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## **Growing Body Structure and its Sways on Clothing Panaches of Professional Punjabi Women**

### **Abstract**

This study aims to develop substantive theory explaining working pregnant Punjabi woman's process of making their clothing decisions during this special period by using grounded theory. The study has explained the categories and sub- categories regarding change in body structure of the working women when they are pregnant and are at work place. During analysis causal condition, contextual condition, intervening condition, action/interactional strategies of growing body structure are simplified. In presenting the findings, passages from the transcript of the interviews were also quoted and at the end of each quotation a code or pseudonyms were mentioned in brackets. This research study concluded that pregnant Punjabi women use different clothing strategies for their appearance management during pregnancy as they don't want to be prominent and wants to strengthen their self-esteem. Lastly it is recommended that social and psychological aspects of the changing body structure should also be addressed.

**Keywords:** *clothing, Punjabipregnant women, maternity clothing, physical changes*

### **Introduction**

Gross & Stone (2002) identified that body of the women goes under lot of changes during pregnancy. Robinson (2004) believes that growth of the pregnant body may vary from one person to another, depending on their body structure. However, the belly of the pregnant women does not show up until 12<sup>th</sup> weeks. During 14-16 week their belly slightly comes out and this change can be adjusted by wearing loose clothing, but after this there is a definite need, as pointed out by Eicher & Lutz (2000), of precise garment to accommodate these bodily changes such as maternity clothing and nursing undergarments. Maternity clothes, according to Weiss (2007) are designed in such a way that they make the wearer comfortable, which is first priority of a pregnant woman and they fit properly and also cover the body of the pregnant women. It is observed that they are usually the size of the lower changes first, and

then later on the size of the shirt also changes.

It is notable that choices in these maternity clothing, writes Robinson (2004) largely depends on the type of the commitments that person is having with her family and office, and they also depends upon dressing style of the wearer e.g. some women want to look attractive and formal while others dress themselves casually and comfortably. Maternity clothes are usually made of stretchy fabrics to accommodate the growing body. Apart from this, there are also some new inventions in maternity outfits e.g. belly belt, which is worn to extend the waist of the lowers, however this insert is visible with the tight fitting shirts. Therefore loose shirts are usually worn over them.

The present study has particularly focused in finding out the effects on clothing styles of working pregnant women with change in physical structure. The study explained this by developing categories and sub- categories of effects on clothing styles because of the change in body structure of pregnant women, when they are pregnant and are at work place.

This study will significantly contribute in find out the clothing needs of the working pregnant women and it will help in knowing the effect on clothing style of the pregnant women. It will significantly contribute in giving guide line to professional women especially those who are working at managerial level in deciding and planning their clothing for special days. Additionally it will also give guidelines to designers while designing clothes for working pregnant women according to the teachings of Islam.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Physiological Aspects of Clothing**

Clothing plays significant role in shaping one's life as an individual as well as in group. In this way, human body and clothing are considered inalienable and this alienability is influenced by the living environment which makes human bodies as a mirror to reflect ones inner self. This inner self, commented by Kaiser (1997), is formed by the combination of different ideas, sentiments and awareness which interact in making the right choice. Therefore, this inner self plays crucial role in one's decision making in relation to clothing due to close proximity of human body (inner self) and clothing.

It is revealed by Eicher& Lutz (2000) that clothing is instrumental in providing protection and beautification to human body

and in the same tune it provides communication and extension to human body. Eicher& Lutz (2000) refer the relationship between clothing and the movements of human body while highlighting the concept of comfort with dress which, in turn, depends upon the pattern of body movements. This concept outlines the significance of comfortable clothing and body movements. It brings out the concept that human body and dress are dovetailed and depended on each other as clothing, dress or outfits need body measurements to be stitched and tailored.

### **2.2 Physical Changes and Need of Maternity Clothing**

It is maintained by Sterling (2000) that in the period of pregnancy body of the pregnant women goes under lot of physical and psychological changes. Physically during this period, the body size and shape of the pregnant women goes further away from the ideal body size and shape, due to increase in weight and fat during this period. These remarkable physical changes, taking place inside the body of the pregnant women during this period, have their psychological influence on her which requires lot of care and attention.

