Chapter III

Costumes And Jewelleries Of Woman In The Paintings
COSTUMES AND JEWELLERIES OF WOMEN IN CHUGHTAI'S PAINTINGS

God’s most delicate, sensitive, beautiful creation is the woman in this world and when we look after her belongings, of which most of them are proud of, are as follows.

1. Costumes
2. Jewelleries/ornaments
3. Headgears
4. Her beautiful stylish hair styles
5. Footwears

Thus we see that the articles belonging to the above mentioned type of things worn by women are most precious possessions to them. These articles are important not only because of their monetary value but because all of these items add to and enhance the natural beauty of women. Women appear more attractive when they wear such items decently.

1. Woman Costumes In Chughtai’s Paintings:

It is clearly evident that the dresses of the chughtai’s woman painted are all out come of his
imagination. That is why, their dresses are not exactly same as the dresses exactly used and wore by women of those old times. He used to exaggerate the subject of his paintings according to his wish. But as we know in other art schools like Mughal, Rajasthan, Persian etc. The garments or costumes are almost same in look as worn in those old times e.g. in kishangarh school of painting "Radha and Krishna", Radha shown in the painting wearing lahanga and choli, just like in chuughtai’s painting "Holi" but in his own typical style, (see plate 11) in which Radha is also wearing lahanga choli, and playing holi with Krishna.

 Renowned historian Harbans Mukhiya opines that the practice of ghunghat predated the mughal rule. Purdah worn by Muslim women in the South Asian subcontinent is not seen in any other country or region that was a Mughal influence. Covering head by wearing a head scarf or chador is more in practice in other countries. Infact, the purdah or
barga worn by Indian Muslim women is a modified and adopted form of ghunghat worn by Hindu women. The contemporary paintings and literature till the time of Akbar, Persian dress was worn by Muslims in India, but during Akbar’s rule an Indo-Muslim cultural amalgamation took place which paved the path for induction of Rajputana dresses. The veil, the dupatta of the Rajput women, superseded the women’s turban of the Zenana\(^a\) of the kings and nobles\(^2\) and as well as by Muslim king’s and noble’s Harems. In the paintings Rani of Rajasthan (see plate 4) and a “Mughal female figure” (see plate 6)\(^b\) are the two females who observe the purdah in style of a little Ghunghat.

As we have seen in Rajasthani and Mughal paintings the women also used to wear ‘Angarkha’ a type of an upper Garment long up to the knees where as ‘churidar payjamas’ as trousers in both of the Rajasthani and Mughal cultures. And women also used

\(^a\) The Ladies Appartment.  
\(^b\) Paintings of Plate No. 4 and 6 taken from internet.
to wear 'patkas' a type of costly fabric belt type cloth worn around waist by both men and women of higher status. Fine light dresses besides heavy woolen clothes were also worn according to the season's need. Dresses in charming colour's decorated with precious stones and pearls embroidered in silver or gold work were used by wealthy or royal ladies.

The fabric mostly used in that period of the history of India were, 'jamawar', 'Dabka', 'kamkhwab', fine muslin (Dhaka ki malmal), Jamazeb and silk were all very expensive fabrics.

2. **Jewelleries, Ornaments in Chughtai's Women Paintings:**

India in the past was often referred to as the jewell in the crown. If we take a thorough look and walkdown the country's historic past, we will find that Indian jewellery is very much a part of its intrinsic value and dates back to the Mohanjodaro and Harappan times when elegant and intricate
jewellery was designed and crafted for its pantheon of Gods.\(^3\)

In fact even before the discovery of matels Indians are said to have adorned themselves with wooden jewelleries crafted out of wood and other materials which were easily available. By the 3\(^{rd}\) century B.C. India became the leading exporter of gemstones and that was a bench mark in the history of Indian Jewellery.\(^4\)

