



**SATHYABAMA**

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGN**

**UNIT – I - APPRECIATION OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN COSTUMES - SFDA 1101**

UNIT I (9Hrs) Origin and History of costumes – Classification of Costumes. Types of Early costumes. Factors Influencing Costume Development. Theories of Clothing origin – Protection theory, Modesty Theory, Self-Adornment Theory.

## Origin and History of costumes

### Origin and History of Clothing

#### When did we start wearing clothes?

The first known humans to make clothing, Neanderthal man, survived from about 200,000 B.C.E. to about 30,000 B.C.E. During this time the earth's temperature rose and fell dramatically, creating a series of ice ages throughout the northern areas of Europe and Asia where the Neanderthal man lived. With their compact, muscular bodies that conserved body heat, Neanderthals were well adapted to the cold climate of their day. But it was their large brain that served them best.

Neanderthal man learned to make crude but effective tools from stone. Tools such as spears and axes made Neanderthals strong hunters, and they hunted the hairy mammoths, bears, deer, musk oxen, and other mammals that shared their environment. At some point, Neanderthals learned how to use the thick, furry hides from these animals to keep themselves warm and dry. With this discovery, clothing was born.



## Prehistoric Period

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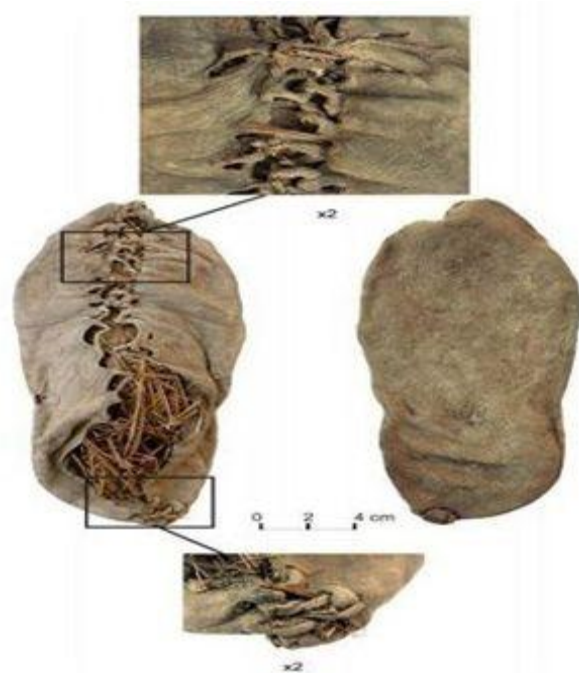


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It is not certain when people first started wearing clothes, however, anthropologists give estimates that range between 100,000 to 500,000 years ago. The first clothes were made from natural elements: animal skin and furs, grasses and leaves, and bones and shells. Clothing was often draped or tied; however, simple needles made out of animal bone provide evidence of sewn leather and fur garments from at least 30,000 years ago.

When settled neolithic cultures discovered the advantages of woven fibres over animal hides, the making of cloth, drawing on basketry techniques, emerged as one of humankind's fundamental technologies.

Cro-Magnon man considered the next stage in human development, emerged around forty thousand years ago and made advances in the clothing of the Neanderthals. The smarter Cro-Magnon people learned how to make fire and cook food, and they developed finer, more efficient tools. **Sharp awls, or pointed tools,** were used to punch small holes in animal skins, which were laced together with hiding string. In this way, they probably developed the earliest coverings for the body, legs, head, and feet.



It is thought that the first assembled piece of clothing was the **tunic**. A tunic is made from two pieces of rectangular animal hide bound together on one short side with a hole left for the head. This rough garment was placed over the head and the stitched length lay on the shoulders, with the remainder hanging down. The arms stuck through the open sides, and the garment was either closed with a belt or additional ties were placed at the sides to hold the garment on the body. This tunic was the ancestor of the shirt.

One of the most important **Cro-Magnon inventions was the needle**. Needles were made out of slivers of animal bone; they were sharpened to a point at one end and had an eye at the other end. With a needle, Cro-Magnon man could sew carefully cut pieces of fur into better fitting garments.

Evidence suggests that Cro-Magnon people developed close-fitting pants and shirts that would protect them from the cold, as well as shawls, hoods, and long boots. Because they had not learned how to tan hides to soften them, the animal skin would have been stiff at first, but with repeated wearing, it would become very soft and comfortable.

Much of what is known about early clothing is a patchwork of very little evidence and good guesses. Only fragments of very early clothing have survived, so archaeologists have relied on cave drawings, carved figures, and such things as the imprint of stitched together skins in a fossilized mud floor to develop their picture of early clothing. The discovery of the remains of a man who died 5,300 years ago in the mountains of Austria, near the border with Italy, helped confirm much of what these archaeologists had discovered. The body of this male hunter had been preserved in ice for over five thousand years, and many fragments of his clothing had survived.

Archaeologists pieced together his garments, and they found that the Iceman, as he became known, wore a complex outfit. Carefully sewn leggings covered his lower legs, and a thin leather loincloth was wrapped around his genitals and buttocks. Over his body, the man wore a long-sleeved fur coat that extended nearly to his knees. The coat was sewn from many pieces of fur, with the fur on the outside. It



was likely held close by some form of a belt. On his feet the man wore animal hide short boots, stitched together with hiding and stuffed with grass, probably to keep his feet warm in the snow. On his head, the man wore a simple cap of thick fur. Though the Iceman discovered in Austria appeared much later than the earliest Cro-Magnon man, the way his clothing was made confirmed the basic techniques and materials of early clothing. The ravages of time have destroyed most direct evidence of the clothing of early man, however.

Hand in hand with the history of clothing goes the history of textiles. Humans had to invent weaving, spinning and other techniques and the machines needed to be able to make the fabrics used for clothing

Before sewing machines, nearly all clothing was local and hand-sewn, there were tailors and seamstresses in most towns that could make individual items of clothing for customers. After the sewing machine was invented, the ready-made clothing industry took off.

## ORIGIN OF COSTUMES

The word costume is derived from a Latin word “*consuetude*”, which means a complete set of outer garments. Including, ornaments and hairstyle. Costumes were used not only to cover the body and embellish it they also constitute a significant non-verbal medium of communication that serves to establish the

cultural identity of a person including a person’s community or country of origin at any given historical period.

The costume is the distinctive style of dress of an individual or group that reflects their class, gender, profession, ethnicity, nationality, activity or epoch.

The term also was traditionally used to describe typical appropriate clothing for certain activities, such as riding costume, swimming costume, dance costume, and evening costume. The appropriate and acceptable costume is subject to changes in fashion and local cultural norms. “But sable is worn more in carriages, lined with real lace over ivory satin, and worn over some smart costume suitable for an afternoon reception.”

This general usage has gradually been replaced by the terms “dress”, “attire” or “wear” and usage of “costume” has become more limited to unusual or out-of-date clothing and to attire intended to evoke a change in identities, such as theatrical, Halloween, and mascot costumes.

Before the advent of ready-to-wear apparel, clothing was made by hand. When made for commercial sale it was made, as late as the beginning of the 20th century, by “costumiers”, often women who ran

businesses that met the demand for the complicated or intimate female costume, including millinery and corsetry.

## THEORIES BEHIND THE ORIGIN OF CLOTHING

‘Clothes make the man’ is an old saying, which we accept as a without giving it much thought. Clothes not only ‘make the man’, but also affect the facial features and the body. Clothing takes the form of symbols used by individuals as a tool for social interaction. This forms non-verbal communication. Climate has obviously played an important role in determining the necessity for inventing the various kinds of clothing worn by humanity. The temperate zones are responsible for clothing which covers substantially the entire body. Clothing protects the wearer against, heat, cold and sandstorms.

### CLOTHING IS CLASSIFIED INTO TWO CLASSES:

- The fixed
- The modish



The fixed are substantially permanent and are not subject to fashion changes but vary with each locality. The modish type predominates in the western countries and changes rapidly in point of time over all parts of the world, which are subject to fashion changes.

Concerning the origin of clothing, there are major 4 theories, these are:

1. **The Modesty Theory:** The word “**modesty**” comes from the Latin word modestus which means “keeping within measure”. This theory familiar to the Mesopotamian legends of the garden of Eden and even seduction by the serpent holds that clothing was originally donned to conceal the genital organs from a sense of shame, modesty, embarrassment, or some other forms of sexual emotions. From this beginning it is assumed has grown the practice of covering body more generally as sexual self-consciousness has become more refined.
2. **The Immodesty Theory:** sexual attraction **theory** (Westmark 1921) people first wore clothes in order to attract attention to the private parts \*DRESS IS A POWERFUL SEXUAL TOOL\* This theory popularized by Westermarck and Havelock Ellis, maintains that the intent and purpose of clothing in the begging was salacious, designed to attract attention to sexual organs and sexual functions and in general to make the wearer a greater object of sexual interest. This is the Doctrine that familiarity breeds indifference and that concealment especially pretend or partial concealment increases interest.
3. **The Adornment Theory:** Clothing begins in he/She desire to attract attention or secure preeminence not necessarily of a direct sexual sort. The primitive clothing on this theory is

conspicuous ornamentation. This theory refers to the decorative nature of clothes and other forms of appearances; modifications for purposes of display, attraction or aesthetic expression.

4. **Projection Theory:** This theory suggests that clothes protect humans from the elements, animals or even supernatural forces.

### Why People Wear Clothes?



Prehistoric people clothed their bodies over 75,000 years ago. This has been shown by the discoveries of ancient cave drawings, statues, and remains of materials used for making clothing. From the beginning, clothing has served the same basic human needs. Those needs are protection (a physical need), adornment and identification (psychological needs), and modesty and status (social needs).



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**UNIT – II - APPRECIATION OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN COSTUMES - SFDA 1101**

UNIT II (9Hrs) Study of ancient Indian costumes during the following periods -Indus valley Civilization, Mauryan and Sunga period, Kushan Period and Gupta Period.

## HISTORY OF INDIAN COSTUMES

### ANCIENT INDIA CIVILIZATION



### INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION (3000-1500 BC )

In the year 1922, archaeologists found a hidden city named Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro which was collectively called Indus Valley Civilization. They used to have one or two stories houses built with baked bricks which were identical. Each home had its private drinking well and bathroom. Both men and women used to get dressed in colourful robes. Women used to wear jewellery made up of gold and other precious stones. They also used to wear lipstick. A small bronze statue was found of a dancer which shows that they enjoyed dancing and had a great skill of working with metals. Some of the toys found were small carts, whistles shaped like birds, and toy monkeys which could slide down a string. The ornaments found in that civilization was microbeads which were made up of precious stones having different colour and sizes. The Indus valley civilization flourished 5,000 years ago in the valley of the river Indus.





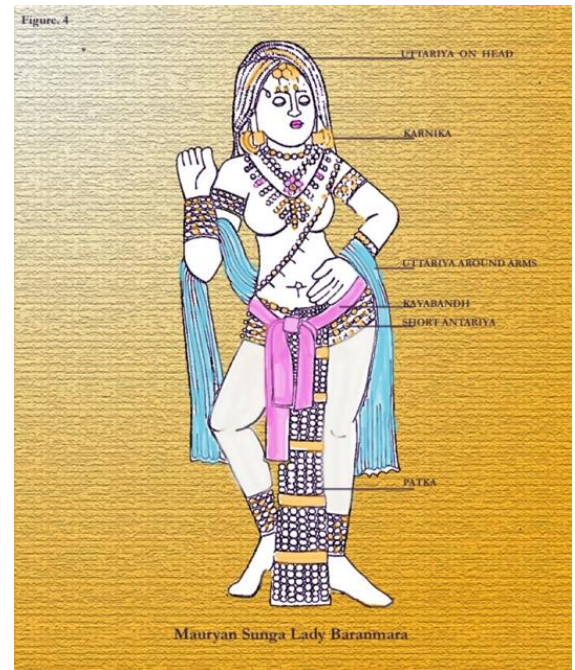
#### ARYAN CIVILIZATION (1500-500 BC)

Have you wondered what would be the origin of women wearing bindi on their forehead? Well, it goes back to Aryan civilization! The groom used to apply a spot of his blood to the bride's forehead to resemble wedlock. Since this was a sign of marriage, single or divorced women could not wear it but what once was a tradition became a statement of fashion overtime having different colors and sizes. A new group of people called the Aryans arrived in the Indus Valley who came from Central Asia. Aryans loved to gamble and they were the ones to introduce horse chariot racing. Their clothing was initially made up of animal skin but as they got settled and started their occupation their clothes began to be made up of cotton.



## MAURYAN AND SUNGA PERIOD (321-72 BC)

During that period both men and women wore 3 unstitched garments called Antalya, muraja, and uttariya. Antariya was the main garment made from white cotton, linen or muslin. They sometimes used to do embroidery on it with gold or other precious stones. It was an unstitched length of cloth draped around the hips in a kachcha style, which was extending from the waist to the calves or ankles. This was secured by a band around the waist with different styles such as vethaka, muraja, pattika or kallabuka. The third item was called uttariya made from fine cotton or silk but for low-class people, it was made from coarse cotton which was used as a long scarf to cover the upper part of the body which again was draped in different styles.



Women generally covered their heads with uttariya in different styles having a beautiful embroidered border. The hair was centered parted with two braids or a large knot at the back. At times it was decorated with fringes or pendants. For the male no such headgear was noticed during the Maureen period however during the Sunga period great emphasis was put on the headgears in which their hair itself was styled in different forms to make the headgear.

Looking at the sculptures we could make out that they were very much fond of wearing jewellery and after researching it shows the material used most frequently, were gold and precious stones like corals, rubies, sapphires, agates, and crystals. Pearls too were used and beads of all kinds were plentiful including those made of glass. Certain ornaments were common to both sexes, like earrings, necklaces, armlets, bracelets and embroidered belts. Earring or karnika were of three types-a simple ring or circle called Kundala, a circular disc earring known as dehri and earrings with a flower-like shape known as Karnaphul. Necklaces of two kinds were worn. A short one called Kantha which was broad and flat, usually gold, inlaid with precious stones, and a long one, the lambanam. Baju band or armlets of gold and silver beads were worn on the upper arm, and were occasionally studded with precious stones. Bracelets called Kangan, very often made of square or round beads of gold, and richly embroidered cloth belts completed the male ensemble. Women, in addition, wore girdle called mekhala, a hip belt of multi-stringed beads, originally made from the red seed kaksha but now made of gold and silver beads, with shapes ranging from round to square and oval. All women wore anklets and thumb and finger rings. The rings were plain and crowded together on the middle joints of the fingers. Anklets were often of gold in this period, though silver was more common. They could be in the form of a simple ring, Kara, a thick chain, sankla, or an ornamental circle with small bells called ghungru. There is no evidence of nose-rings in the period. Forehead



## TEXTILES AND DYES

The weaving of fine and coarse varieties of cloth was well established. Cotton, silk, wool, linen, and jute fabrics were readily available. Furs and the better varieties of wool and silk like tussar, called *kausheya* like *Eri* or *Muga* silk of Assam, yellowish in its natural color but when bleached called *patrona*, were used. *Kaseyyaka* (High-quality cotton or silk) and the bright red woolen blankets of Gandhara were worth a small fortune each. A rainproof woolen cloth was available in Nepal. Resist dyeing and hand printing in a pattern on cloth has been mentioned by Greek visitors to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, as is the Indian glazed cotton cloth, which was in common use by 400 BC. Material similar to the *khinkhwab* (which is the interweaving of silk and gold or silver wires beautiful floral pattern) was in great demand and even exported to Babylon long before the Mauryas. Cotton, wool and a fabric called *karpasa* were available in the north in both coarse and fine varieties. There were also fine muslins often embroidered in purple and gold and transparent like later-day material, which came to be called *shabnam* (morning dew). The coarse varieties were used by the populace. Woollen cloth, *avika*, from the sheep's wool was either pure white (bleached) or dyed pure red, rose, or black. Blankets or *kambala* were either made by completing the edges with borders or braids, or woven wool strips were joined together. The process of felting (pressing the fibers together, instead of weaving) was also made known. All varieties of wool were available, coarse for making headdresses, trappings, and blankets for richer class.

## SATAVAHANA PERIOD

### Early Satavahana

The people of the Deccan were a hybrid race, a mixture of the aboriginal Dravidians and foreign invaders. In the first century B.C their costumes too were an interesting mixture of foreign and indigenous garments. All these clothes are represented in caves IX and X in Ajanta. In the first century B.C we find tunics, kancuka in the stripes design worn by attendants. The kancuka are of mid-high length with short sleeves, in some the opening is on the left side and in others it is at the front. The tunic worn by a king in hunting dress has no discernible opening at the neck, so it is probably at the back. Necklines too differed in that some were V-shaped and others were round in shape. With the tunic a thick kayabandh was wound once around the waist. An elaborate turban ushnisa, intertwined with the long black hair of the aborigine wearers was also worn. In addition to these, hunters wore two-bar type sandals with a strap for buckling, which is still seen in the Deccan. As influences from the north and from foreign invaders percolated, the Dravidian aboriginal village women too changed their costume using short antariyas, large uttariyas with elaborate broad borders covering the head and back, tikkas on the forehead and a series of conch bangles on the arms. Except for the skirt, they looked very much like the Lambadis who are a gypsy tribe of the Deccan today. In the royal court dress of the Mauryan-Sunga people the female attendants wore transparent long antariyas with loose kayabandhs tied in a knot at the center having beautiful ornamental tips. Their many stringed girdles were made of beads. Shoulder length hair held by fillets tied at the center of the head seems to denote that these attendants were foreigners, although nothing in the garments wore seems foreign. The king and most of his courtiers wore the indigenous antariya short and informal ceremonial occasions. With this the decorative kayabandh was tied in different styles and knots. The kayabandh could be tied like a thick cord looped in a semi-circle at the front with conspicuous side tassels, or be made of thick twisted silk. The ushnisa was always worn and a crown was used when necessary.