It is also revealed by Sara (2003) that physical changes in the body structure of the pregnant women are visible in the first trimester e.g. the breast of pregnant women enlarges significantly during this time. These changes in body structure are prominent and may attract variable response from the public, and women may have the biggest fashion dilemmas as they move on with their pregnancy. Therefore in order to accommodate these physical changes, Robinson (2004), writes that they will subsequently have to make a decision either to borrowing or purchasing well designed special maternity clothes, to accommodate this and to maintain their comfort. Although, as outlined by Sara (2003) they may carry on their daily life after making unpleasant and uncomfortable alterations in the design of their dresses to accommodate the changes in their body structure. But, Robinson (2004) considers that maternity outfits which are specifically designed for the pregnant ladies should be worn in this special condition, as these women require physiological and psychological satisfaction.

### **3. Method and Methodology**

Grounded theory was the selected methodological approach of this research study. The framework used by this study is given by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998). It provides the opportunity to discover how

pregnant women for the first time deal with phenomenon in working environment.

After formal consent from the participant semi structured interviews were recorded. These interviews opened with the researcher’s brief introduction regarding the aims, and significance of the study. The researcher also outlined the rights to the participants to withdraw themselves from the study at any time. Along with this, it was also explained to them that their confidentiality will be fully maintained throughout the study by using Pseudonym or codes and all the identifying details will not be used. As these interviews progressed, prompts were also used, so as to have a rich and in-depth data related to the study. Towards the end of the interview, the participants were provided the opportunity to think and share any other details which they felt important and had missed during the interview. The rigour or trustworthiness of this study was also ensured in all its methodological dimensions or methods.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

In this research study in order to explore and to make sense of the dynamic relationships between the categories, (which are supported by sub-categories) within each phenomenon, the paradigm model outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) has been used. Along with this, the link between these categories and subcategories are also ordered by using this model. In presenting the findings, original chunks from the transcripts of the interviews are also quoted and at the end of each quotation, a code or pseudonym is supplied in brackets. The first letters of codes are in capital letter. The phenomenon is written in bold. While, categories are bold and underlined, and sub categories are written in italics, so they can be identified easily.

##### 4.1 An Overview of the Phenomenon



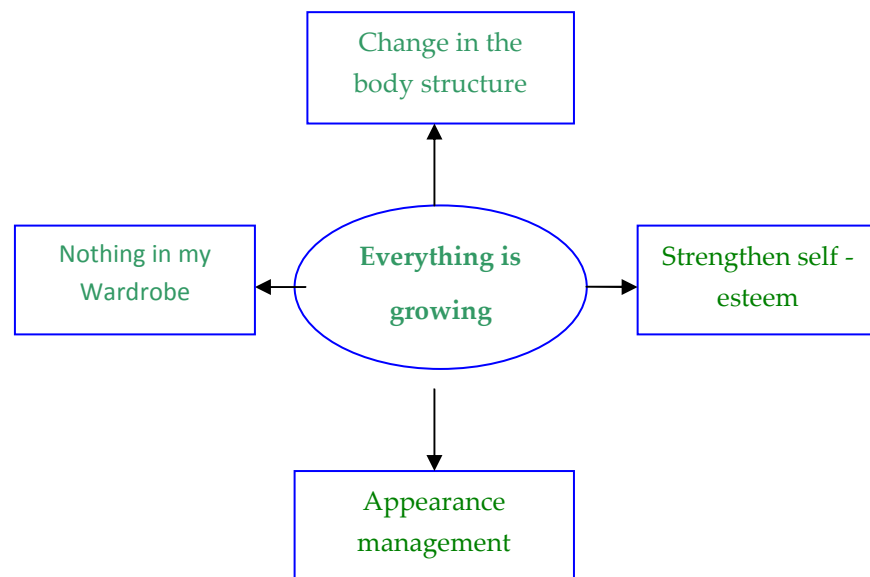
Figure1 (Hughes, 2007)

The first consideration of the working pregnant Punjabiwomen while making clothing decisions, regardless of which ever cultural, ethical or religious background do they belong is the recognition that **Everything is growing**. This factor has a major influence on the clothing choices of the pregnant Punjabiwomen; rather it can be said as the basic phenomenon which initiates any change in the clothing styles and preferences of the working pregnant Punjabiwomen. **Everything is growing** is an in vivo code drawn from the statement of women who work in banking sector. When mentioning the factors which influenced her in making clothing decisions during pregnancy, she expressed herself in these words, with a big laugh:

I go to work every day so I have to Ahmm---- buy something that will, that I can wear every day; and at the same time the whole course of pregnancy---- because my tummy is growing, my waist line is growing, everything is growing, --- so I have to consider that (Laugh)--- (TAI).