Jewellery as recognized is the symbol of fortunes for Indian women. The concept that underlines the wearing of jewellery by Indian women becomes clear when the pattern of life in India is viewed in its proper perspective. Indians do not look upon jewellery merely as a means of adornment. The jewellery not only adorns their body but figuratively speaking, their very souls. It is regarded as a kind of treasure, or valuable investment that touches and guards the life of people at many points.
Together with its beautifying and decorative aspect, jewellery influences the socio-economic life of the country in a significant manner. So jewellery’s intrinsic charm and its economic value a piece of jewellery is viewed from more than one angle. It is because of this reason that the jewellery exercises a widely extending influence over the lives of Indians men, women and even children (see plate 23). Thus we see the significance of jewellery goes back to the earliest times and one sees a remarkable manifestation of aesthetic urge, the inventive genius, the technical skill, and prosperity or decline of a nation... That’s why there is fondness for jewellery in the Indian society of Hindu, Muslim, Sikh- all alike. This is evident from the works of artists. In their paintings mostly the Indian women are shown wearing jewellery as a normal feature, with an appreciative aspect as well. It will not be wrong if we come to the
conclusion that the Indian artist when paints women in traditional style they definitely show female figures in their paintings wearing jewellery according to the need and necessary for the subject of the painting.

As we see in oriental period as well as in modern period in India, jewellery is liked with studied diamonds and well decorated with pearls, see the garlands of different styles where as for forehead a jhoomar (an important popular ornament for women). Chughtai’s figures are well decorated with ornaments, rings, armlets and bangles all have been beautifully painted to enhance the beauty of the painted figure as much as possible.⁶

When we observe the work of M.A.R. Chughtai we find this Indian influence in his paintings as well but in a different way i.e. in his own style of decorating the figures specially women. The jewellery he creates suites well to the woman he paints. The jewellery which is elegant, decorative,
intricate, attractive impresses the observer, and found enough in chughtai’s work.

The Lady Holding Footwear\(^c\) (untitled) (see plate 24) This copy of the painting was sent to me by the artist's son Mr. Arif Rahman Chughtai, Director, Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.

The woman appears to the viewer as 'a black beauty', her dark complexion, sloppy forehead, fish like elongated eyes and a beautiful hair style with delicate beads and hair clips giving her a beautiful attractive appearance to her. Where as her necklace antique in appearance and beaded 'tika'\(^d\) as well as the beautiful ear ring all add a graceful effect to the woman.

The contrast colour of the footwear woman holding in her hand has enhanced the beauty of the whole painting making it more charming and more attractive and giving a bit modern look. The artist

\(^c\) Painting: Without \(\textit{title}\)

\(^d\) 'Tika'- A jewellery piece for forehead.
has painted a most modern design on the 'nagra's', the foot wear she is holding. There is a print of a human face decoratively designed on the upper of the footwear where as the lady is deeply angrosed in judging the beauty of the novel design. She wraps a shawl around her with several folds in a graceful manner. On the shawl a very delicate ornamental design in fine lines unique of the style of the artist is painted here.

Then look at the background of the painting, though simply plain but not without appropriate decoration. Dancing peacock ornamental in design and very soft in appearance has added more beauty to the painting.

**Engagement Ring:** (see plate 15) Let us review another painting namely 'engagement ring' to understand his unique style of painting. A newly engaged pair, a charming lady wearing engagement ring and a handsome young man, looking happily each other with sensual expressions on both of the

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* Nagra-footwear.
faces. As the lady is not yet married she is not shown wearing the ornaments which specially married women wear for example the nose ring. She is only wearing a 'nosepin' and a 'tika' on forehead and ear rings which any girl can wear according to the customs. Dresses are very simple but modest and appealing. 

Hair Styles And Head Gear's:

Chughtai in his painting paid much attention to the articulation of the hair style of figures. The hair dos are carefully rendered especially while executing mythological and historical character. The hair style of such characters are developed according to their demand and Chughtai has successfully illustrated them. But this treatment is not adopted while depicting imaginative characters and Chughtai glamorizes his figurative forms with his own choice and imagination abiding by aesthetic and realistic conventions.
Generally, the concordance is established in the hair style of male and female characters. In most of Chuhtai's paintings, the curly locks of noble women and of royal dignitaries are dangling from ornamental or plain turbans. Sometimes, evenly cut hair take their place either on neck or shoulders, well arranged hair on the forehead sneaking through the head dress, bedraggled hair of common woman and sometimes hair tied with band or scarf are some of the styles which Chuhtai mostly used when the head dress is used. Generally the major portion of head is eclipsed in the cap, turban or scarf showing only side locks. The variety of hair. In some of his styles of female forms is evident to avoid these are often used as a device for emphasizing the character rather than obtaining decorative details. In some Paintings, women wear long locks with disheveled ends hanging on the shoulders from either side of the face, the main part of the head is being caught up in the turban
or veil or sometimes the hair is tied into a knot on the head. (see plate 27-a,b,c,d,e). Through hair style one can analyse the personality of an individual. Chuhamtai, as a sensitive and creative artist tried to pinpoint this aspect.