### Late Satavahana (100 B.C – A.D 250)

Clothing was generally sparse and made of thin cotton. The three articles of clothing, the antariya, uttariya, and kayabandh were widely used, but interesting mixtures of foreign and indigenous garments were fairly prevalent. The uttariya for both men and women was usually white and of cotton or silk. It was however, at times, of beautiful colours and embroidered. Men could wear it across the back and over both shoulders or merely thrown over the chest, and they still worn by both sexes in the kachcha fashion which meant that one end was passed between the legs and tucked in behind, but this way normally to the knees or even shorter. Generally, the antariya appears to have been made of almost transparent cloth and was worn very tight and clinging in the case of women. It is almost invisible in the early Andhra sculptures with only double incised lines to show the drape. The nivi bandha knot to tie the antariya at the waist is often alluded to in the literature of ancient India. The kayabandh tied in a bow-shaped knot was worn by both sexes to give further support to the antariya at the waist. This item was worn in a variety of ways. The kayabandh in the form of a simple sash was called the vethaka. The women also wore the patika which was made of flat ribbonshaped pieces of cloth, usually silk. A heavy looking thick jeweled roll with hanging tassels Kakshyabandha-was worn by men. the kalabuka was a girdle made of many strips plaited together, and the mairaja had drum headed knots at the ends instead of tassels. It is in the

distinctive ways of wearing these three simple garments the antariya, uttariya, and Page65 kayabandh and in the headgear and jewellery, that we can trace the evolution of the costumes and the fashion of the times in areas of India where they were in use. The true yajnopavati thread is found on the sculptures of this period. Before this, it existed more in the form of the uttariya worn draped over the left shoulder and under the right arm in the upavita fashion from which the term yajnopavati consisted of three cotton threads each of nine twisted strands, but of hemp for the Kshatriya and of wool for the vaishya. At a later stage this sacred thread continued to be used in a limited way by other castes but was retained most strongly by the Brahmins. Attendants, grooms, guards, and so on in the king's court and attendants in the women's apartments in the palace, frequently used a stitched shirt like foreign garment called the kancuka. Women too wore the short kancuka with an indigenous antariya or when calf-length it was worn with kayabandh and uttariya, and in many other ways.

## KUSHAN PERIOD

Kushan costumes may be divided into five types: the costume worn by 1. indigenous people-the antariya, uttariya and kayabandh 2. guardians and attendants of the harem-usually the indige and sewn kancuka, red brown in colour 3. foreign Kushan rulers and their entourage and 4. other foreign such as grooms, taders, etc. there are fifty category – a mixture of foreign and indigenous garments. This category is of great interest as it shows how clothes changed and evolved, how some of the purely draped garments of the Indians were replaced by cut and sewn garments. Especially in north and northwest where influences were felt more keenly, and where climatically sewn garments were more suitable. The Kushan dress had evolved from a nomad culture based on the use of the horse. It is at Mathura, Taxila, Begram, and Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan. The dress was worn by most of Scythian and races and resembled particularly that of the Partians. It consisted of ruched long sleeves tunic with a sleeve neck opening, simply decorated. The close fitting knee length tunic was sometimes made earlier, and with it could be worn a short cloak length woolen coat, worn loose from right to left and secured by a belt of leather. Besides these two upper garments, occasionally the third garment the chugha was used. The chugha was coat-like and decorated with a bored down the chest hemline, and had slits to fascinate movement. The trouser could be of linen, silk in summer but woolen in winter. These loose fitting trousers, chalana, were tucked into the soft padded board with trappings, khapusa. Along with this was worn the Scythian pointed cap of felt, bashylk or pea helmet or headband with two ends tied at the back. Although the clothes were simple, they were often adorned with stamped gold or metal plates, square, rectangular, circular or triangular sewn in lines or at the central seams of the tunic. Their purpose was not decorative but functional as well, as they helped lift the tunic in the middle for riding, by gathering the cloth along seams. This helped to give the distinctive draped effect with four sharp pointed ends at her. The drape of trousers too as held in place by means of these gold plates stitched down the center.

## GUPTA PERIOD

Men In this period there was a marked preference for the stitched garment, as compared to any previous age, and clearly defined garments for north India and the Deccan began to emerge, which later crystallized into the garment preference we see in India today. With the Kushans, the stitched garment had gained in status and it was now linked to royalty, for the Kushans kings and their nobles had ruled a large part of India and Central Asia for more than a 100 years. The Gupta king realized the value of adopting a dress that traditionally becomes identified with royalty. They are shown on Gupta coins in full Kushans dress, that is, the coat, trousers and boots. They continued, however, to wear the indigenous antariya, ultrayia, and kayabandh for informal occasions. Women In the case male costume it is easier to trace the influence, which came mainly from the invaders and Page 136 traders. In female costume, however, the variety is much greater and hence it is more difficult to pinpoint the exact sources. The antariya which was 18-36 inches wide and 4-8 yards long was worn in the kachcha style or as a lehnga, in which case it was first wrapped around



the right hip then around the body and tucked in at the left hip. It was drawn very tight across the hips accentuating their curve most seductively, was normally calf length. Another form of the antariya was worn in the kachcha and lehnga style together. This was usually a very short antariya only up to kachcha style; the longer end of the three-yard long material was then wrapped around like a short lehnga. A common form was a skimpy antariya made of cheap linen worn mainly by the lower classes. Normally the nobility and women of high rank wore the ankle-length antariya; attendants usually wore the shorter form. But in all cases it was tied under the navel and supported by the hip bones. A heavily gathered skirt, an elaboration on the ghagri probably introduced by foreigners, is also seen. It seems to be mainly used by dancers, so that its many folds, which may have been gored, enhance the swirling effect. This skirt is still worn by many rural peoples, including the Lambadi and Banjara gypsies of India. Women wore langoti type of drawers, the ardhoruka, which had evolved from the needs of modesty. This was a short strip of cloth worn around the waist with an attached piece from the center of the waist, which was drawn up between the legs and tucked in behind. Like the bhairnivasani this too was an early garment originally used by women ascetics. Jain nuns wore four of these ardhorukas ones on top of another, something like the medieval 'chastity belt'.

Simple plaits were no longer visible, and hair was so elaborated dressed at times, that the help of maidservants who were expert hairdressers was obviously essential. There seemed to be broadly two styles of foreign origin, while the complicated ways of dressing long hair were mainly derived from south Indian and Deccani's styles. The latter became extremely popular in the gupta age. The use of misli to darken the gums and lips, and hena to redden the palm and soles of the feet was fairly prevalent. Of foreign origin was the short hair, which was sometimes frizzed in front with luxuriant ringlets quite unlike anything, seen today, or just left hanging loose to the shoulders or lower, held by a fillet or a chaplet of flowers. The indigenous style showed itself in long hair worn in a bun either high or low on the neck or knotted at the side of the head, or with the coil wound on the left on top of the head. The bun itself was sometimes a simple tight knot, at other times in the shape of the figure eight, or large and

loosely wound, but almost always surrounded by flowers or had large lotus blossoms tucked into it. In addition, there could be a ratnajali, jeweled net or a net of pearls called muktajala, worn over the bun.

In the Gupta age the finest textiles were available, printed, painted, dyed, and richly patterned in weaves or embroidery. The art of calico printing improved considerably and many of the traditional prints of today originated in this period. There were checks, strips and bird and animal motifs, for eg. Geese, swans, deer, elephants and so on. Delicate embroidery on muslins, consisting of hundreds of different varieties of flowers and birds, was skillfully executed along with intricately woven brocades, which continued to be in vogue. These brocades with floral designs from the Deccan and Paithan were like the Jamiwar and Himru fabrics of today. The former is a silk floral design on a wool background and the latter has cotton for its main warp. Gauze and Decca was noted for its transparency and was said to be fine that the only evidence of its presence was the delicate gold edging of the cloth.



## MEDIVAL PERIOD, MUGHAL PERIOD

Writing in the fifth century BC, the Greek historian, Herodotus, marveled at the equality of Indian cotton: 'There are trees which grow wild, the fruit of which is a wool exceeding in beauty and goodness, that of sheep. The Indians make their clothes of this tree wool. In 330BC, Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, enthused about the patterned robes and dresses made from the finest flowered muslin worn at court and by the wealthy. In the first century BC, the Emperor Nero sent for spices and cloth from the East. In fact, the demand for Indian muslins in Rome was so great that Pliny the Elder complained of a trade deficit with the East causing a drain of over 550 million sesterces of gold bullion each year. The Mauryan administration had improved transportation and the Indo-Greek kings; the Shakas, Kushan and Parthians had established strong links with Western and Central Asia, China and the Mediterranean world. Mercantile activity increased throughout the Southern kingdoms where large-scale maritime trade and commerce was conducted by the Eastern and Western coasts of India with Arabia, South-East Asia and Japan. Trade with the Nile Valley and Lower Egypt, by the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea, was also well developed. Cotton fabric made up the main portion of the shipments carried by the Arabs' dhows that plied the seas in the Middle Ages. Silk was also exported by the famed Silk Road, the ancient trade route that linked China with the west. Fabrics were woven from a variety of yarns: cotton was cultivated in most parts of the subcontinent; silk came mostly from the Eastern Himalayas; and wool came from the Northern Himalayas. Most of these textiles were luxury commodities, which began their evolution during the medieval period.

The wild silks of India were gathered from the cocoons spun by the silkworm, which fed on the Asian trees, mulberry and the castor oil plants of the northeastern Himalayas. Textured silks were referred to as 'bark cloths' in early Indian texts. The first direct mention of this silk appears in the seventh century in Banabhatta's *Harshacharita*, the biography of King Harsha. There Muslims were quick to recognize the beauty and value of Indian silk, but in some regions Islamic law forbade the wearing of silk next to the skin. The problem was solved by developing a special fabric known as *mashru*, which is woven in such way that one side is a rich silken face. These mixed fabrics were used extensively in the Muslim courts for robes, linings and decorative hangings and were exported to Muslim communities in Africa and Arabia.

The beauty, brilliance, colour range and fastness of Indian fabrics were held in high esteem and their quality was unsurpassed. Remarkably, India managed to keep the complex technique of cotton dyeing secret from the world until the seventeenth century. The process of cotton dyeing involved preparing the bleached fabric, painting it with mordants, dipping it in dye and bleaching it again, in repeated sequences, until a bright multi-coloured fabric was created. The secret of the dyer's art lay in the deft manipulation of the mordants and the purity of the vegetable dyes. There were over 300 dye-yielding plants in India. One of the most important of these was indigo, which had a high commercial value and was imported in large quantities by the Dutch, English, Persians, Mongols, and Armenians. The two most valued colors after indigo were black and red, which were dyed and fixed with alum and other mordants. In addition, Indian craftsmen had also mastered the technique of manipulating dyes to create complex grid patterns, delicate flowers and intricate pictorial scenes on cotton. Block-printed cotton exported from Western India and the Deccan provided the prototype for the calico and chintz upon which later European and American fashions were based.

Many other fabrics –patterning techniques emerged in different parts of the country. The bulk of traditional block printed, painted and dyed fabrics came to Western India, the Andhra region, the Coromandel Coast and certain peninsular regions. Dye painted wall hangings depicted stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata and mythological scenes from the Purans were used in temples as decorative backdrops and for religious rituals. They were painted by master craftsmen who had an in-depth knowledge of the sacred texts and who worked in guilds attached to the temples. The act of making these temples cloths was in itself a ritual and the rules of purity were observed rigorously by the craftsmen as they worked. Their main function was to relate the stories of the gods and goddesses to the public and they were considered to be auspicious objects. Although most of the surviving painted textiles do not pre-date the seventeenth century, the degree of sophistication they display suggests that the technique and style is the continuation of a long-established textile tradition.







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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGN**

**UNIT – III - APPRECIATION OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN COSTUMES - SFDA 1101**

UNIT III (9Hrs) Costumes of Medieval Period - Mughal Period, British Period, Evolution of Khadi movement.

## Costumes of Medieval Period

### Mughal Period



Queen Subada, Detail from Shahnamah, Sultanate School, 1450.

## Costume Details:

Phiran: of transparent material, form-fitting and ankle length, has two embroidered vertical panels along the length and sleeves.

Odhni: of sheer material, fringed, draped over the head around the neck and shoulders.

Sulwar: tight fitting white pyjamas

Hairstyle: long, worn in a plait ending in a decorative tassel.

Hair ornaments: of pearls, have many strings and loops suspended from the head of the Queen.

Necklace: many stringed gold necklace edged with pearls, and a smaller necklace with a ruby pendant.

Bangles: of graded sizes of gold and pearls.

Baldric: gold and pearl baldric, like a chain, is worn over the right shoulder and under the left arm.

Anklets of gold and pearls.

Indian elements: odhni, bare feet, bare/visible torso, some of the ornaments.

From Roshen Alkazi's Medieval Indian Costume (India and Central Asia). The tale referred to is the Shahnameh and the character is Sudabeh (I am assuming the name is modified in the Indian version). The illustrative style draws a bit on Jaina texts of the period.

This is a doorstopper of a book with great visuals and illustrations that covers an intermediate period of Indian history, starting with Mahmud of Ghazni and ending somewhere around the time of Babur. There aren't too many costume resources for this period but Alkazi draws on Indian and foreign texts (largely Central Asia and Iran and both Islamic and Buddhist influences) to show the kinds of costumes that were prevalent and the intermingling of styles. It is a little more focussed on parts of India that came under Islamic rulers but covers a lot of ground.

*First up the most ubiquitous of summer (and spring) flowers, the jasmine.*





*In the east it is highly esteemed, and the Indian women braid it into their hair when they receive it from their lovers, inasmuch as it promises long affection.*

Excerpt on the jasmine. The kunda is a spring flower and varieties of jasmine bloom through spring and summer in the subcontinent.

And though symbolic of a romantic bond nothing at all to stop one from a solo enjoyment of its flowers in the hair:)

Artwork: 1. Deepal Kilewala, 2. Rohini, 3. Vilas Chormale.

*The bougainvillea is an import, nevertheless ubiquitous as summer blooms.*





*The bougainvillea girls enter in a flock, like dragonflies at noon. Their sudden laughter peals over me. Warm salt waves that take the breath and pull you to drowning. They float through the musty dark of the store, glittery dustmotes on a ray of light. The Mistress of Spices, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.*

Pics: 1. DOT, Daizy and Tapushi 2. Peach, photographed by me 3. via tilfi 4. Via parama\_g

*Summer flowers and staying cool in Sanskrit poetry.*





*A crest of double jasmine nestles in her braid, fresh after bathing;  
A necklace made of trumpet flowers pours coolness on her breast'  
an acacia blossom, delicate of tip, adorns each ear  
The summer offers its insignia  
to a woman's every limb. Madhusila.*

Pics: 1. Laxmi Chhaya wearing jasmine 2. bridal photography by Anbu Jawahar (flowers in pic not the Indian trumpet flower but suggestive of trumpet flowers) 3. detail from a Hemen Majumdar painting 4. Still from Kumki.