The statement clearly explains that while making clothing decisions, working pregnant Punjabiwomen may consider lot of factors; however the phenomenon of **Everything is growing** remains the major consideration throughout the period of pregnancy.

The paradigm model of this phenomenon is shown below in figure2



**Figure 2: Everything Is Growing**

The paradigm components are illustrated in detail in table 2.1, which includes the categories and sub-categories involved in **Everything is growing**.

**Table 1.1: Everything is growing**

PARADIGM COMPONENT	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Causal Condition	Nothing in my wardrobe	Nothing fit any more Change in priorities Ahh, it started getting tight
Context	Change in the body structure	Noticed all those Changes Don't want to be prominent Have to buy something.
Intervening Conditions	At workplace	Are adjustable
Action/ Interactional Strategies	Appearance management	Nice and loose Feel good
Consequences	Strengthen self esteem	look good and quite acceptable

**4.2Causal Condition: Nothing in my Wardrobe**

**Nothing in my wardrobe** suggests the intensity of situation, which working pregnant Punjabiwomen have to face when their pre-pregnancy figure change drastically and nothing is left in their wardrobe which can be worn comfortably and confidently as Fa said: I couldn't dress up in my old clothes (TFa).

**Nothing in my wardrobe** is an in vivo code said by Jo who works in non-governmental organization (NGO) while telling her problems during pregnancy she said:

When I started to realize; that nothing in my wardrobe would go on with me. I had to go and find something new. Ahhh---ahhmya, so after--- I bought these clothes, --- at about six and half seven months, a shirt and a couple of new trousers ahh- they did not last very long; ---they got a little bit tighter as the months went on,-- So I made myself---some new clothes (TJo).

This causal condition of **Nothing in the wardrobe** was experienced by almost all of the participants in different ways, one participant expressed this, in these words when old clothes do not fit me she went to buy something adjustable. While others expressed this that under a causal condition of changing body structure there is a *Change in priorities as nothing fit any more*.

**Table 2.2: Causal Condition: Nothing in my Wardrobe**

PARADIGM COMPONENT	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Causal Condition	Nothing in my wardrobe	Nothing fit anymore Change in priorities

**4.2.1 Nothing in my Wardrobe:***Nothing fit anymore*

*Nothing fit anymore* is a sub- category of causal condition of **Nothing in my wardrobe** and it suggests drastic change in the body structure of working pregnant Punjabiwomen, that compels them to make some changes in the existing wardrobe and even they have to change their clothing styles. As most working pregnant women want to dress up in an acceptable manner when they are in social groups or when they are at their work place.

*Nothing fit any more* is said by Jo, while telling with laughter that change in her body structure appeared at very early stage of her pregnancy and she realized that **Nothing in my wardrobe**. She said:

To be honest around 3months, or 4 months, it started feeling very early, -- nothing fit any more. Everything was stretching. So, I

had---I noticed all those changes very quickly-- and I was very conscious (TJo).

#### 4.2.2 **Nothing in my Wardrobe:** *Change in preferences*

*Change in preferences* is a sub-category of the category **Nothing in the wardrobe** which is the causal condition of the phenomenon **Everything is growing**. *Change in preferences* suggests that during pregnancy, as the body structure of pregnant working Punjabi women grows, clothing preferences also changes and working pregnant women has to set their preferences intelligently. *Change in preferences* is felt and expressed by many participants. One of the participant, Sa while telling her story told the researcher that her preferences change as she was very fond of embellished dress but now she feels itchy in those clothes and that she had feeling of **Nothing in the wardrobe** as **Everything is growing**. She expressed herself in these words:

I think my style has changed altogether. And I was very fond of laces braid and embellishments. Change in shirt shalwar, trouser and even in shoes. I was not psychologically satisfied with my old clothes even when they fit me. Before I wear I think that I will be uncomfortable at work place(TSa).

