady to feel itchier, stickier and hotter than normal.
- Most maternity clothing may contain lycra or spandex for stretch capacity, but pregnant women must choose clothing with natural fabric blend.
- Light weight fabrics must be selected for comfort and flexibility.

#### 5. SHOES

Comfortable, supportive shoes are extremely important for pregnant women. This is imperative not only because pregnant lady puts a lot of stress on her feet, but also because feet may swell at later stage. For office or formal wear, one must invest in flats or “kitten heels” and seek out shoes that offer arch support. Shoes without shoelaces or buckles, and non skid soles may provide relief in pregnancy.



**Design 1**



**Design 2**

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## 6. CONCLUSION

When one is pregnant, dressing can be a major fashion challenge even for the trendiest mom-to-be because body is always changing, and one doesn't know which clothes in the closet are going to fit from day to day. It has however, now become a popular trend to wear fine quality and well-designed clothes during pregnancy period. Most pregnant women today are no longer trying to hide or cover up their pregnancy; instead, they are choosing different varieties of garments that fit into their new shape. It is therefore imperative for expectant mothers to choose garments that can balance both style and comfort to make the whole experience worthwhile.

## REFERENCES

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