*The fruit of the season, the ubiquitous mango. It's blossoms appear in spring poetry and the fruiting tree in art and sculpture.*

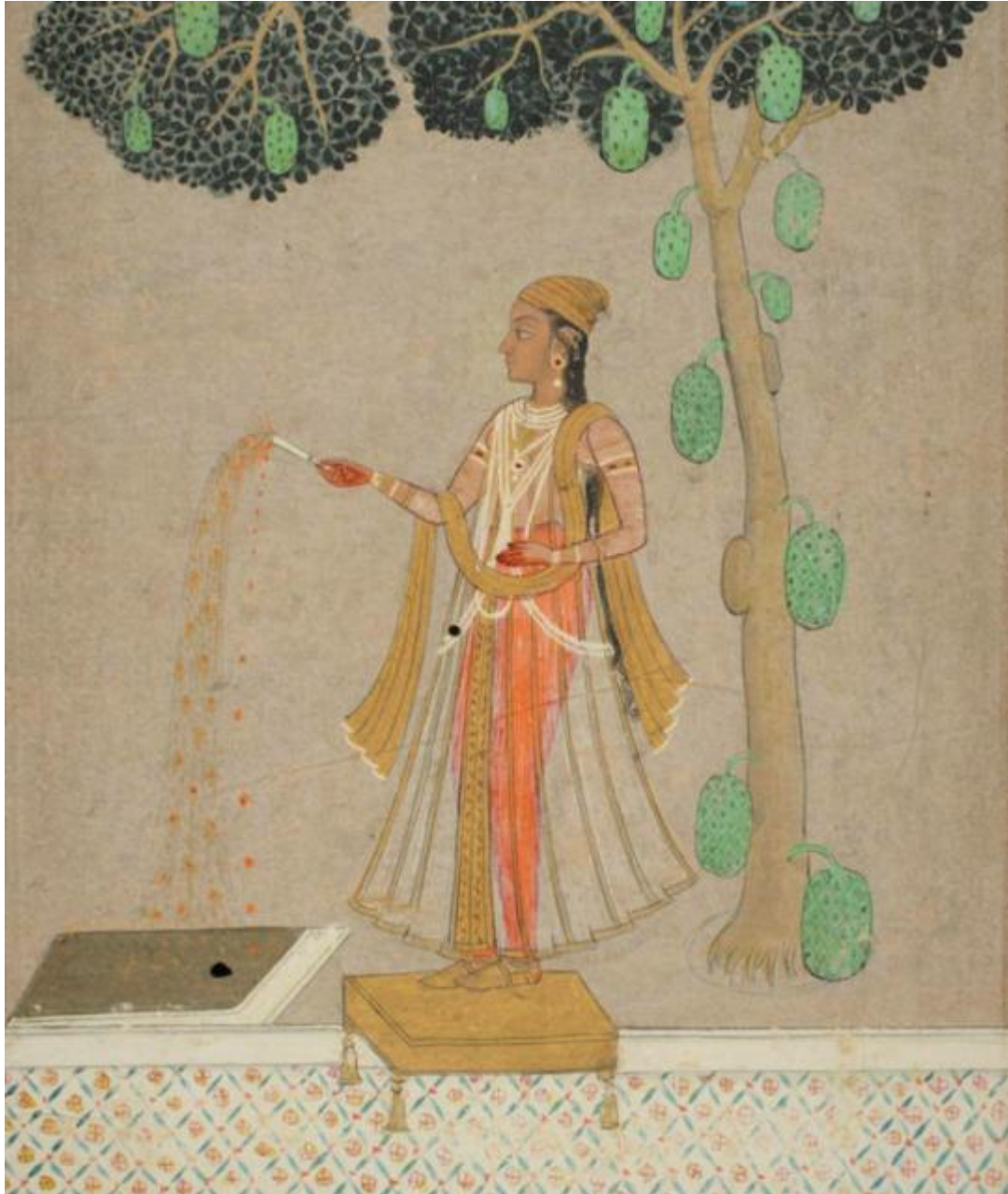


*In Sanskrit, mango has 63 names. Some of them are as follows : Kamashar, Madhavdruma, Bhrungubheeshta, Seedhuras, Vasantdoota, Atisaurabha, Madirasav.*

*The most common words in two ancient languages are: amra in Sanskrit and manga in Tamil..... Most languages have words for mango derived from amra or manga.*

Pics: 1. Salabhanjika at Sanchi where the tree is a mango tree 2. Detail from a miniature painting with a fruiting mango tree 3. Detail from a Kumaril Swamy painting 4. Snagging a Mango (2017), Aditi Raychoudhury.

*And the jackfruit.*



*This is April.  
The jackfruit tree that shines  
like slashed gold at the touch of a chisel,  
and the honey-mango tree that always tempts the hand  
to carve a toy boat from its trunk,  
will be shaking now  
with, blossom, with fruit.*

Though this artwork is related to Deepavali, the jackfruit is also a summer fruit.

Pic: 18th century miniature painting.

*And lastly, my personal favourite. Summertime is jamun time. (wiki on [jamun](#)). But do not eat it with mangoes says the Sushruta Samhita:).*





*The luminescent beauty of Lord Krishna's dark skin is compared to the shiny black fruit; just as a woman's round, beautiful eyes is often poetically referred to as 'jamuns'. The God of clouds – Lord Megha incarnated on earth as the jamun and that is why the colour of the fruit is like the stormy monsoon clouds.*

Pics: illustration of the jamun tree, Raag Megh Malhar, Jamun Kheer by kharakapas.

## Costumes of British Period



it was Jnanadanandini Debi, the wife of Satyendranath Tagore - brother of the famous Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore - who popularised the blouses, jackets and chemises and the modern style of the sari today after she was reportedly refused entry to clubs under the Raj for wearing the sari fabric over her bare breasts. Tagore is believed to have actively encouraged his wife to adopt Western ideas.

The terms "blouse" and "petticoat" - both English - made the leap into Indian vocabulary in the Victorian era. Shirts also came to be worn under the sari as part of high fashion and these rather British innovations are considered traditional garments.

Even though it can be revealing, as the crop top leaves the midriff bare, the sari blouse has long been deemed decorous and associated with tradition. In India it was important for a woman to cover her body with a draped fabric here no matter what is underneath.

The British influence only became stronger over time. We see different kinds of blouses coming in with sleeve structures, and various necklines.



IMAGE COPYRIGHT© THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD, PHOTO 1000/46(4641)

image captionAt the height of the Victorian era the British and Indian fashions rather resemble each other

In India, unlike in Britain, there are no written codes of conduct or sumptuary laws about what should be worn. What was considered suitable was spread through word of mouth.

So today's guardians of the hemline - who no doubt believe they are safeguarding women by prescribing what women should wear - are following in the footsteps of older political overlords.

Indian women now are much freer to do what they want, at least in the cities, yet we see dress codes being set and women condemned for what they wear. Some people even make an association between clothing and rape.

These people don't understand that ideas of decency are constantly changing and rape is not a consequence of what women wear but of how certain men think.

Our dress is our identity. But what we think of as traditional Indian modesty, can turn out not be not very Indian at all.



### **The 1910 saree**

Details of a studio portrait of the youngest daughter of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, Princess Sudhira. Taken in 1910.

Though Gayatri Devi is the most well known, Cooch Behar royalty that preceded her had a distinctive style and you often see a lot in play in their attire that later became the norm.

For example, the saree here is draped much like the present 6 yard saree, even though around 1910 the Bengal drape was quite common in the state. The saree itself is a light fabric, I am inclined to think a fine muslin but I might be wrong. Around this period you often see sarees (of the very expensive sort) that are beaded/embroidered. I don't know the exact term but chiffon gowns in this period often feature beading. As was common in the early part of the 20th century, the pallu is pinned at the shoulder and draped over the head in some of the portraits, though at least one showcases the Princess' fashionably short hair.

The blouse has Edwardian details like the lapel like feature as well as the sleeve detail (though the border suggests Indian fabric). Jewellery is fairly minimal, though the ear dangles are very shall we say “statement”.

## **The Brahmika drape**



Hindu Girl of the Period

I had an anon question on tumblr as an earlier question on wordpress that I will answer here together as they are kind of related.

*1. I saw an early 19th century painting which showed women in a blouse and sari. I always thought blouse was introduced by Jnanadanandini Devi?*

I think some sort of blouse (and possibly a kind of petticoat given ghaghra cholis and related outfits) was always around. Even Ajanta paintings have a few examples. This early 19th century painting is an example of it too:



But I think a formal kind of blouse, often influenced by prevailing Victorian fashion, and the petticoat worn with a sari did come in with the 1870s both in Western India and in Bengal. A few books of the time and later refer to shops selling “jackets”, which term seems distinct from the choli.

The early 20th century Dhurandhar painting right on top shows differing blouse styles, from the indigenous choli to the modified choli with puff sleeves as well as more elaborate versions which are obviously Victorian in origin suggesting a variety of styles after the 1870s.

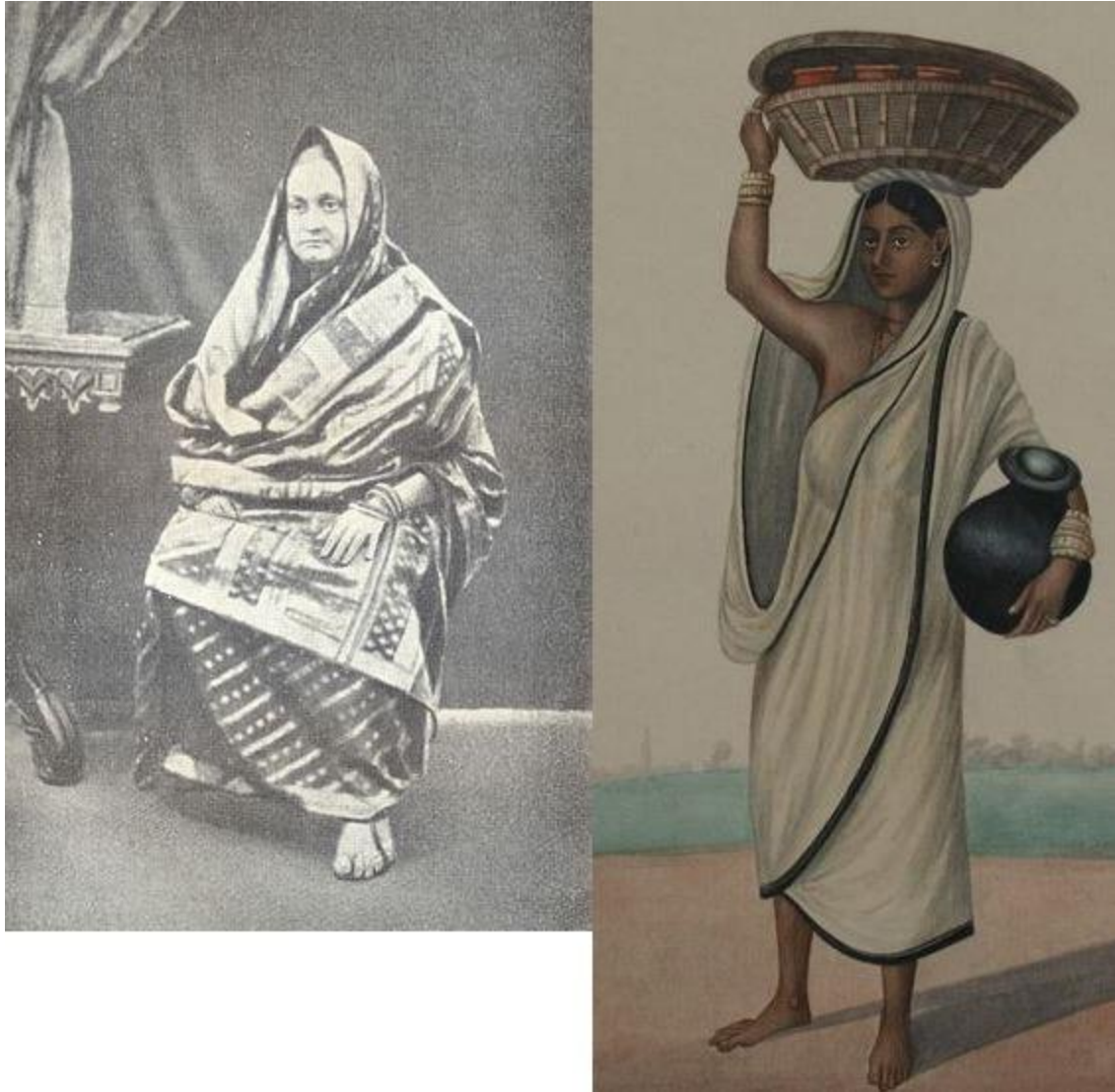
In summary I think the sari blouse was around but not essential. Especially in the hotter areas of India where a sari sufficed. From the 1870s onwards, however, it became an essential part of attire for educated women and then all women.

*2. Several months back I had a query regarding Jnandanandini Devi’s introduction of the Brahmika (Brahmo woman) drape from Sari Sisters. The query was on the difference between the Brahmika drape and Classical Bengal drape and whether the only difference was in the pleats on the shoulders.*

At the time I assumed that there wasn’t much difference between earlier sari drapes in Bengal and the Brahmika saree. But the question stayed in my mind and I had some time this weekend to poke around a bit. Not much came up. Though everyone agrees that the Brahmika drape was novel and inspired by the

Parsi/Gujarati drape that Jnanadanandini saw in then Bombay, the exact nature of the earlier drape is not clear. Instead there is more emphasis on the introduction of accessories like the blouse, petticoat, hair net etc, which assisted in making the saree a dress for a bhadra (respectable) woman. Nevertheless there was some change since there are many remarks both on the untidiness of draping as well as the immodesty of previous drapes.

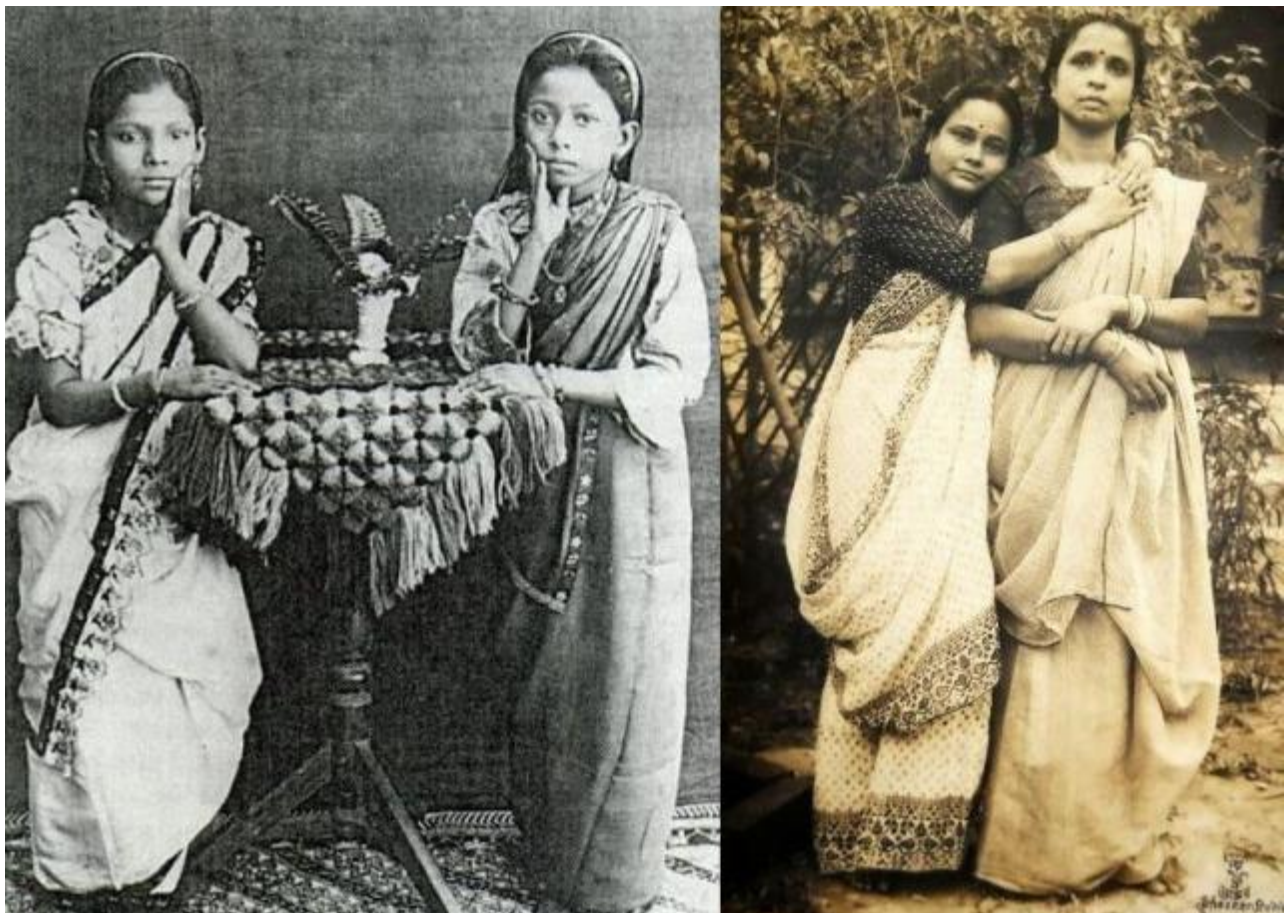
The only clear reference I got was in Rochona Majumdar's book (Marriage and Modernity) where she mentions that the traditional style is the pallu (end of the sari) wrapped around the waist or hanging in front rather than the pleats of the Brahmika saree. As it happens there aren't too many pre 1870 pics that I could find except these.



Rabindranatha Tagore's mother on the left (presumably an older style, though it isn't clear to me if the pallu is tucked around the waist and also on the shoulder). On the right a milkmaid of the 1840s, this drape has some resemblance to the Brahmika style but has no pleats and is simply wound around.



The Parsi/Gujarati style is seen above which is the seedha (straight) pallu style with the sari being secured on the right shoulder.