So, casual condition of change in clothing styles and preferences is due to contextual situation of **Change in body structure** of the working pregnant Punjabi woman.

#### 4.3 Context: **Change in the Body Structure**

**Change in the body structure** is the contextual situation of the phenomenon **Everything is growing**. This **Change in the body structure** is inevitable, and it starts taking place sooner or later during pregnancy. In few women, this **Change in the body structure** starts taking place in very early stage of the pregnancy, while in others it happens in the second trimester of the pregnancy. But it happens in all pregnant women. Women, who are working when they become pregnant, sometimes find the management of the clothing quite a hassle due to the **Change in the body structure** as commented by one of the participants with a laugh:

The whole experience I found quite a hassle, -- because every time, you finally manage to find something that is fitted, within a couple of weeks didn't not fit any more,, ----- and I have to go through the whole thing again (TJo).

So as told by Jo, **Change in the body structure** is continuous throughout the period of pregnancy, that ultimately makes the period of pregnancy and choice of clothing quite difficult and complicated for the working pregnant Punjabi women as **Everything is growing.**

Whether earlier or later this unique experience of **Change in the body structure** is noticed and acknowledged by almost every pregnant woman as it compels them to make some changes in their clothing style. One of the participants when noticed these changes in her body structure, expressed herself in these words “couldn’t wear what I was wearing”, while another participant said *Ahh it started getting tight.*

However, for some of the pregnant women, may notice these **Change in the body structure** at very early stage of pregnancy as Jo said that she *Noticed all those Changes* very quickly. All these sub-categories of the **Change in the body structure** are shown on the table 2.3

**Table 2.3: Context: Change in the Body Structure**

PARADIGM COMPONENT	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Context	Change in the body structure	Ahh it started getting tight Noticed those Changes

**4.3.1 Change in the Body Structure:** *Ahh it started getting tight*

*Ahh it started me getting tight* is an expression used by one of the participants, when it became impossible for her to wear her normal clothing any more, due to change in her body structure. However, some of the working pregnant women, who are pregnant for the first time, keep on wearing their usual clothing until it becomes impossible for them to wear their normal clothing any more. *Ahh it started me getting tight* also suggests that this change is sometimes not very pleasant and surprising for working pregnant women as stated Ca:

I was wearing my normal trouser for a while, --- then I realized that ahh, it started getting tight, so I need to change my trouser. I

got the elastic--- shalwarahmm—because that would be more comfortable (TCa).

So, this **Change in the body structure** is non-stop. However this **Change in the body structure** can only be handled by developing some strategy which is acceptable for the working pregnantwomen and is according to their working environment.

#### **4.3.2**Change in the Body Structure:*Noticed all those Changes*

This sub- category suggests that some of working pregnant women is quite aware of this expected **Change in the body structure**,and*Notice all those changes* at early stage of the pregnancy. *Noticed all those Changes* is an in vivo code which was used by Jo, while telling with laughter that changes in her body appeared at very early stage of pregnancy. She said:

To be honest around 3months, or 4 months, it started very early, -- and nothing fit any more. Everything was stretching. So, I had--I noticed all those changes very quickly-- and I was very conscious (T Jo).

So, this **Change in the body structure** which is a contextual situation of this phenomenon, in fact, is the basic motivating force to workout different strategies for the working pregnant Punjabiwomen to deal with the phenomenon **Everything is growing**.,*Ahh, it started getting tight, Noticed all those Changes* all suggest that changes appears in all pregnant women but for some working pregnant women this condition might become a challenge as they do want this condition to hinder them in their working.

I like the challenge; --- because I like to look for things that were different, and I think most women do (TCa).

So, in a situation when the body is not itspre-pregnancy form and clothes in the existing wardrobe do not fit any more, then working pregnant women may say **Nothing in my wardrobe** as they are dealing with the phenomenon **of Everything is growing** whichis also influenced by the intervening condition being **At workplace**.

#### **4.4** Intervening Conditions: At Workplace

In order to have an acceptance **At workplace**working pregnant women dress themselves according to working condition, social group with which they have to deal and religious guidelines. As most of the working pregnant women said they *Don't want to prominent* and

therefore they *Have to buy something* to fulfill the job requirement. The table below shows the categories and the sub-categories of the intervening condition.