In one of his paintings named ‘Face Study’ (see plate 29) adorning the title cover of the brochure of his exhibition, Chuhamtai has used blue color for the hair of a woman to embellish the charm of her feminity. The length of the hair fulfills the object of covering the head with the ‘dupatta’. The serpentine long hair knitted in a ‘parandi’ encircles her neck many a time. Chuhamtai’s study of human figure is significant. For an artist the knowledge of anatomy is very essential. Chuhamtai’s success lies in the mastery of human figure. These heavy blue bands supposed to be the hair, around her neck give her a solid and bold look as against the usual delicate and soft look of Chuhamtai’s alluring female forms. He has shown this style on a
negrress woman. This almost succeeds in deceiving the viewer who takes the hair to be 'dupatta'. Its only the 'phundas' of the parandi knitted in the hair that gives evidence to the lot to be hair and not 'dupatta'. This dissimulation is amplified by the affinity of colour of hair with that of 'dupatta'. The blue coloured hair are unique in their approach and the end of the 'parandi' is designed traditionally and artistically.\textsuperscript{11}

In his earlier works especially in delineating love themes from the couplets of Ghalib reproduced in Murqqa-i-Chughtai, the hair styles of female figures are quite protruding. The wavy, long, disarranged and uncombed hairs are left loose like those in The Flame of Love and The Exinguished Flame.\textsuperscript{12} (see plate 27-b)

The hair incorporated with jewellery are also striking features of Chughtai's female forms. The coils, ringlets and spiral hair bedecked with heavy jewellery. (see plate 24) A lady holding footwear.
Royal dignitaries of Persian and Mughal regime are portrayed with their traditional turbans, sometime in Safavid\textsuperscript{13} style and more or less worn in an imaginative way. The Royal turbans are decorated with strings of precious stones and pearls tied with cross bands and sometimes holding a plume. The ‘judda’ executing in single (see plate 11) Holi and in three steps placed at the back of the head were ornamented with strings of pearls accorded the influence of Ajanta paintings\textsuperscript{14}.

Besides these he has painted many hair styles and head dresses. Here we have just taken a few illustrations to highlight Chughtai’s mastry in this field.

In old times Kings Queens used to wear head gears decorated with ornamental motifs in silver and gold threads and precious stones.
Foot wear:

Though footwear considered an integral part of the dress, Chughtai has become more or less casual while executing them. Mostly, These 'chappal' and 'juti' are matched with the dress of the characters but these do not seem to be proportionate. The slippers are generally half eclipsed by the long Empire-style gown touching almost the feet. Full slippers are visible only when the characters are depicted in 'pajama' or the dress shown above ankles. The designs projected on slippers are into similar but the outfit is almost of the same style. These are traditional chappals called 'jutis' in its regional language, bearing the mark in the form of folk motifs of their respective regions. (see plate 28-a,b)

It is interesting to note that these chappals are worn by the royal dignitaries or noble men and women of the court, pointing to the fact that this was essentially an aristocratic fashion and not a

1Chappal, Juti-footwear
need of all individuals. Sometimes, bare-foot figures are also painted.\textsuperscript{15}

Besides a few, almost all 'jutis' have been decorated with gold and silver threads, and are also used ornaments for decoration of such articles.
References

1. Greeting Card of Painting 'Holi', presented to me courtesy, Arif Rahman Chughtai.

2. From internet.

3. Ibid.,

4. Ibid.,


7. op. cit.,


10. A brochure was brought out on the occasion of an exhibition of chughtai's paintings. The exhibition entitled "The Unknown Chughtai", M.A. Rahman Chughtai, Islamabad, Dec. 8-11,
1993. And this brochure is sent to me by Director of Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.

12. Ibid.,
13. Luthra, Promilla, op. cit.,