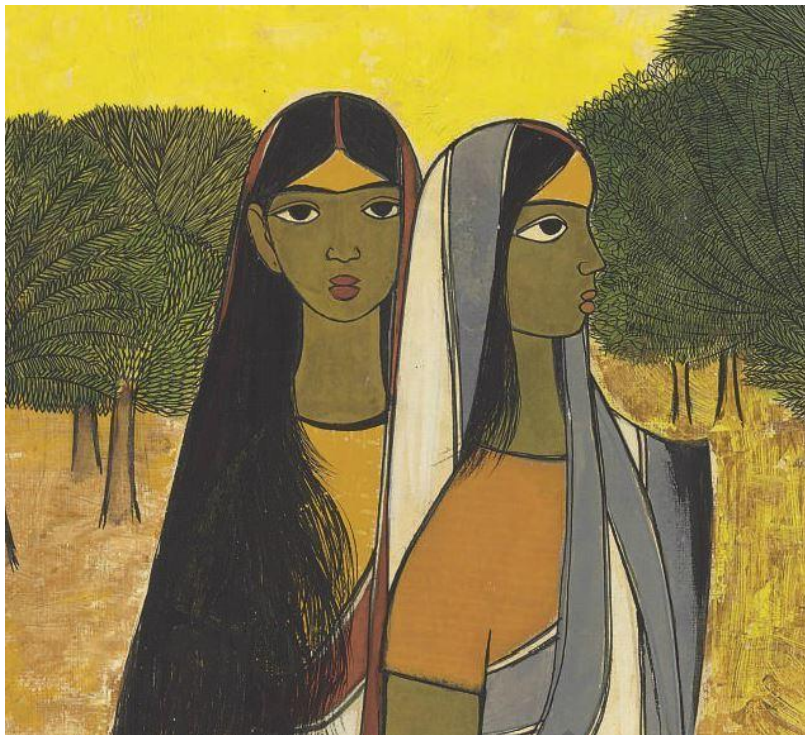
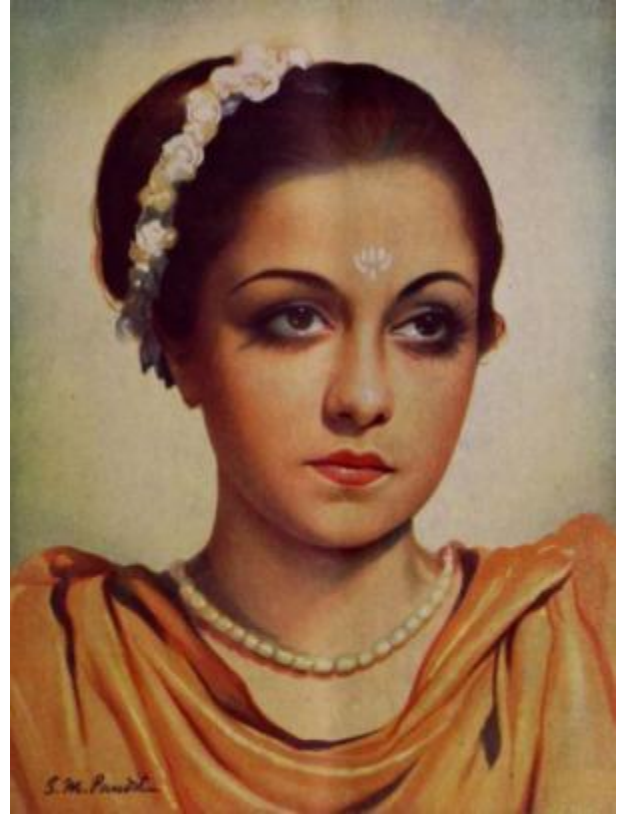
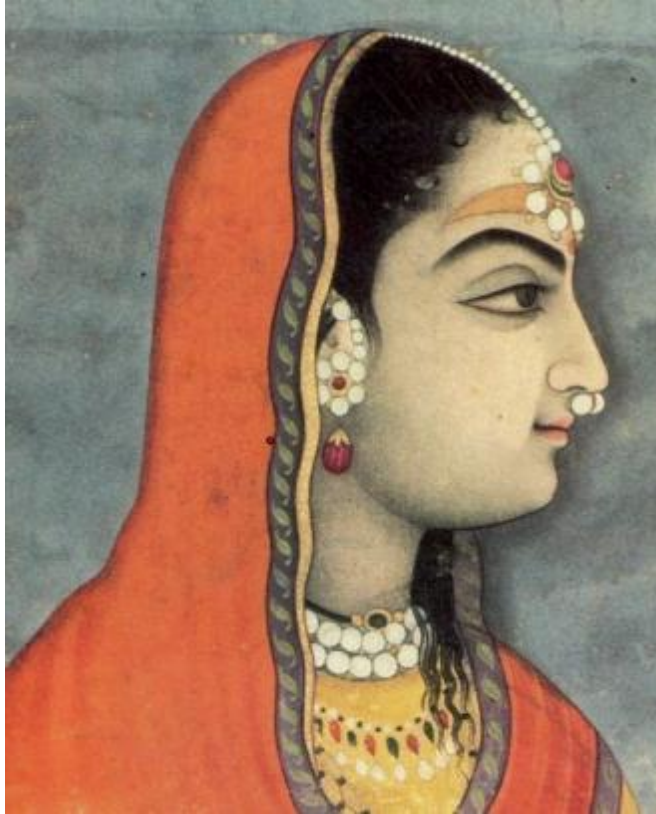
The Brahmika/Bengal styles are above. The style arranges the saree border in a way that mimics the seedha pallu (more evident in the left pic of girls in 1904\*) but the pallu is eventually thrown over and secured at the left shoulder. So it does appear that the sari sisters were right in that process of pleating and arranging the sari in the upper part was probably different for the Brahmika saree (though some of the modern Bengal saree drape tutorials have a bit of a pleat arrangement in the bottom part too. Further the loose end can be thrown over the right shoulder).

## **All About the Bindi**

The bindi/pottu/sindoor/tikli – whatever name it be known by – is probably the most emblematic of Indian elements of attire and also has a long history. It is symbolic (as a signifier of marital status or of caste), part of the daily ritual as well as decorative. While several terms exist, I will use the term bindi in this post.



The bindi as a symbol of marital status in women (Kumkum/Sindoor) is familiar to most Indians. This can vary from region to region and does not always involve the hair parting, but in almost all parts of the country it is a part of Hindu marriage, festive and temple rituals. Its origin is obscure but it possibly was a blood mark of sorts to mark the bride's entry into a new family, this later being replaced by kumkuma which was a mix of turmeric and slaked lime. Not as commonly worn as a few decades back it remains a part of rituals and is often applied in conjunction with decorative bindis.



*Her friends apply coolants: fresh lotus leaves, bracelets of lotus fiber, sandal wood paste; they fan her with palm leaves.*

Decorative designs for the face and body are found in plenty in Sanskrit texts, some seem to have been very elaborate given they start at the breasts and literally bloom on the face. The practice was more

common in spring and summer and the ingredients used were cooling in nature, with the coming of winter the paste was minimally applied, if at all. Designs were usually made from a paste of sandalwood, musk and/or saffron and were commonly known as पत्रावली/patravali (a garland of leaves/foilage).

Sandal paste patterns in conjunction with kumkuma and ash were also indicative of castes and sects, the latter persists now and then among men. For women the practice of using sandal paste on the forehead is now reduced to a spot or dash often worn with a bindi or as bridal decoration.

While sandal paste is used to make designs and applied as lines/a band, turmeric was used on the forehead as a band. Like sandal it has decorative and cultural aspects and is used for skin care.

Pic 1: Veena in Samrat Ashok (1946), Pic 2: Portrait of a Lady, 18th cent., Pic 3: Untitled B.Prabha (1960).



*A spot of  
chalk and  
another of  
vermilion  
shone upon  
her forehead,  
like the sun  
and moon  
risen at once  
over a lotus  
leaf. On*

Radha as a  
bride,  
Harkh'nath.

The designs  
referred to

earlier persist in some ways, e.g. bridal designs for the forehead are seen in several parts of India and especially in Bengal where sandal paste is often applied to make the design. The photograph here is of a Gujarati bride (an Asha Parekh role?!), I think perhaps in the 60s-70s. Another Gujarati bride [here](#).

Must be the purist in me but I can't get on the sticker train for this:)



Decorative facial designs by way of tattoos or black dots is common in rural and tribal India. The application of three dots on the chin is one of the more common rural designs and expectedly often made a screen appearance.

In the pics: Sreela Majumdar in Mandi (via dhrupad), Vyjayanthimala in Ganga-Jamuna and Nargis in Mother India.



Specific designs are often seen in medieval and later Indian paintings. An e.g. is the straight line on the forehead seen on Deccan women as in this MV Dhurandhar illustration. Another example is the chandra-bindu or the moon bindi. Which is also a Sanskrit character. In bindi form the dot may be placed within the half circle or outside it. Though worn elsewhere in Western India, it is characteristic of Maharashtra ([pic 1](#)) and can be combined with further lines and dots. A mang tika (forehead pendant) can also function as a similar kind of bindi like in [pic 4](#).



While all kinds of bindis from the sindoor to a round dot to lines to designs are seen in 20th century India, some types seem to dominate in the popular images (read cinema) in certain decades. The 1940s and 1950s stills often have a lot of different designs, sometimes these appear to suggest a particular aesthetic in historical or mythological films but they also appear in more modern looking publicity shots. The designs can be quite varied and complex though the flower bindi (pic 4) with its Bengal hints (red core with white dots) pops up quite often on 1950s actresses.

Pic 1: Nalini Jaywant, Pic 2: Sushila Rani, Pic 3: Shakila (courtesy [photodivision](#)) and Pic 4: Madhubala





The 1930s/1940s urban woman look required a very basic and small bindi . Where it is positioned on the forehead depends on the wearer. Shaping the eyebrows also seems to have been a thing in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the pics: Amrita Sher-Gil, Gayatri Devi, Devika Rani, Shanta Hublikar, Leela Chitnis, Miss Gohar.



These were also decades that did not require a sari to be worn with a bindi as in these pics (pic 1: Hansa Wadkar, pic 2: Neena).



The “tilaka” or the elongated forehead mark takes many forms, some of which have a religious function. It can also be present as an ornament . It has a decorative aspect and can be drawn on as required by the wearer. While quite commonly seen in South India on young women, it is also prevalent in other parts of the country. Quite often seen in the 1950s and 1960s when it was worn by young women- you can see a few examples in today’s post.

Last pic courtesy [photodivision](#).



By the 1970s and 1980s the simple round bindi was around, it could be applied as a powder or liquid but the presence of Shringar kumkum as well as the initial simple felt bindis meant that the latter were preferred. By the 1990s of course the felt decorative bindi we are familiar with had appeared.

In the pics: Rekha, Aruna Mucherla, Swaroop Sampat (still the Shringar kumkum girl).



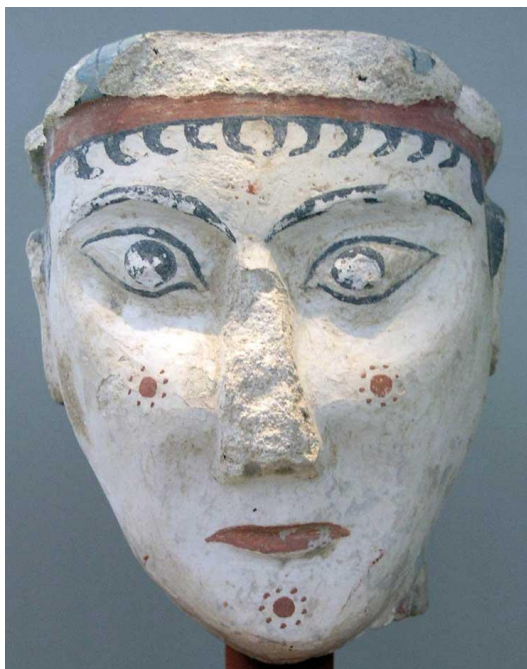
And between the lac bindis of the early 20th century and the felt bindis of today there was the plastic stick-on bindi. Made of a stiff but pliable plastic, it had a bright and smooth surface and came in more than a few colours. It's not hard to spot in photographs of the 60s and 70s but never replaced powder and liquid bindis like its felt counterpart.



*Finally he appears with white fragrant paste on his body, a bright crest jewel, white silk garment with a yellow border of swans, tilaka mark on his forehead and ornaments round his hair, neck and arms.*

Various forms of the bindi, largely the round dot and tilaka, were also used by men. A band of sandal or turmeric across the forehead was also be worn by men. Often these serve as caste marks and include a mixture of lines, dots and tilaka. Usually drawn with sandal, ash or kumkuma they are more common in the Southern and Western parts of India. They also serve a decorative purpose, especially for a bridegroom.

In the pics: Gandhara head (photograph mine), Krishna, Maratha chief, 1860, Maratha prince, late 19th century, Madhava Rao and Sir Pannalal Mehta painted by Raja Ravi Varma, Maharaja Sayaji Rao in 1902, Mysore raja in 1906, M.K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar, bridegroom.



PostScript: Facial decorations are of course known all over the world, especially in tribal societies. Decorations similar to the bindi in more urban cultures occur in Mycenaean Greece and Tang Dynasty China (and can also be seen in Korean wedding rituals today). The Tang Dynasty in particular had many kinds of designs and a number of colors were used, though red predominated. As well as a story re its origin, the falling of petals on a princess' forehead. Nevertheless the persistent and diverse uses of the bindi for ritual and decoration appears to be peculiar to India.

### **The 1940s Salwar Kameez**



The adaptation of the salwar kameez with modernity is perhaps less documented than the sari. In the 1920s and 1930s, the new kind of sari drape was the on trend garment. By the 1940s, the salwar-kameez (or on occasion the churidar-kameez) was in vogue, especially for young college going women. While maintaining the traditional silhouette and embellishments like zari, gota and sequins, it was also possible to incorporate new fabrics and prints as well as collars, laces, trims and the like. Especially for the kameez.





The most common ensemble in the 40s is as in pics 3 and 4, a kameez that ended above the knee, loose salwars and a dupatta. Pics 1 and 2 are of churidar ensembles which you see now and then in the decade. Pic 1: Amrita Shergil with her cousins

Pic 2: Still from a 1940s film

Pic 3: Drama group, Delhi, 1947

Pic 4: Still from Midnight's Children.

## The Kerala Post

This post was in response to a reader request on tumblr. Its fairly basic and is confined mainly to the 19th and 20th century but does cover some ground. Here goes!



Though the “set-mundu” consisting of two pieces of cloth is considered the traditional attire in Kerala, in practice its fairly common to see the lower half i.e. mundu alone in many 20th century photographs. This is usually worn with a jacket like blouse or sometimes a saree blouse as in the 1965 film Chemmeen. Typically the mundu is a woven cloth of cream or off white with a border. While the border can be a simple coloured band, the festive version has a woven gold border and is called kasavu. You can see the kasavu mundu worn with a blouse on three of the women in this photograph of the Travancore sisters and others. Of the three sisters in the middle, Lalitha on the left wears a neriyath (the upper part) as part of a half-saree like ensemble. Ragini wears a mundu and velvet jacket and Padmini on the right wears a half-sari that is common in Tamil Nadu (in the 50s this was usually a silk skirt, a georgette upper part and an embroidered blouse). Photograph circa 1954 courtesy Betsy Woodman. L to R Ambika, Lalitha, Chandran, Ragini, Betsy’s dad, Padmini, Sukumari.



***Kerala Costumes, the variations over the decades:***

*Pic 1:* The mundum neriyathum as worn in the 19th century (see also Ravi Varma's painting of the mother of Sethu Lakshmi Bayi)

*Pic 2:* The addition of a blouse and in this case also a lacy cape on Sethu Lakshmi Bayi (these additions to local costumes were common in India in the late 19th/early 20th century, a clearer picture of the blouse here).

*Pic 3:* Karthika Thirunal wearing a mundum neriyathum with the upper part draped like the six yard saree and worn with a sleeveless blouse (1934). Like many a young royal of the 1930s, the Princess was quite stylish.

*Pic 4:* Syrian Christian girls wearing mundu with kuppayam (blouse or jacket).

*Pic 5:* Sethu Parvati Bayi as a young girl wearing the neriyathu (the upper wrap) with a full skirt and blouse (like a lehenga choli).

*Pic 6:* Miss Kumari wears a fitted saree blouse with the mundu in the 1950s (still from Neelakuyil (1954).

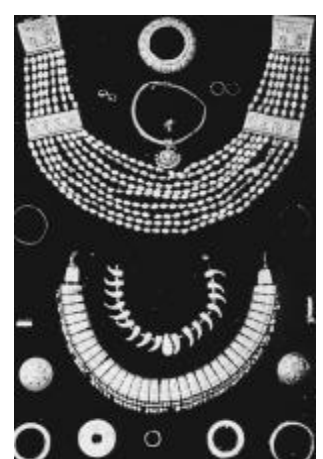
*Pic 7:* Miss Kumari again, this time in Aniyathi (1954), wearing the mundum neriyathum with a fitted saree blouse characteristic of the 1950s.