**Table 2.4: Intervening Conditions: At Workplace**

PARADIGM COMPONENT	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Intervening Conditions	At workplace	Don't want to be prominent Have to buy something

**4.4.1 At Workplace:** *Don't want to be prominent*

*Don't want to be prominent* At workplace is sub-category as Ra expressed her concern by saying:

I wanted not be prominent in the eyes of the fellow staff and I have to consider all of them my recent boss I joined two months before it is easier to communicate with her (TRa).

While Fa said:

I didn't want to get prominent and don't want to get focused in the labour class I had to move around them I had to move between them. I never like they talk about me so whenever I use to go to “adda” I cover myself with a duppatta (TFa).

So some time it is the work environment that compiles that change their clothing style as *Don't want to be prominent* At work place. She said that:

I don't wear very tight clothes. I don't prefer it I wear full sleeves with not very deep neckline and with big duppattas and long shirt and don't prefer trouser I prefer shalwar (TRa).

**4.4.2 At Workplace:** *Have to buy something*

*Have to buy something* is a sub-category of the intervening condition At workplace in a causal condition of Change in the body structure. So when the body of the pregnant women starts changing and

nothing fits, then they *Have to buy something* as they have to they have to be acceptable at workplace . Al said:

I go to work every day; so I have to buy something; -----that will; -  
--that, I can wear every day and at the same time---- things that  
can go for the whole course of pregnancy (TAI)

This intervening condition of **At workplace** helped in formulating the action/interactional strategy of **Appearance management** of the phenomenon **Everything is growing** in the causal condition of **Nothing in the wardrobe** and the contextual condition of **Change in the body structure.**

#### **4.5 Action/ Interactional Strategies: Appearance management**

**Appearance management** is the action /interactional strategy of the phenomenon **Everything is growing**. Working pregnant women are able to deal with this challenge in their life mostly through **Appearance management** which is generally done by changing the style of their clothing. This change in appearance may also affect the personality of the wearer to some extent. Some of the working women are able to manage their appearance very successfully by not sacrificing their personal style of dressing. They design dresses for themselves as Ra said:

I started with three different styles but by the end it was only one style that was comfortable was the a-line one this I abandon after six months when my tummy become more prominent the other one was with bodice may be plain on the top and printed on the lower side and third one was very interesting, that design was given to me by my tailor that sort of the design is usually made by Abbais so it was like a full shirt beneath and another shirt on the top of it upper shirt was with v- neckline with ribbons going all down and the lower one was with boat neckline the lower shirt was sleeve less and the upper one with sleeves (TRa).

While Fasaid :

Kaftans were very trendy and I wore them as it was also the fashion of time. And as the silhouette was quite boxy you don't get noticed so that made me comfortable. (TFa).

Generally, throughout the period of pregnancy, working pregnant women put lot of efforts for their **Appearance**

**management** by purchasing and altering their clothing as well as by wearing stretchy clothing which *Are adjustable* or they usually wear *Nice and loose* clothing. The table 2.5 shows the sub-categories of category **Appearance management** of the phenomenon **Everything is growing**.

**Table 2.5: Action/ Interactional Strategies: Appearance management**

PARADIGM COMPONENT	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Action/ Interactional Strategies	Appearance management	Are adjustable..  Nice and loose.

**4.5.1 Appearance Management: Are Adjustable**

Working pregnant Punjabiwomen are able to deal with the **Change in the body structure** by using the strategy of wearing clothes which *Are adjustable* or stretchy. As they want to manage their appearance in such a way that it gives them an acceptable look at their workplace and in their social groups and are also wants to be comfortable. They believe that stretchy clothing *Are adjustable* as well as comfortable, and these clothes can manage the appearance quite dramatically and makes pregnant women confident at their work place. *Are adjustable*, said by A1, while telling about her economic constraints and the **Appearance management** strategies. She said with laughter that I thought:

I need to buy something that fit me; and at the same time—that are adjustable; isn't it adjustable—because I will be growing, it is not like that--- I can't buy clothes every now and then; -- because it is temporary (TA1)

**4.5.2 Appearance Management: Nice and loose**

When **Everything is growing** during the period of pregnancy for **Appearance management** some of the pregnant working Punjabiwomen use the strategy of wearing *Nice and loose clothing*. *Nice and loose* is a common approach of **Appearance management** of the pregnant women in this way they are able to conceal the **Change in the body structure**.