*Pic 8:* Karthika Thirunal, her brother the Maharaja of Travancore and her mother Paravti Bayi in a 1933 portrait, the six yard modern saris and styling is akin to that of many other Indian portraits of the period. Similarly the Maharaja wears a achkan and turban which was at this time a pan-Indian costume.

*Pic 9:* Aranmula Ponnammam in Yachakan (1951). While the mundum neriyathum with the upper portion (neriyathu) draped in the fashion of the six yard sari and the blouse are seen in the 1950s, many films of the period also feature the six yard sari which was common in India by this decade.

In some cases, the Kerala weave can be a six yard saree.

Notes: For royal costumes in Kerala, please go to this link. This link is a tumblr illustration of the mundum neriyathum, but I can't locate the source.



*....their black glossy hair, tied in a knot in the middle of the head, is copiously anointed with cocoa-nut oil, and perfumed with the essence of sandal, mogrees and champas; their ears, loaded with rings and heavy jewels, reach almost to their shoulders, this is esteemed a beauty;.....they are adorned with a profusion of gold and silver chains for necklaces, mixed with strings of Venetian and other gold coins; they have also heavy bangles or bracelets,....their skin is softened by aromatic oils,... Oriental Memoirs, A Narrative of Seventeen Years Residence in India, James Forbes (1813).*

*She has a regular profile, pure features and magnificent large eyes, in fact all the beauty of her race. In accordance with the tradition of the Nayer family her jet black hair is wound round her forehead. Pierre Loti on the Travancore Maharani (1903).*

In the 19th century earlobes amongst women in Kerala were sometimes elongated, I think so that a large “thoda” could be worn as in pic 1 Some of the jewellery worn in Kerala can be seen in pics 3 and 4 ) In general, like in many parts of India, a large amount of jewellery was worn (though the Rev Saththianadan remarks that Tamil women could learn from their Travancore counterparts and go easy on the jewellery:)). Hair wound into a round coil (pic 2) and placed in the centre or the side is very Kerala (in fact the style is known as a Malayala hair bun as in this 1950s description of hairstyles). This could then be decorated with flowers or jewels. PS: There is some serious hair envy on the part of travellers visiting Travancore, almost all accounts are whoa this is glorious hair!



A number of photographs discussed so far are of Nair costumes. For the sake of completion, this post includes the clothing of the Mappila (pic 1) and Syrian Christians/Christians (pic 2,) I had done an earlier post on the Jews of Kerala Almost all costumes do build on the mundu or lower garment with the addition of the head cover amongst Muslims in Kerala. The practice of wearing a kuppayam or chatta (jacket/blouse) was restricted to the Christians, Muslims and Jews in Kerala before it became common for everyone in the state in the 19th century .

Kerala also has a number of small tribal communities (e.g. the Kādir, the girl here has a decorative comb and large earrings, the costume appears to be akin to the short sari).

And there is a bit of indigenisation of the skirt-blouse in Kerala as in pic 4 (1973 )

## Evolution of Khadi movement

### **The Origin of Khadi Fabric**

Khadi fabric has been evolved as the latest fashion trend since 1990 in India. When it is about the Origin of Khadi Fabric it's true Khadi came in limelight as a pure handwoven native dress material during Swadeshi movement led by Mahatma Gandhi. But, khadi fabric has been originated way before that in ancient civilization. Yes, it is true. Few of us know about the origin of khadi fabric. Khadi has started a lot before than Mahatma Gandhi's Khadi movement.



### **History of Khadi Fabric**

Along with holding a significant historical event of the past, as well as popular present demand in the fashion industry and Indian handloom industry Khadi Fabric, has an interesting history regarding its origin. The word 'Khadi' is originated from 'Khaddar' which refers to the handspun fabric. This 'Khaddar' term is also popular in Pakistan and Bangladesh. Khadi is a type of handspun or handwoven fabric usually made from cotton fibre. On the other hand, Khadi is also merged with silk or wool and termed as khadi silk or woollen khadi.

You will be surprised to know that many historians specially mentioned in the history of ancient civilization Mohenjo-Daro concerning handwoven cloths that are so similar to the texture of Khadi. This is because from many ancient literary references historians had found the earliest description of cotton

textiles in India. Greek historians Strabo had mentioned the soothing texture of Indian fabric because, during the time of Alexander's invasion in India, Greek army wore Indian cotton clothes which were far more comfortable during summer time. One of Alexander's aspirant commented that these Indian cloth materials are made from cotton grown on the trees.



Wondering? There's more. Khadi had a special recognition and popularity in the Mauryan Era. In Chanakya's "Arthashastra" he mentioned about 'Sutradhyaksha' that refers a person who is adept in producing yarn spun out of wool, fibre hemp, bark-fibre, flax. In that time many expert artisans were producing cotton cloth material and that had sheer quality and pivotal role in that era's economy. That's why Mahatma Gandhi brought back Khadi as an original Indian product during the Swadeshi movement.

In the caves of Ajanta, the images of the procedure of separating cotton fibers from seeds have been found along with some images of women spinning cotton yarns. Alexander and his inheritors introduce Indian cotton in Asia & Europe. Thus cotton has gained international recognition since the ancient era.

Not khadi material but the handwoven fabric was very popular in the ancient times, in the Mughal empire handwoven fabric used to be very popular especially Muslin fabric.

Despite of having such glorious history after the increasing popularity of textile mills and cheap clothes produced by these grabbed Indian market and as a result handwoven khadi fabric was facing a big loss. But Gandhiji had revived Khadi industry and hand-spun products during Swadeshi movement.

Khadi fabric material has a special texture. The reason why khadi is so famous and popular even among celebrities and politicians because of its rugged texture and it feels very comfortable in Summer and warm in winter.

Interestingly, ancient temples in India gives a varied and brief account of the varieties of dresses worn by ancient Indians. Each temple in India from varied region reflects distinct material varieties and textile traditions. The material khana is produced by maintaining a specific length and width. Women from parts of Marathwada, Vidharbha region from Maharashtra, north of Karnataka makes use of GulegaguddKhana. The ornamenting art of fabrics has been an age-old traditional custom and technique from the historical past. Indian handloom fabrics have abounded of types of costumes, however, saris and blouse have special significance. Saris are strongly identified with India women. Art and architecture have shown strong traditional and sentimental value to sari and blouse, also regarded as one of the most beautiful costumes in the world. The Indian temples not only reflects varieties in dresses but also reflecting in wearing and weaving style. A large number of folk thrives on the connoisseurs of art and weaving.

Weaving in ancient India was conducted in lengths and breadths of the vast country as semi-urban, rural industry and urban environments. Hand weaving occupied a prominent position in ancient India, and artisans, designers, and weavers occupied a prominent position in courts of Indian kings palaces. This type of fabrics has been spread across various states of India. The states of Karnataka has a traditional design and intricate weaving methods. Ilkal saris of Bagalkot and Molkalmuru saris of Chitradurga and comprises the traditional saris of Karnataka. The weaving of Ilkal dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD has still remained popular. In Maharashtra and Karnataka regions, the traditional clusters of Vidarbha, Marathawada and GuledguddKhanahas been very well-known. Similarly, in West Bengal, the rise of handloom cotton fabrics, khadi, and dhakai has been worn traditionally by women.

Colonial times had endangered the fabrics weakening the weavers and designers in India. Most of the production during the Colonial period used to ship to London, headquarters of the British Empire. The Victoria and Albert Museum still exhibits the Fabrics of India, charting India's textile. The exhibition in the industry depicts the various stages in the cotton cloth production according to the Handloom Industry. The Colonial British rule had destroyed the designer and artistic workers in the Indian handloom industry by importing raw materials back to their country to make finished products. The finished products were brought back to India and sold at a higher price, the money used to go back to England. Mahatma Gandhi starting the Swadeshi movement whereby weaving and complete garment manufacturing was reinstated in India. It was only after the British rule ended and India became independent that the Khadi fabrics regained its position. The textile industry formation post-independence was primarily dependent upon small scale weavers and manufacturers making traditional garments. Only till in the recent period, the Indian government together with several small scale industry decided to showcase and reinstate India's position in the global industry.





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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGN**

## **UNIT – IV - APPRECIATION OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN COSTUMES - SFDA 1101**

**UNIT IV** (9Hrs) Traditional Costumes of India – Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka.

## **The history of traditional Indian Clothing**

Indian clothing has been evolving for an extremely long time. In fact, the first evidence of spinning and dying cotton cloth dates back some 7,000 years to the ancient Indus Valley civilization. Over the years, its inhabitants left clues about Indian Customs, Culture, and Fashion through epic sagas such as the Mahabharata and grandiose rock sculptures including the world-famous Ellora caves. Indeed, clothing is as much a part of Indian history as food and religion (or even cricket!).

Since these early beginnings, the subcontinent has produced a plethora of finely woven garments, with distinct styles for both men and women found right throughout. Gender and geography aside, it is class and caste which has the most heavily defined Indian dress. The upper echelons of society continue to don golden ornaments and fine threads such as Munin, while those at the bottom are forced to be considerably more refined.

Over time, outside influences such as trading via the Silk Road, colonialization by Britain, and homogenization from the West have diminished the prevalence of traditional dress in India. Nevertheless, ancient traditions remain strong throughout the country, and - even today - can still be seen adorning the bodies of its proud traditional inhabitants.

## **Indian Women clothing**

Indian women dress in modest and colorful clothing, taking great care not to expose too much skin no matter how humid the climate may be.

### **1- The Sari (Saree)**

The most ubiquitous piece of feminine Indian attire is a classic and colorful sari. Indeed, a regional variation of the archetypal outfit can be found across all corners of the subcontinent. Although it may look similar to a dress, the sari is actually a long piece of cloth – ranging from 13 to 30 feet – which is wrapped snugly around the woman's body. Most choose to start from the waist and finish around the shoulders to leave the midriff exposed, although each region has a slightly different wrapping style. Special occasions such as weddings warrant a more elaborate pink or red shade of the sari.

### **2- Mundum Neriyaathum**

The ancient original form of the sari is the Mundum Neriyaathum, a similar design that was only intended to cover the legs. Still in use today, the Mundum Neriyaathum comes from the hot and humid state of Kerala where women went about their lives topless until the arrival of Muslims from the Middle East. These days, of course, a lightweight top is worn up above.

### **3- Salwaar Kameez**

The other famous piece of appeal for Indian women is the Salwaar Kameez. Although at first glance it may appear similar to the sari, the costume is remarkably different. Rather than a wraparound cloth, it's a complete dress ensemble. The outfit includes the Salwaar, loose trousers that become tighter around the ankles, as well as the kameez, an intricately decorated tunic. To finish off the look, many women prefer to add a dupatta or odani, a unique type of veil which covers their head and shoulders.

The Salwaar Kameez originated in northwest India, particularly the provinces of Punjabi and Himachal Pradesh. These days, however, the in-vogue outfit can be found virtually anywhere in the country and has become increasingly popular with the movie stars of Bollywood.

## **Indian Men Clothing**

Traditional men's clothing in India is often adapted to suit the climate. Don't be surprised to see males wearing what appear to be skirtd.

### **1- Dhoti**

Few outfits of Indian clothing are as ubiquitous as the dhoti. Considered India's national dress, its practicality has rapidly led it to become the unofficial uniform of the country's countless outlying villages. City slickers sometimes take a liking to the whitewashed outfit as well, which consists of a long sleeve shirt on top and a sarong wrapped around the waist.

Above all else, the energy-efficient design is a hit in warmer regions because it provides substantial relief from the blazing midday sun. Other colors and combinations are typically worn on special events and occasions.

### **2- Nehru jacket**

As eclectic as Indian clothing is, these exotic styles rarely find their way into wardrobes overseas. One exception is the Nehru jacket, a slim fit blazer that somewhat resembles the executive suits of the West. After becoming a staple of Indian men's formalwear in the '40s, it eventually began piquing the interest of trendsetters overseas.

International adoption reached a fever pitch after the Beatles started wearing the garment upon returning from a creative and meditative holiday in Rishikesh at the height of their career. The Nehru has since been spotted on everyone from the Monkeys to villains in James Bond. Funnily enough, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, never actually wore the jacket which would later bear his name. He was more fond of a slightly different style known as the sherwani.

### **3- Achkan and Sherwani**

Despite their striking regal nature, these two staples of Indian formalwear are mostly indistinguishable to the outsider. Both elegant ensembles entail a suit-like jacket worn over either tight-fitting trousers or a wraparound dhoti. The primary difference between these and the Nehru jacket is that the former are much longer, hanging down below the knees rather than the upper thighs.

### **4- Lungi**

First-time visitors to India might be surprised to see so many men wearing a white wraparound cloth, which is not unlike the sarong. There is a good reason for it, though. Before the arrival of the monsoon season, most of India becomes oppressively hot. Many men prefer the Lungi over trousers for the extra aeration the garment provides. This added comfort has become so highly sought-after that the article has been adopted in neighboring Asian countries as well.

### **Accessories and headgear**

Perhaps the most striking aspect of traditional Indian clothing is the many exotic headdresses and accessories which adorn both men and women alike. In many regions, the men don large turbans that vary in color and style according to religious and cultural preferences.

The women, on the other hand, are better known for their infatuation with jewelry. Noses, ears, mouths and belly buttons are all frequently pierced and embroiled with an array of glistening gems and golden chains. But who could forget the bangle? A benchmark piece of Indian jewelry that some women wear a dozen or more.

You won't spend a fortune in putting together an exciting Indian wardrobe, and you'll receive plenty of smiles and goodwill from the friendly locals you'll meet along the way.

## Jammu & Kashmir

Costumes of Jammu and Kashmir are well known for their embroidery and intricate designs, which reflects the richness of the culture and landscape of the region. The form of clothing is designed to counter the cold climate of the region. Most of the garments are made of wool, silk designed with intricate embroideries and cotton.



The traditionally Poots & Pheran is the most popular form of dress among both men and women. With Mughal type Turbans, headgear, Taranga Belt of Pashmina and colored scarf.

### Costumes of Kashmiri Women

The Pheran is the prominent attire for Kashmiri women. The Pheran worn by women usually has Zari, embroidery on the hem line, around pockets and mostly on the collar area. Ladies prefer suit and Burgha in summer and Pheran are preferred in autumn.

## For Hindu Women

### Pheran

The Hindu women of Kashmir wear their Pherans long, stretching up to their feet with narrow sleeves. The cloth is turned on the bottom side. Often, the Pherans are wrapped tightly on waist by a piece of creased cloth called Lungi. The Hindu women, started wearing the saree now. But as per the culture of the Kashmir region, they have to wear taranga on their marriage day.

### Headdress – Taranga

The headdress of a Kashmiri woman is a brightly colored scarf or Taranga, that is stitched to a suspended cap and it narrows down at the back, towards the heels. The Taranga is an integral part of the wedding attire among Hindus.

### Jewelry

Earrings, anklets and bangles are widely used apart from the use of ornamentation in clothing. Dejharoos or golden pendants (the Kashmiri panditani's mangal-sutra) are worn by the Hindu women. These Dejharoos comprise two decorative gold pendants which are suspended through gold chains or silk threads. It is symbolic of a woman's married status among the Kashmiri Pandits.

## For Muslim Women

### Pheran

The Pherans worn by the Muslim women are traditionally characterized by their broad sleeves and reach up to the knees. Elaborate Zari embroideries or floral patterns around the neck and the pockets are a prominent feature of a Muslim woman's Pheran. With Brocade patterns adorn their long sleeves. The Pherans are wrapped tightly by a piece of creased cloth called Lungi or Pashmina sawl.

### Headgears

They wear a head gear that looks very distinctive from the taranga. The head gear is in red color, they tie it round their forehead like a turban and they also use trinkets and silver pins to tie it tightly. The traditional headgears are made of fine wool and are thick keeping the people warm in the extremities of winter climate in Kashmir.

The red headgears known as the Kasaba and abaya. It is worn by the Muslim women as a part of their regular attire, and the Abaya is also commonly worn by them.

The Muslim girls who are unmarried, wear the skullcaps which are decorated by the embroidery made by gold thread and ornament it by using trinkets, pendants and amulets.

### **Jewelry**

The Muslim women are quite fond of wearing a bunch of earrings. Silver jewelry is popular among the Muslim women and they adorn themselves with neckpieces, bracelets and heavily jeweled chains.

## **Costumes of Kashmiri Men**

### **Kashmiri – Men Pheran**

The typical dress of a Kashmiri man both Hindu and Muslim is Pheran, a long loose gown hanging down below the knees. The men wear a skullcap, a close-fitting shalwar (Muslims) or churidar pyjama (Pandits). The traditional Hindu male garment pheran is always plain and has narrow sleeves and a left side breast-open collar with a kind of lapel or lace emerging from it.

The Pheran is a loosely fitted woollen garment which makes use of the Kangri. The Kangri is an earthen vessel which is filled with flaming coal. The Pathani Suit, also referred to as Khan-dress, is popular among the Muslim men, especially in Srinagar.

### **Turbans for Muslim Male**

Turbans are common among Muslim men. Skull caps are prevalent, especially among the peasants and the Karakuli. Fur skull caps with the Pashmina shawls worn by men often symbolize royal lineage. The Muslim men wear lace-free shoes known as Gurgabis.

### **Headgear of Hindu Male**

The turban is the traditional headgear of the Kashmiri Pandit males, though its use is very restricted now. This turban is not much different from the turban the Muslims wear except that the Pandits do not wear any scalp cap inside. The priest class among the Pandits would wear their turbans in almost the Namdhari Sikh style.

### **Gujjars**

The people who live on the hilly region of Kashmir are known as Gujjars. The women of Gujjar community wear the Kashmir dress which is similar with the dresses of women who live in the Turkish village. The Gujjar women are dressed in loose sleeved tunics (a full skirt) but they like loose sleeves with baggy salwars. They also wear a thick curtain over their face, which is long till their shoulders. The hair of the Gujjar woman, are knotted with more than one plaits, which they like to hang on the front side.

### **Dogras**

Located in Kashmir state's mountain valley, on the southern side which is extended till the Punjab's plains. These people are the existence of the Aryans which normally wear the woollen of grey color and pyjamas which are loose in fitting. They also wear the Kamarband or waist belt. Dogras women wear a loose tunic, dupatta, chudidars salwar and also a cap, which makes their personality charming. Similar Dogara Men wear fitted pajamas and kurtas of considerable length. The use of kamarbands and turban are prominent among the Dogra elders.



# Punjab

## Traditional Dresses of Punjab

Punjab contains one of the oldest and the richest cultures in the world which is exhibited in every possible way. It is enveloped with bright colours and high-spirited people that can be best expressed through their traditional garbs.

Here is a list of the traditional dresses of Punjab and the significance in their culture.



### 1. Phulkari - Floral Heritage of Punjab

Phulkari, which means 'flower craft' has been nestled in the culture of Punjab that goes back to the 15th century. Its bright colours embroidered in a manner that speaks volumes about the women and their clothing desires. It famously appeared in the tear-jerking love story of Heer-Ranjha by Waris Shah and the creative art of embroidery has not changed its technique since the introduction. Women of all ages and classes don this cloth that reflects their life through the various colours entrenched on it. It can be woven on shawls, Kurtas, Dupattas, and Lehengas with eye-catching blends of intricate patterns and is worn on all occasions by the women of traditional Punjab.

### 2. Jutti - The Flamboyant Footwear of the Punjabis

The Jutti or the Punjabi Jutti has been a part of the royalty of the Kings for 400 years and is traditionally embroidered on leather in real gold or silver threads. One of the unique features of this handcrafted footwear is that it has no left or the right side distinction and can be worn on any foot of choice. Being worn by the men and women of Punjab, it is the most comfortable and stylish flat-soled footwear worn mostly at weddings and festivals. It brims with shimmer and extensive embroidery that contains the heritage of Punjab.



### 3. Patiala Salwar - Furled up Beauty - Traditional Dress of Punjab

This baggy and pleated trouser has its roots in the city of Punjab called Patiala and was initially donned by men but later became a part of women's attire as well. It is usually combined with a Kurti and a chunni for women with a draping pattern at the back. Involving various modern designs, it still keeps in touch with the tradition it was introduced with. It is one of the easiest and comfortable dresses worn by the Punjabi women united with grace and style.



### 4. The Jama - The Flared Up Piece of Cloth

The Jama is a long piece was worn by the men in the Punjab region during the Mughal period. Tight from the torso flaring up like a skirt at the ankle or the knees, it is worn with a turban on the head reflecting royalty and the majestic nature of the kings. It was originally a dress for the men but was also worn by women with tight-fitting pyjama. Characterised by the long sleeves and tied under the armpits, it allows freedom of movement, making it another comfortable traditional attire of Punjab.



#### 5. Punjabi Ghagra - Adding Richness to the Femininity of Punjab

One of the few traditional dresses that has been modernised is the Punjabi ghagra which is a part of a four-piece outfit originated in Punjab but is now worn in Haryana and parts of Himachal Pradesh. This attire is mostly donned during 'Giddha' a famous folk dance of Punjab performed by women to twirl around in mesmerising colours while singing folk songs reminiscent of its culture.

#### 6. Parandi - The braided accessory

Bedecked with jewellery and colourful threads, Parandi or Paranda is a hair accessory used by the women of Punjab. In addition to that, it also symbolises love when a bride receives it from her husband as a form of affection. In older times, women wore Parandis to enhance their traditional beauty and make their hair look longer in the simplest way possible by intricately weaving threads together and tying it to their long and lush hair. *Parandis* come in different sizes and colours and can be adorned with ornaments like necklaces, tikka, bangles and golden shimmer added to the tip of it. It exhibits exuberance of the women of Punjab and is extensively used by women all across India.





### 7. Kurta Pyjama

The most popular traditional wear of Punjabi men includes Kurta and Pyjama. Kurta is a long shirt with slashes on both the side and long sleeves. Pyjamas are loose baggy pants tied with a drawstring. However, the kurta can be worn with lungi, dhoti or jeans.

# Haryana

## Traditional Dresses Of Haryana



Haryana is one of the most economically developed regions in South Asia and one of the wealthiest states in India. But the people of Haryana are simple, humble and down to earth. Majority of Haryanvis are occupied in the agricultural sector and are vegetarians. They lead simple lives. The same could be said about their attires. Their clothing is practical and straightforward. Men wear dhoti kurtas and women wear kurta lehenga. Communities wear their attires in a different manner. While men are usually found wearing white, women of different castes were vivid, colourful attires.

### Men's Wear

#### Dhoti

The Haryanvi men wear 'dhoti' for trousers. Dhoti is a long piece of rectangular cloth, which is wrapped around the waist and legs and tucked in from the centre of the waistline. The loose ends are tucked in from the behind for a better fit. The men of Haryana wear white coloured dhoti and kurta as wearing white a status symbol for them.

Different castes (Rajput, Brahman, Bania, Ahir and Jat) wear dhotis in a different manner.

#### Kurta or shirt

The men wear a kurta or a shirt over their torsos. The kurta or shirts are usually white in colour.

## Pagri

Pagri is a turban or a headgear for the men. It is a rolled piece of long cloth wrapped around the head. Although now fully stitched pagris are available which are required to be worn as simple as a hat.

However, in recent times, only the older men are found wearing pagris.



## Shoes

The traditional footwear of Haryana is jutti. Juttis are an Indian style footwear and are similar to mojaris. Juttis are closed shoes only till front half of the feet and thus are easy to wear. Juttis are made out of leather with various designs on them in North India. Even jutti made out of jute is famous.

## Blanket

Occasionally, men are found with a blanket draped over one of their shoulder, especially during the winters. The blankets are light weighted. Most common type of blanket is the dark coloured chequered blanket.

## Women's Wear

Women of different communities wear different type of clothing.

Women of Jat community are found wearing shirt and ghagra with a chunder.

### Shirt

Women wear long sleeved shirts or kurtas made out of cotton.



### Ghagra (Daaman)

Women wear long, free, flared skirts called ghagra. Ghaghras have different patterns and designs on them and are of many bright colours. They may also have a border at the bottom end.



### Odhni

Odhni or chunder is an elongated piece of cloth that women wear over their attire. The chunders have colourful borders with different patterns. Women use one end of the chunder to cover their heads. The other end is tucked in their waistline in the front. Women of Ahir Community wear angia - lehenga with a chunder.

### **Petticoat**

Lehenga / Petticoats are straight fitted long skirts. They are different from ghaghras as ghagra are more free flowing and open.

### **Angia**

Angia is a tight fitting blouse that women wear to cover their torsos. The blouses come only till midway on the torso.

### **Odhni**

Women use odhni or dupatta over their attire.

### **Shoes**

Women of Haryana wear traditional Indian style of footwear just as the men do. The traditional footwear is called jutti and is worn by most communities in Northern India.

Women of these communities work outside in the fields, especially during harvest season. Thus, these dresses are designed in a manner that is comfortable for them to wear.

Women from the Aggarwal and Brahmin communities wear sarees and dhotis with kurta and odhni. Saree attire consists of a blouse, petticoat and a long cloth called saree.

### **Wedding Attire**

Weddings are major celebrations in India. The wedding events are meant to showcase happiness and prosperity of the families. Women wear bright coloured sarees as according to the Hindu tradition. Many women, especially the younger, prefer to wear salwaar - kameez or ghagra with odhni with some great embroidery on them.

Men wear dhoti and kurta with a turban. However, The kurta worn by them is of fine clothing and with some small but spectacular embroidery work.

### **Jewellery**

The women of Haryana prefer to wear their traditional style of jewellery. They usually wear small sized earrings made of gold or silver along with a necklace or chain.

Kathla is a neck piece of the Jat community. They wear this on auspicious days. Bania people wear Malas, which are long neck pieces usually made of gold, with different patterns and designs and may also have a huge pendant in the centre. Haryanvis wear costly jewellery on important days and during festivals and marriages. The ornaments mostly made of silver and gold.

Aged women prefer to wear the Hansil ornaments. They are unique in their style as they are not foldable like normal chains but instead are shaped to fit around the neck in a particular form. These are made with silver and weigh heavy. Older and young women also wear a nose piercing called Nath.



## **Influence Of Western Culture**

Due to the influence of western culture, most men, especially the ones that are travelling, have started wearing trousers and shirt. Fewer women are found in western clothing wearing pants and tops except in the major cities. Kids are commonly found wearing tops, pants and frocks. People of Haryana are also found wearing sweaters during the months of December and January.

## **Rajasthan**

Rajasthan's rich culture is exhibited via its majestic forts, royal palaces, vibrant festivals, delicious food, performing arts, and even traditional costumes. The traditional outfit is colourful and elaborate, and is still proudly worn by Rajasthanis. Here's an introduction to Rajasthan's traditional dress.

### **Women's traditional dress**

Traditional attire for Rajasthani women is ghagra, choli (also called kanchli or kurti) and odhni. The ghagra is a full-length, embroidered and pleated skirt, which comes in a variety of colours, prints and fabrics, such as silk, cotton, georgette and crêpe. Of all the various prints, the laharia, bandhej, tie 'n dye, chundri and mothra are the most widely worn. To impart royal elegance, antique borders and Jaipuri gota-patti work are incorporated to the ghagra.

The kanchli, choli or kurti are the upper-body wear. These are colourful and intricately designed and shaped as per the specific body measurements. For an ethnic touch, they are embellished with mirror-work, beads and sequins, coral and shells, and creative-cut work.



*Rajput women wearing ghagra, kanchli and odhni*

The odhni, or chunar, is a long piece of cloth, approximately 2.5 meters in length and 1.5 meters in width, and is worn as a veil. Made of light printed or patched fabric, it features beautiful embroidery, beadwork or other embellishments. There are different ways of wearing it, but the most traditional way is tucking one corner inside the ghagra, resting the middle portion on the chest and draping the end part over each shoulder and above the head, covering it gracefully.



*Women from Rajasthan covering face with odhni*

## **Women's traditional accessories**

Elaborate necklaces, like Jadau sets, aad (chokers) and Raani Har (long necklaces to the belly button) are worn around the neck, especially by women from affluent families.

The women of tribal groups such as Bhil, Meena or Garasia prefer wearing brass, silver or white metal



ornaments. Kaanbali or surliya (earrings), nathani (nosepins), bajubandh (armlets), rakhdi or borla (maang tikkas), tagdi or kardhani (belly or waist chains), payal (anklets), bangadi (bangles), bichuwa (toe rings) and finger rings are also worn to complete the ensemble.

*Aad (choker) along with bangles made up of pearl and kundan*



*Tribal women wearing nosering and borla (maang tikka)*

## **Men's traditional dress**

The traditional outfit for Rajasthani men is dhoti and angarkha, or pyjama-kurta. The dhoti is a long piece of cloth tied around the waist and wrapped around like a loin-cloth between the legs. It is paired with angarkha, a type of robe characterized by an inner panel that covers the chest. The angarkha is usually worn by the wealthy class. However, some tribal and pastoral communities have adopted it, reserving it for special occasions. The length and flare of this garment varies. The royal Rajput clan prefers wearing flared, ankle-length angarkha, while other communities and tribal groups wear knee-length or shorter versions. For everyday use, men wear angarkhi (or, puthia), which is short and tied with laces, not buttons.



*Rajasthani men wearing dhoti, angarkha and pagari*

The pyjama is like track pants, and generally made from cotton. It is paired with kurta or mufti, which is a loose-fitting shirt. While it usually goes down to the knees, today Rajasthani men may take liberties with the length and pattern of this traditional costume.

The traditional outfit is incomplete without pagari (turban or headgear), which is generally two meters long and 0.2 meters wide. It comes in a variety of colours, shapes and sizes, and is considered the pride and honour of men. There are different ways of wearing it, each defining a specific region or caste. Specially designed pagaris, called safas (short and broad in size), are worn during weddings and festivals, while everyday pagaris are rustic.



*Tie and dye pagaris*

### **Men's traditional accessories**

To complete the ensemble, men wear round-shaped balis or studs on their earlobes and crystal beaded or semi-precious stone neckpieces. Influential families and royals also wear kambarbandh (waistbands) and patka, a piece of cloth hung over the shoulder.

#### **Footwear for men and women**

Both men and women in Rajasthan wear jootis or mojaris. They are leather shoes made up of sheep, camel or goat skin, complete with intricate embroidery and embellishments. While traditional footwear is usually black or brown, nowadays much more fashionable multi-coloured slip-ons are also available.



*Mojaris and jootis for both men and women*

## Footwear

The shoes are called as Mojari or Jootis which are made of animal's skin and embellished with embroidery on velvet or brocade. Both men and women wear these. The footwear from cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer are worn all over the country.



## Rajasthani Textiles

Rajasthan is also known for a variety of prints and textiles like-

- Bagru Print
- Sanganeri Print
- Leheriya - a type of tie-dye
- Bandhani - a type of tie-dye
- Barmeri Print
- Kota Doria

It can be gathered that a lot of uniqueness and vibrancy to this northwestern state of India is derived from the distinct dressing culture. It's laudable that a state with a vast stretch of sand, scanty vegetation and scarcity of water has such a rich history and culture. They dress beautifully even for everyday purposes celebrating each day which makes their culture different from others. Suffice it to say, Rajasthani couture is a classic, which is celebrated all over the globe.

## Madhya Pradesh

### Traditional Dresses of Madhya Pradesh

Known as the 'Heart of India' due to its location at the centre of India, Madhya Pradesh is well known for its incredible culture. Though the state has some cultural similarities to states like Rajasthan and Maharashtra, it still owns a unique culture of its own. It is the land of vibrant folk music and dance which is still intact since the Mughal period. Handicrafts of Madhya Pradesh are well sought after owing to their intricate designing. The state is home to followers of diverse religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, and Buddhism. A significant chunk of the population belongs to tribal communities which make up 20% of the total population of the state.

This diversity in communities has rendered Madhya Pradesh a unique culture which can be titled as traditional and ethnic. A prominent element of Madhya Pradesh's culture is its traditional clothing. In the modernized world, the people of Madhya Pradesh still preserve their traditional clothing heritage. An overview of the traditional dresses worn by men and women in Madhya Pradesh is given below.



## Madhya Pradesh Traditional Dresses of Men

Dhoti is the famous traditional dress for men in Madhya Pradesh. It is comfortable and best for summer months. Safa, a kind of turban is another common element of the traditional dress of men here. Safa is considered as a symbol of pride and honor for men. Mirzai and Bandi are a type of jackets in white or black color which form a part of the traditional dress of men in Madhya Pradesh, especially in regions of Malwa and Bundelkhand. The clothes are colorful and vibrant as people in Madhya Pradesh like to add colors to their appearance.



## Madhya Pradesh Traditional Dresses of Women

Lehenga and Choli are the most famous traditional dress among women in Madhya Pradesh. Odhni is a kind of scarf that covers the head and shoulders and is an essential element of traditional dress. Black and Red colors are the most popular colors in clothes. In the current scenario, saree has also become part of the dressing of women in Madhya Pradesh. Bandhani Sarees are becoming especially popular. The saree is dyed using various methods which create elaborate and colorful patterns. Wax is applied to the yarn of the saree to bring stiffness and richness to the cloth which is easy to weave. Madhya Pradesh is also well known for Maheshwari and Chanderi Sarees. Even foreigners like these silk sarees and Madhya Pradesh produces and exports these dresses on a large scale. The prints and designs are lovely and colors are vibrant.



## Madhya Pradesh Traditional Ornaments and Tattoos

People of Madhya Pradesh love wearing Kathir and Silvers ornaments. These traditional ornaments are a major part of the tribal clothing. Bangles, necklaces, and bracelets are worn by women over their traditional dresses and are considered a mark of beauty and virtue. 'Pajeb' is another ornament that is very popular among women due to its pleasant sound and lovely design.

Another important element of traditional clothing in Madhya Pradesh is Tattoos. Tattoo designing is very popular among rural and tribal communities. The people living in Bajara, Bhil, Kumhar, Bhilala, and Kahar can be seen sporting tattoos on their hands and foreheads. Mostly the tattoos carry spiritual designs or names of loved ones.