This gives them a sense of relief and satisfaction Fa, when talking about her strategy for **Appearance management**, said:

I also wore tunics and kaftans as those were the trendy clothes at that time (TFa).

For **Appearance management**Ra wore *Nice and loose* frocks. She said:

Frocks were very helpful and when had a small tummy it used to conceal it through layers and that was one of the reason that I had those frocks (TRa).

While Ca said

Mainly trousers I would have u know you would really need to wear loose trousers (TCa).

However, some of the pregnant women do their **Appearance management** through *Nice and loose* clothing may be because of their religious teaching or moral or ethical values. Al is a working pregnant woman and she was not interested in showing **Change in the body structure**when **Everything is growing**. So, she used the tactic of wearing *Nice and loose* clothing for **Appearance management**.

#### 4.6 Consequences: **Strengthen Self -Esteem**

**Strengthen self esteem** is the consequence of the **Appearance management**.By **Strengthen self esteem**the Punjabipregnant women are able to build courage and it assists them to work confidently at their workplace, in the causal condition of **Nothing in my wardrobe**.

Along with this, there**Strengthen self esteem** makes them feel good.

Table 2.6 shows categories and sub-categories of the consequences.

**Table 2.6: Consequences: Strengthen Self -Esteem**

PARADIGM COMPONENT	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
Consequences	Strengthen self esteem	feel good look good and quite acceptable

##### 4.6.1 **Strengthen Self -Esteem: Feel Good**

Working pregnant women use different strategy of **Appearance management** to deal with the phenomenon of **Everything is growing** which helps them in **Strengthen self esteem** and therefore they *Feel*

*good* and these feelings are important for the working Punjabi women **At workplace** to work effectively. *Feel good* is a sub-category of the category **Strengthen Self esteem**. These words are used by one of the participants of the study Fa, while telling that she likes wearing dresses and she has done her **Appearance management** by wearing such styles of dresses which helped her in maintaining her personal style of dressing **At workplace**. Fa who is a fashion designer said:

I believe in this when you are dressed up nicely you feel comfortable and you feel confident and for my kind of job I have to comfortable and confident and been focused all the time to my design (TFa).

#### **4.6.2 Strengthen Self- Esteem: *Look Good and Quite acceptable***

Working pregnant women when they use their strategy of **Appearance management** and are successful in getting the recognition **At work place** helps in **Strengthen self esteem** as they feel they *look good* and are *Quite fashionable*. These feelings of looking good and *Quite fashionable* are the main driving force which gives a feeling of courage and acceptance to the working pregnant women **At workplace**. Therefore these working Punjabipregnant women are able to continue their work throughout the period of pregnancy when they are facing with the causal condition of **Nothing in the wardrobe** which they successfully managed through **Appearance management**.

Sa feels that she was *Quite fashionable* during her pregnancy and therefore she was very much acceptable at her workplace. So, the development of such positive feelings in working pregnant women helps in building positive attitudes towards work and pregnancy, as *Look good* and *quite fashionable* both of them are positive feeling which help them in working confidently. As Fa said

I was wearing what is suitable for me and I was quite fashionable (TFA)

Whereas as Su said

I bought some clothes I felt quite nice. They were comfortable and I felt I look good in them (TSU).

## **5. Conclusion**

It is concluded that working Punjabipregnant women definitely believes that the whole course of pregnancy is quite hard for them especially in last trimester as the changes in body structure are inevitable and this they come to know when they are unable to wear normal sized

clothing. However they tried to accommodate this change in body structure in their normal clothes as far as possible but when they do not fit in their old and normal clothing then they change their style of clothing. It is also concluded that working Punjabi pregnant women start with different styles but at the end only those dresses are worn by these working pregnant women who are comfortable.

It is also concluded that this change in body structure continues throughout the period of pregnancy and working Punjabi women find it quite a hassle. They limit themselves to limited clothing although they make wardrobe extensions and manage their appearance by wearing such clothing which can accommodate their body change and raise their self-esteem.

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