## West Bengal

Colors, ethnic prints and accessories form an important part of traditional dresses of men and women in Madhya Pradesh. While the influence of Western style is quite evident now with men and women adapting to the latest dressing style, they still like to wear traditional dresses on important occasions like weddings, festivals or get-togethers.

West Bengal is a state of extremely rich culture and history. Every corner of the streets of West Bengal has a story to share. Not only has this land given us some of the most renowned names in the country, it also happens to be a place of strong civilisation.

The costume of West Bengal is known for its distinct features and is perhaps the most popular example of our culture.

### *Men's Dresses*

The traditional dress of Bengali men is *dhoti*. The top or kurta that is paired with dhoti is called *panjabi*.

In earlier times and especially during British Era, the dhotis were synonymous with white color. However, these days, to add a twist to the attire the dhoti is made available in number of attractive colors.



The pnjabis or the kurtas are usually made of silk or cotton and run up to knee length.

The lungi happens to be another variation of the men's costume. However that is more of an informal casual indoor wear.

### ***Women's Dresses***

Saree is the signature traditional attire for the women in West Bengal. The saree captures the very essence of the culturally infused state West Bengal is. Even the saree draping style of Bengali women is quite distinct and has become more of a distinguishing feature now. Sarees are primarily woven in cotton and silk which have been named chiefly after their weaving techniques. The traditional weavers or Tantis of West Bengal are reputed worldwide because of the quality of fabric spun and their elaborate thread work. In various districts of Bengal like Murshidabad, Malda, Nadia, Birbhum, Bankura and Hooghly, different varieties of Sarees are woven with supreme efficiency and dedication.

### ***Traditional Jewellery***

The jewellery of West Bengal just like its rituals and customs imbibes beauty, traditions and modernity beautifully. It is a pure mesmerising sight! It keeps the cultural ethnicity of the state intact.



the neck.



The traditional jewellery comprises a ***pati haar*** which is a heavy studded necklace. Primarily, the Bengali ornaments are made of gold and precious stones.

***Jhumko*** is the well crafted, intricately designed earrings which usually have beautiful floral motifs. ***Nath*** or the nose ring is like the regular nath of North India except that is hoop like in its size. ***Choker*** is a small necklace that fits just around

**Chur** is the traditional gold bangle of West Bengal which is exclusively made of pure gold, sometimes weighing upto 50 grams.

### ***Modernisation of the Traditional Attire***

These days, with a whiff of fashion plaguing everyone and everything, the traditional costume of Bengal too is somewhere losing its mass presence. Western outfits and other alternatives are replacing them. What used to be there everyday clothing is now restricted to special occasions and festivals only. Thanks to Bollywood and their obsession with the Bengali culture, these costumes are still very much in demand.

But all said, the cultural costumes of Bengal have hugely been responsible for keeping the heritage of the state intact and will remain so for many generations to come!

## **Assam**

### **Customs of Assam**

Customs and traditions play a significant role in the society and the Assamese strictly adhere to the customs laid down by their forefathers, pertaining to their communities. These customs are beliefs that originated in the past and have been followed ever since, generation after generation. The weddings, birth, death and festivals in Assam include many customs that are supposed to be followed by all. For instance, the Assamese use bamboo to welcome guests because of their attachment to the bamboo culture. Known as Jaapi, this is basically known as the sunshade of Assam. It is made of bamboo strips and dried palm leaves locally known as Tokow Pat. There are many types of Jaapi like the Halua Jaapi, Pitha Jaapi, Sorudoiya Jaapi, Bordoiya Jaapi, Cap etc. These Jaapis were also used as headwear back in the olden days, mostly by rich and noble families. They are also used by farmers and peasants as umbrellas in the paddy fields. People of Assam always believed in the joint family system and it is still prevalent among both tribal and non-tribal communities. The rule that was followed for inheritance was called Dayabhaga. This system holds strong even today. The custom is that a child cannot claim his share in the property of the father as long as the father lives. Some of the tribes follow customs like the matriarchal system, which asserts that the mother is the center of the clan and that her property will be given to her daughters. If there are no daughters, it will be passed to the youngest daughter of her sister. The prevalent custom among the Dimasa-Kacharis is that the sons inherit the father's property while the daughters inherit the mother's property.

### **Dhoti and Gamosa**

The Dhoti and Gamosa are said to be the native dress of the men of Assam. The Dhoti is used to cover the lower half of the body and is a well-known piece of clothing in other Indian traditions too. Wearing a Dhoti properly is not so easy and carrying it is also one tricky job. The Gamosa is a rectangular piece of cloth that is an important and significant part of the Assam culture. Gamosa means 'A cloth to wipe one's body' and is a white cloth with a beautiful red border on three sides and woven motifs on the remaining one. It is a piece of clothing that has some great significance in this state hence it is also used to felicitate and honour people who achieve some great feat. The Gamosa can be used as a cloth to wipe or can be transformed into a waistcoat which is commonly known as the Tongali. It can also be used as a Loincloth by a Bihu dancer.



## **Mekhela Chador - The Traditional Dress of Assam**



The Mekhela Chador is the traditional dress for the women of Assam. It is worn by women of all ages except children. This two piece garment has a long piece of cloth that is draped from the waist downwards and is then folded into pleats and tucked in. This piece is called the Mekhela. The upper part of the dress is the Chador that is also a long piece of cloth whose one end is tucked into the Mekhela, and then the rest is wrapped around the body. This Chador is worn with triangular folds the art of which can be mastered only by sheer practice. Wearing these traditional dresses is not everyone's cup of tea and can be a magnanimous task at times. The run for traditional dresses of Assam does not end here. Assam is a state that houses different tribes who themselves have carried the flame of their tradition for generations. Each of these tribes has their set of unique culture, tradition, lifestyle and clothing. Wandering deep into the state, let us have a look at the artistic dresses of few of the major tribes that reside in Assam.

### **Traditional Jewellery**

The jewellery is usually hand-made, and the designs depict flora and fauna. The people are keen on wearing a beautiful and unique style of ornaments made of gold and silver and varieties of jewels. The jewellery is simple and decorated with ruby or mina. The traditional ones worn by men are called Biri, Magardana, Matamoni, Kundal and Lokaparo whereas the ones worn by the women are Keru, Karpul, Kharu, Aargathi, Nalak, Keyur and Nupur.



## **Traditional Dresses of Maharashtra - Cultural Clothes of Maharashtra**



The Lezim dance, the Marathi folk music, its literature, its cuisine and various festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi make Maharashtra a grand state, not only in its size but also in its culture. When we talk about Maharashtra and its people, an image immediately comes up in our minds of local Maharashtrians in their traditional wears. The clothes or the traditional costumes of Maharashtra are very realistic and practical in its approach.

The occupation of the majority of people in Maharashtra is agriculture. People living on the Konkan Coast- the Konkanis are involved in fishing. Both of these activities require a lot of labour work. The people are to work hours in the sun and move around from one place to the other. Thus they wear clothes that made it easier for them to do so. In many Indian cultures, we see that women do not work outside the house. However, in Maharashtra, some did participate in various outdoor activities and even helped in agricultural activities and thus, like men, preferred to wear what made them able to move around freely and feel comfortable.

**Following is the traditional Dresses of Maharashtra that the men wear:**

**Maharashtrian Attire For Men**

**Dhoti**

The men in Maharashtra usually wear a dhoti. A dhoti is a single piece of cloth that is tucked around one's waist, and it covers the entire leg till the ankle. Dhotis are secured by making five tucks on each side, and then the loose ends are put in at the back. Dhotis are usually saffron or cream or white in colour. Dhotis are an unstitched piece of clothing that do not require any proper measurements as one could make it however tight or loose they wished it to be.

Maharashtrians usually have the same style for everything - work or celebration. Therefore their clothes were made comfortable. Nagpur, a city in Maharashtra, is famous for its dhotis.



## Pehta

Pehta is the headdress Marathi men wear. It is a 'topi', or a head cover usually made up of cotton. Pehta, also known as pagris are small hats that are made to cover the heads so as to protect them from the direct sun rays falling on their heads. Travellers and people working outside, under the sun especially wear this. By preventing the direct sun rays, the individual does not feel drained or tired too quickly or easily.

## Kurta / Shirt

Maharashtrian men usually wear cotton tops or Kurtas above their dhoti. The tops are made up of cotton so as to enable the garment to absorb sweat since Maharashtra has a warm to a hot environment. These tops are thin and loose, generally white in colour.

## Waistcoat

The Maharashtrian men occasionally wear waistcoat called Bandi. Bandi is a sleeveless jacket or coat. They are worn above their shirts. Bandi made the Maharashtrian attire look more formal and proper. Bandis are more pragmatic keeping in mind the climate of Maharashtra which did not allow men to wear normal coats or overcoats due to the excessive warmth.

## Footwear

The men usually wear simple but sturdy footwear. Their footwears are open sandals making it comfortable for them to wear. The sandals are strong and are made up of leather.

Following is the traditional or cultural costume that the women wear:

### Maharashtrian Attire for Women

## Sarees

Women wear sarees that are 9 yards long. The saree is tucked in the middle giving it a similar look to the dhoti. The rest of the saree is wrapped around the upper body of the women. This type of saree is usually called Lugade. There were many variations in how women wear their saree. Some only wear knee length sarees. Some wear it in a skirt manner without the tuck in the middle. But the 9-yard saree is the traditional costume of women in Maharashtra.



Women wearing Nauvari, Marathi Dress

## Head Dress/Cover

Women do not have a separate headwear as the men do. They simply use the end of their sarees to cover their heads.

## Choli

The Maharashtrian women wear choli or blouse underneath the saree. It is the 'top' or shirt that they wear to cover their upper body. The choli covers half of the torso. the blouses are short, or half sleeved

that have hooks in the front making it easier for the women to wear them. Similar to men's clothing, women's clothing is also made up of cotton and sometimes of silk. The commonly found colours in Maharashtrian sarees are green and red and sometimes even Kesari (yellow) colour.

## Jewellery

Women wear *nath* i.e. a nose piercing. Naths can be simple loops or loops connected with the earring on any one side. They are normally made up of gold. Women are also found wearing other gold jewellery like earrings and necklace (haar) with different coloured stones. Married women wear mangal sutra and also green bangles. The bride wears green bangles as they are said to bring prosperity to the relationship and family. Some women even wear toe rings on their second toe of both of their feet (as the second toe is said to have a nerve that is connected to the uterus and elements from the ring are said to make the uterus strong).



Maharashtrian Jewellery

## Footwear

Women traditionally preferred to go barefoot and found it only natural to do so while on occasion would wear sandals. The footwear in Maharashtra is famous for its durability and longevity. The Kolhapuri chappals are open-toed sandals in a t-strap shape that are handmade by the Maharashtrian from leather and are tanned using vegetable dyes. Kolhapuri chappal originated in the Kolhapur District of Maharashtra and are worldly known for its strength and endurance. Maharashtrians seem to have the same style of attire for everything they do - whether it is resting or attending a wedding or travelling. The only thing that differs is the material. Cotton is used for making attires for all occasions and is cheap whereas silk is relatively expensive and used for making garments for weddings, festivals and other such events.



Now due to urbanisation, a majority of Maharashtrians have adapted to the western style of clothing and even a merger of the Indian and western style (kurta and pants). But the elderly still prefer to wear this traditional style as they feel comfortable in it.

## **Tamil Nadu**

### **Traditional Dresses Of Tamil Nadu - Dressing Style and Culture!**

Located in the southernmost part of India, Tamil Nadu is a state famous for extravagant temples, delectable food and rich culture. One significant aspect of Tamil Nadu's rich culture is its traditional clothing, which symbolizes the cultural essence of this south Indian state. A wide variety of materials like cotton, chiffon, silk, crepe silk, organza, georgette, micro silk and pattola silk is used in the dresses of Tamil Nadu. Let's find out more about Tamil Nadu attire.

### **Traditional Dresses for Women**

Sari finds immense significance in the traditional clothing for women in Tamil Nadu. The popular Tamil poetry Cilappatikaram portrays females in a sari. Sari is a dress which women wear in offices, temples, parties and marriages. South Indian saris are famous across India for their intricate zari work. Kancheepuram sari is especially well known for its exquisite style. The colour, texture and style of a Kancheepuram sari are quite different from North Indian saris. The length of sari usually ranges from five to six yards.





Pavada is the dress adorned by Brahmin girls before getting married. This half sari dress is the combination of a full-length skirt with a short blouse and a shawl known as Davani. It is the symbol of young age and beauty of the Tamil girls.

These days, Salwar Kameez has also become popular among women of Tamil Nadu. Salwar is a kind of loose trouser combined with a long top, known as a kurti or kameez.

## Traditional Dresses for Men

The traditional dress of Tamil men is as elegant as the dress of women. Lungi is the most common bottom-wear for men in Tamil Nadu. It is wrapped around the waist and thighs. Lungi comes in different colours. It is the traditional dress worn by men in marriages too. This rectangular shape cloth is generally made with cotton. It is mostly worn with a shirt or Angavastra. Angavastram is another significant part of Tamil dressing. It is a piece of cloth wrapped around the shoulders. In early days Angavastram was used as upper clothing but now it is used above the shirt.



## Traditional Accessories

The traditional dressing of men and women in Tamil Nadu is incomplete without gold jewellery like necklaces, chains, payals, bangles, maang-tika and earrings. Tamilians love gold and are known to possess great amounts of gold jewellery. Apart from jewellery, women in Tamil Nadu love to decorate their hair with flower garlands, known as Gajras.

To complete the look, men apply Vibhuti along with sandal paste on their forehead while Kum-Kum is applied by women on their hands, feet and forehead.



The traditional dresses of Tamil Nadu are famous in the world, for their grace and beauty. In the modern era, Jeans, T-shirts, shirts, skirts and tops have also made their way into the dressing culture of Tamil Nadu. However, in the time of festivals or celebrations, Tamilians still prefer their traditional dresses.

## Kerala



## **Traditional Dresses of Kerala - Kerala Costumes and Traditional Wear**

The traditional wear of the state is called 'Mundu' which is worn on the lower portion of the body, from the waist to the foot. It is white and is worn by both men and women. It resembles a long skirt or a dhoti. The upper garment varies with gender and age. This dress is worn in Kerala, Tulu Nadu region and Maldivian islands. Muslim women on the other hand sometimes prefer the black or blue purdah, while traditional Christian women wear a two-piece blouse and a pleated "Mundu".

When you visit Kerala, you'll see men and women wearing completely white attires. It depicts purity and elegance. Their warm nature, amicable behaviour and simplicity in living welcomes all from around the world.



### **Traditional Kerala Dress of Men - Mundu or Lungi**

The lower garment Mundu is a white cloth wrapped around the waist. It has a border called Kara which can be of any colour, mostly golden. Kara renders a style to the Mundu by displaying it on the left or right side of the person. Kara can be embroidered or decorated with ornaments for special occasions. Mundu can be turned into a half skirt kind of a thing by tucking the lower end into the waist. Men prefer to do this while doing any physical activities. The upper garment is called 'Melmundu' which is worn like a towel on the shoulders. The white shirt is also worn by many men these days.

In Hindus, men wear a Mundu and a Jubba for special occasions. It can be made of silk and Kara is often embroidered. Muslim men wear a cap called Kulla which differentiates them from Hindus. Muslims may either wear a shirt and Mundu or sometimes a Sherwani or Kurta, heavily embroidered. Christian men may wear a shirt and Mundu at their weddings or maybe a Suit or Blazer. Nowadays the latter is preferred.

### **Traditional Dress of Women in Kerala - Mundum Neriyathum**



The traditional attire for women is called 'Mundum-Neriyathum'. This consists of a pair of similar Mundus. One of them is worn around the hip on the lower portion of the body, reaching the ankles. The other is worn on the upper part, with a blouse, one end tucked in the lower Mundu at the waist and another is passing through the shoulder and falling to the ground from the back, resembling a saree.

Hindu women may wear a Mundu or a Saree depending on the occasion and custom. For weddings, they prefer Kanchipuram Saree made of silk and have zardosi or Kundan work on them. The dark colours are preferred, but white and black are avoided. Muslim women wear Sarees or Lehengas for their wedding with a lot of embroideries and golden zari on the veil. Sometimes, purdah is also opted to cover the face, depending on the customs. In Christians, they wear white Sarees and white blouses- complete white attire. Nowadays they've started wearing a white gown with a veil.

It's quite evident that the people of this southern state of India wear a very simple clothing. White is their favourite colour as it depicts purity, elegance and simplicity. Beautiful embroideries and Kara designs are enough to make it an occasional dress for them. Although the basic clothing in Kerala is very simple, it can be worn and designed according to different occasions, such as weddings, family events, regional festivals like Onam and Vishu. Kara can be beautifully designed, Mundus can be made of silk and can

be differently styled for women, and blouse can also be woven or embroidered in a particular manner. This varies from community to community, religion to religion.

These days western culture has had a common influence on people not unlike the rest of India and people have started wearing western clothes like shirts, jeans, skirts, dresses, etc. But whenever any religious event or a wedding or any other function is celebrated, they make sure that traditions are followed, and people wear only the traditional attires. The people of Kerala still preserve the culture.

## **Karnataka.**

Karnataka is known for its rich culture, delicious delicacies, dance forms, art, music, and traditional outfits.

Its heritage, multilingual ethnicity and history have a major influence on the cuisines, unique art forms and the outfits adorned by the people.

The outfits worn by men and women in Karnataka are not only popular in India but throughout the world.

Here's everything you need to know about the traditional dress of Karnataka for men and women.

### **Traditional Dress Of Karnataka For Men:**

credit : [www.sulekha.com](http://www.sulekha.com)

The traditional dress of Karnataka for men consists of Kurta and Lungi.

Kurta is a long shirt that goes up to the knees. It is paired with a Lungi or Dhoti which is loose pant wrapped around the legs and knotted around the waist.

This entire look is adorned with Angavastram which is a piece of cloth worn above the shoulder to cover the upper portion of the body.

Men in Karnataka wear it with or without kurta.

### **Outfits For Special Occasions:**

credit : <https://www.utsavfashionindia.com>

On special occasions, men wear Panche which is a type of dhoti made in white color. It is paired with traditional kurtas and Angavastram.

This complete attire makes for a great Karnataka culture dress for men.



### **Traditional Kodagu District Costumes:**



People of Kodagu have a distinct style of dressing up as well as accessorizing. The men adorn their outfits with ornamental sashes, swords, and daggers.

The entire look is complemented with black robes or tunics to give it a royal look. Men also wear gold-trimmed turbans with their outfits for festivals, weddings, and special occasions.

### **Traditional Dress Of Karnataka For Women:**



Women in Karnataka wear silk sarees weaved by the artisans with precision and finesse. The sarees are crafted in a variety of materials such as traditional Mysore or Bangalore silks, and cotton.

These sarees are not only popular in Karnataka but also well-known throughout India. Every Indian woman has desired to buy a traditional Kanchipuram saree at some point in her life.

Even though there is a wide range of styles, designs and color combinations available in Kanchipuram sarees (Karnataka culture dress), the traditional ones are made in red, pink, cream, red and white colors.

Kanchipuram or Kanjeevaram sarees of Karnataka come in fabulous designs and a really smooth and rich texture. Handmade by the artisans, these sarees are dyed and then adorned with Zari work to give them the richness of South-Indian culture.

Zari work is done with pure silk thread and a thin silver wire and gilded with pure gold. Zari gives a shimmery shine to the sarees.



### **Kodagu District Costumes:**

credit : [in.pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

Women of Kodagu district wear saree in a different way. The pleats are tied on the back and the pallu is placed over the shoulder.

A traditional Kodagu saree is made with both silk and cotton. The motifs crafted on these sarees are vibrant and represent the culture of Karnataka. The body of the saree is adorned with prints, stripes or floral work.

### **Ilkal Sarees:**

Ilkal sarees are one of the most popular styles of Karnataka culture dress worn by women.

The name Ilkal comes from the town of Ilkal located in the district of Bagalkot, Karnataka. These sarees are made with both silk and cotton. These sarees are also a great Karnataka traditional dress for girl.

A traditional Karnataka Ilkal saree is woven using cotton warp on the body and art silk warp for the border and pallu portion of the saree.

The main body of the Ilkal saree consists of simple patterns and a gorgeous pallu consists of flattering motifs such as temple towers, palanquins, elephants, and lotuses.

The main attraction of an Ilkal saree is the border, which is about 4 to 6 inches broad. Both bottom and pallu of the saree contain eye-catching borders that give an incredible look to the saree.

The colors that are usually used in the saree are pomegranate red, peacock green, and parrot green.







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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION DESIGN**

**UNIT – V - APPRECIATION OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN COSTUMES - SFDA 1101**

## **UNIT V (9Hrs) Study on Tribal costumes of India - Odisha, Rajasthan, Andrapradesh , Nagaland , Manipur, Assam. Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka.**

### **A General Overview**

What draws India closer to an obscure and indifferent picture are the indigenous tribes. Far from the contemporary trend and economical development, they own their personal identity as Adivasi having their own language, religion, festivals, cuisine, dance and music. With such an enigmatic culture and hospitality they also significantly hold a contrasting patriarchal and matriarchal society.

I can't say that for sure the total number of tribal groups in India, but after a wide research I can say that it exceeds more than 500 and comprises approximately 9% of the total population of the country. The lively tableau of the tribal community in India stretches from the remote villages tucked in the Indian Himalayan region to southern – most tip of India AND from the farthest corner of North East India to the dunes of Rajasthan. The tribal population in India covers approximately 15% of the country and the majority is found in central India.

### **Now the real picture: The major tribes in India**

In its mysterious past it encompasses all the dim origins of life. Their lifestyle is completely different from the rest of the world. With an obscure history they are still competing to get along with the modern trend. Their livelihood is mainly dependent on agriculture and handicrafts but the tribes of India still display a wide spectrum of “another India” you hardly know about. One cannot, however, get the complete picture about the whole tribe just by studying or getting close to one particular tribe as each one of them has its own respective culture – food, festival, dance, music, religion and language. Still to get a brief idea about Indian tribes, here is a comprehensive list of 20 tribes, picked from different corners of India.

#### **1. Gonds Tribes**



Known for their valor, the Gond tribes are mostly found in Central India in the Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh. They are also spotted in the Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, parts of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Orissa. So when you are on a tour in Madhya Pradesh, muttering and mulling over the titillating sculptures of Khajuraho and Sanchi Stupa respectively and wheeling from majestic palaces to whispering woods of Kanha and Bandhavgarh, steer towards the Gondi forest and experience the unique lifestyle of the Gonds. The Gond tribes have a good command over Telgu, Hindi, Marathi, Parsi and many other Dravidian languages.

What to experience? The rural colour with mud walls and thatched roof houses, earthen pots, traditional wears – men in dhoti and women in sari and ornaments, the festivals of Keslapur Jathra and Madai and ritual performances are the ones to experience. Try out Kodo or Kutki, which is the staple food of the Gonds; moreover, they are mostly meat consumers.

## 2. Bhils Tribes



If you are on your royal wheels for a trip to Rajasthan, moving from massive forts and palaces to Jain temples, then discovering the lifestyle of the Bhil tribes is an absolute contrast. This tribal community in India is mostly spotted in the Aravali Ranges of Sirohi in Udaipur and some places of Dungarpur and Banswara districts of Rajasthan. Further, the settlements of the Bhil tribes are also found in parts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tripura. What to experience? The cultural harmony – Ghoomar dance, Than Gair (a religious dance and drama) are Baneshwar Fair that is held in the month of January or February are the major attractions. Whereas the Bhili language, which is an Indo – Aryan language, is one of the most interesting features to experience.

### 3. Santhal Tribes



The Santhal tribes are the major tribes of West Bengal and are mostly seen in the districts of Bankura and Purulia. They are also widely seen in parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Assam. The journey to the abode of Santhals heads from the cultural capital of India, Kolkata, en route the terracotta temples of Bishnupur and Bolpur. The Santhals are largely dependent on agriculture and livestock; further, they are well versed in the art of hunting. What to experience? The Santhali dance and music is one of the major attractions that you can't miss when you are wheeling to Bankura and Purulia. Moreover, festivals like Karam, Maghe, Baba Bonga, Sahrai, Ero, Asaria, Disum Sendra and Namah often fascinate travellers.

### 4. Great Andamanese Tribes



Back in 2010 when Boa (one of the speakers of two Great Andamanese languages, Khorá and Bo) died, the world lost two languages. So before the extermination of these unique tribes, speaking Jeru and Sare, plan an ocean cruise to Andaman and explore the indigenous survival land. The Great Andamanese Tribe, which includes the Onge, Jarawa, Jangil and Sentinelese, are said to be the first inhabitants of the islands. But today a significant number is on its way to extinction. Nonetheless, the left over population of the Great Andamanese are largely dependent on the vigorous campaign by Survival and Indian organizations. What to experience? Well, it is hard to distinguish them by their appearance – complexion and dress, still you are another traveller who will end up capturing their lifestyle. The Great Andamanese are mostly spotted in Strait Island and parts of Rutland Island.

## 5. Khasi Tribes



If you are seeking to discover the culture hidden in the mystical mountains of Meghalaya, the ethnical clamour of the Khasi tribes, who are filled with lots of music, playing musical instruments like drums, guitars, flutes, wooden pipes and metal cymbals, surely going to make your tour to Meghalaya bright and striking. The Khasi tribes are mostly spotted in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya and are also found in parts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and West Bengal. What to experience? Other than the language, which is an Austro-Asiatic language AND dress – Jainsem for women and Jymphong for men, the five day long extravaganza, the Nongkrem festival is a feast for travellers' eyes.

## 6. Garo Tribes



One of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world that are mostly spotted in the hills of Meghalaya, the Garo Tribes are ideally known for their vivid lifestyle. They are also spotted in the neighbouring areas of Bangladesh and parts of West Bengal, Assam and Nagaland. It is easy to distinguish the Garo tribes from other tribes of Meghalaya. Women are often found in varieties of traditional ornaments, whereas men are seen wearing turbans with feathers stuck behind them. What else to experience? The unique form of Garo architecture like Nokmong, Nokpante, Jamsireng and Jamadaal are some abstract capture in your lense. Further, the Wangala festival of Asanang is something that you can't miss.

## 7. Angami Tribes





It's the famous Hornbill Festival of the Angami Naga tribes that pulls in travellers to the farthest corner of North East India, Nagaland. The Angami Nagas are one of the major tribes of Nagaland, widely present in the district of Kohima. Apart from the Hornbill Festival, the major attraction remains their intricate and beautiful woodcraft and artwork. The Angami Nagas are known for the producer of bamboo work, cane furniture, beds, shawls and powerful machetes. What else to experience? The form of language, the Angami Language that is identified with different names such as Gnamei, Ngami, Tsoghami, and Monr, is another major feature to get hold off. Further, their dressing style – men in white Mhoushu and black Lohe and women in Mechala along with ornaments like Beads, miniature mask pendants, bangles and bracelets – is surely going to arrest your eyes. Well, the hardcore carnivore travellers may try out some unique pork dishes from the Angami.

#### 8. Munda Tribes



Don't miss the Nupur dance when you are in the abode of the Munda tribes. Their settlement is largely based in the Chota Nagpur Plateau region and is mostly spotted in the dense of Jharkhand. Further, parts of West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Odisha are also inhabited by the Munda Tribes. Amidst the vast eco sphere, these Munda tribes display a simple and basic lifestyle that follows the Sarna religion, believing in a God called Singbonga. What to experience? Mage, Phagu, Karam and Sarhul are the major festivals of the Munda tribes that attract travellers from different parts of the world. Further, the Killi language is also another major feature to get hold off.

#### 9. Bhutia Tribes



Dominating the landlocked territory of Sikkim that is bordered by the Indian Himalaya, the Bhutias are widely known for their traditional grandeur, art and cuisine. One cannot forget the unique preparation of momo, steamed meat dumplings and thukpa, slurpy, burpy and yummy! Travel into the land of the Bhutias during the Losar and Loosong festival and experience the vivid culture – dance, music and religion. The hardcore carnivores can try out some spicy beef.

## 10. Chenchu Tribes



The Chenchu tribes are one of the indigenous people of Andhra Pradesh inhabiting over the years in the midst of the forest of Nallamala Hills. They are mostly seen in the districts of Mahboobnagar, Nalgonda, Prakasam, Guntur and Kurnool. Life is hard for them as they are largely dependent on hunting and trading jungle products like roots, tubers, fruits, beedi leaves, mahua flower, honey, gum, tamarind and green leaves. What to experience? Well, other than the languages having Telegu accent, they are skilled in various form of arts and crafts. Further, the Chenchu tribes are extremely ritualistic. Their ritual performances of various gods and goddesses are the major attractions for travellers.

## 11. Kodava Tribes



So, when you steer onto the Mysore – Madikeri Road from Mysore, you are slowly heading to the abode of one of the distinct race in India, the Kodava tribes, known for their bravery since ages. Coorg, flourishing as one of the eco – tourist destinations in India, attracts lot of weekenders from nearby cities of Karnataka and travellers from different parts of the country and world, BUT the harmony and ethnicity of the Kodava tribes is one of the major attractions for the explorers. Digging into the cultural diorama, the Kodava tribes are fond of music and dance. One can witness such hues during the festivals of Puttari, Kaveri Sankramana and Kailpodhu. Moreover, these people are also passionate about hockey with both men and women playing the game. If you want to seek such a playful panorama then be there during the Kodava Hockey Festival, which is held every year.

## 12. Toto Tribes



One of the isolated tribal groups inhabiting the village of Totopara in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal is the Toto tribes. They have a simple lifestyle and are largely dependent on trading vegetables and fruits. In spite of the fact that they define themselves as Hindus, the Totos are believers of god Ishpa and goddess Cheima. If you are wheeling to Totopara during the peak winter season, then steer to Jaldapara National Park, which is one of the popular national parks in India that is located approximately 20 kilometers from Totopara. Don't forget to try out Eu, which is a type of country liquor made from fermented marua, rice powder and malt and is served warm in Poipa (wooden glass).

### 13. Irulas Tribes



Expert snake and rat catchers, that's what make the Irula tribes of South India special. With a population of approximately 3,00,000 the Irulas inhabits parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Moreover, the Irulas are the second largest tribe in Kerala and is mostly seen in the district of Palakkad. So, when you are on a holiday in Kerala to enjoy the sprawling hues of the Nilgiri Mountains and cruise down the sparkling backwaters of Alleppey, just for a day steer to Palakkad. What to experience? The Irulas are largely dependent on agricultural products like paddy, raggi, dhal, plantains, chilies, and turmeric. Further, the major attraction remains their varied ritual performances. All though most of them are Hindus but they still believe in worshipping their own diety, Irulas are also known to be conversant in white and black magic.

#### 14. Nyishi Tribes



The Nyishi tribes are the largest inhabitants of the mountainous state of Arunachal Pradesh and are mostly spotted in the districts of Papum Pare, Lower Subansiri, Kurung Kumey, East Kameng, parts of Upper Subansiri. Whilst a majority of them have converted to Christian, their religion still involves a belief in spirits associated with nature. What to experience? The Nyokum Festival, which is dedicated to goddess Nyokum, held in the month of February, is a major attraction where you as a traveller can seek the interesting cultural heritage and ethnicity of the Nyishi tribes.

#### 15. Bodo Tribes



Believed to be the early settlers of Assam, the Bodo tribes today are found in Udalguri and Kokrajhar of Assam and parts of West Bengal and Nagaland. If you are keen to seek the traditional colours of the Bodo people, then travel to North East during the time of the Baishagu Festival, dedicated to Lord Shiva (locally known as Bathou), which is celebrated during the spring season every year. Further, the Bodo tribes are meat – eating people and hence MY FELLOW NON – VEG travellers, just wake up the carnivorous nature in you and try out some unique preparation of pork and fish. What else to experience? Weaving is one of the most intrinsic part of Bodo culture and hence you can buy some handloom products.

#### 16. Warli Tribes



The Warli or Varli tribes of Maharashtra and Gujarat display a unique form of art and painting that reflects the mural paintings of 500 – 10,000 BC carved in the Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh. Their form of art follows the rudimentary technique with mixture of earth and cow dung, branches, red ochre, rice paste, bamboo stick and more. If you want to seek such grandeur then visit during the Warli Folk Art Dancing People Festival, which is held during the month of March every year. Well, don't miss the Tarpa Dance, which is a folk dance performed during the harvest season.

### 17. Toda Tribes



Dominating parts of the Nilgiri Mountains, the Toda tribes are largely dependent on cattle-herding and dairy-work. They are also skilled in art and architectural works like embroidery products and dogles, type of oval and pent – shaped huts made of bamboo canes and thatched roof. If you are travelling to Ooty, which is one of the popular hill stations in South India, you will come across several such Toda huts as well as people inhabiting the area.

### 18. Kurumban Tribes



Another major tribe dominating parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the Kurumban tribe exhibits a simple lifestyle, depending largely on agricultural products. Moreover, they are widely known for witch-craft and magical performances as well as traditional herbal medicines.

#### 19. Soliga Tribes



Inhabiting the dense forest of BR Hills of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, the Soliga tribes are yet another indigenous group of people, further divided to five sub groups – Male Soliga, Urali Soliga, Pujari, Kadu and Burude. Even if you steer your wheels towards Bandipur National Park, you may chance upon the Kadu Soliga tribes and hence can experience little bit of their lifestyle.

#### 20. Siddis Tribes



The Siddi tribes of Karnataka are believed to have descended from the Bantu people of Southeast Africa who were treated as slaves by Portuguese merchants. Today, the Siddi people are predominantly found around Yellapur, Haliyal, Ankola, Joida, Mundgod, Sirsi, Belgaum and Dharwad in Karnataka apart from some pockets of Pakistan. The Siddi people are mostly Roman Catholic but some follow Hinduism and Islam. What to experience? Other than mulling over their historical facts, the major attraction remains the ritual practices, dance and music.