Chapter 1

Introduction
Costumes from the very beginning of mankind have played a very important role in expressing the socio-cultural advancement of people. India, with its great size, its wide climate and geographical differences and diversity of ethnic groups has been invaded and conquered by foreign people at different periods of time and in varying numbers. The costumes that these people brought with them did not necessarily remain apart from the mainstream of Indian dress, but with the Indian genius for adaptation and modification, these costumes became altered, even metamorphosed and eventually assimilated and absorbed in to the broad range of Indian dress.

One such people who came to India during the 16th century were the Mughals (1526-1858 A.D). They came to India first in sporadic raids and later on as conquerors and settlers. In the inheritance of power in India, the Mughals had been preceded first by the Arabs, who came from the mainland of Arabia in 712, and then by the Turks from Central Asia, between 997 and 1192. The early military successes of the latter paved the way for the establishment of five successive Turko-Afghan Sultanate dynasties which ruled from Delhi until 1526 A.D, when the Mughals came. The Mughals for their part raised another empire that lasted for more than three hundred years (Swarup, 1996).

The Arabs, the Turks and the Mughals were highly civilized people. Their religion was Islam which was a system of beliefs and practices revealed to Mohammed, the Prophet and enshrined in their holy book Quran. Indian contact with the Arab traders had existed long before the advent of Islam, but was limited mostly to the coast. However, with conquest, Islam became an important influence in most parts of the country. It influenced the culture of every country to which it went. It also fused into the Middle East where it had found its earliest success. The Muslim rulers had a rich literary tradition and a profuse visual aesthetics. They maintained libraries full of valuable books and manuscripts, established workshops where a variety of artistic objects were manufactured with which they maintained a refined style and encouraged artists and learned men to come to the courts to receive honors and grants.
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The Mughals also recognized the fact that the people of Hindustan whom they had conquered, themselves had a very rich tradition of cultural achievements to which they frequently gave recognition in the fulfillment of their own creative instincts. The Hindus on their part, on account of close and constant contacts with the Muslims, were slowly developing an appreciation of Muslim philosophical thoughts, literature and arts. And even before the Mughals came, they were playing a significant role in the administrative and artistic activities of their Muslim rulers. In a way, a process of intermingling between the communities, in which both the Hindus and the Muslims were trying to understand each other, was in progress for quite some time. When, therefore, the Mughals came, India was already in the midst of successfully reconciling with the new historical circumstances and was organizing the two widely varying forces of civilization into a unifying discipline (Swarup, 1996).

The Mughal emperors believed that the king was not only the symbol of political power but also the focusing centre of culture which cannot be divorced from its historical perspective. They, therefore, became enthusiastic patrons of every kind of cultural activity and of the creative strivings of their Hindu and Muslim subjects, which they helped to channelize into the mainstream of Indian civilization. Thus, the Mughals influenced not only the politics of India but also its cultural history. The process of fusion had already begun during the pre-Mughal Sultanate period. The Mughals speeded it up (Swarup, 1996). They proved themselves great patrons of art, and nowhere has the blending between Hindu and Muslim cultures been as happy as in India. They brought with themselves the costumes of the Turks and the Persians which were later to endure in India for more than three centuries, some of them eventually becoming part of the Indian attire.

The costume of the Mughals in India consisted of a *jama*, which is a side fastening frock coat with a tight bodice, a high waist and a flared skirt that reaches at least to the knee; a short sleeved or half sleeved overcoat; a churidar *paijama*, which is a drawstring trouser worn by men and women and one of the styles being a churidar paijama; a turban, *patka* and a sash. The patka is a band of a cloth used to fasten the coats or overcoats at the waist. The costumes were crafted of the most exquisite fabrics such as fine muslins, brocades and silken fabrics ornamented with precious...
stones and hand worked gold and silver embroidery. The first two Mughal Emperors, Babur and Humayun, wore the Turkish dress of their ancestors of Central Asia which was suited to the cold climate of that place. In the accounts of the years spent in India the emperors Babur and Humayun, mentioned quite a few Turkish or Mongol garments by name. These include names like a nimcha, a yaktahi jama, a postin and jama, pirahan, jilucha and jiba etc. mentioned by the emperors in their chronicles.

It was during the reign of Akbar that Mughal dress underwent significant changes. The ingenuity and vision of the Emperor Akbar of integrating his race with that of the Hindus into a unified whole, created an environment congenial for socio-cultural exchanges to take place. His policy was that of social and religious tolerance among his subjects. And costumes being the most dynamic medium of visual expression, were bound to reflect the same sentiment. Akbar fashioned many new garments and modified others to suit his own requirements. The fashions at the court of Akbar became the norm not only for those attending the imperial durbar, but at other courts as well all over the country. The nobles and dignitaries visiting the emperor had to present themselves according to court etiquettes which included the dress. Further changes and modifications in costumes were brought about during the reign of the Mughal emperors, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb.

The Mughals had close alliances with the Rajputs, the association forged primarily due to political allegiances but subsequently acquiring varied dimensions. The political supremacy in India at the time of the Mughal conquest in the 16th century was divided between the Hindus, i.e., the Rajputs and the Muslims, i.e., the Afghans who were two rival powers. To conquer Hindustan, the Mughals had to wrest it from the Afghans and the Rajputs.

The Afghans were as brave as they were wily and having won power, they were not prepared to part with it easily, and many a fields had to be won and lost before they submitted to the Mughals. Theirs was the most stubborn and at the same time, sustained resistance offered to the Mughals. But if the Afghans were brave and wily, the Rajputs were the bravest of the brave and generous to a fault. Their generosity
commended itself to the Mughals as their bravery inspired awe. A combination of the two powers – the Afghans and the Rajputs would have been fatal to the Mughals; but that was never to be. The Afghans and the Rajputs could not unite against their common enemy. Neither could each as a people, present a united front against the Mughals. Their tribal organization and their separatist tendencies gave a handle to the Mughals to conquer them piecemeal (Agarwal, 1983).

This inability of the Rajputs to unite against a common external threat underscores the lack of any sense of political cohesiveness amongst the Rajputs at that time. The most significant element in the Rajput political system was the clan, the clan loyalties far outweighed concerns for caste interests. Thus, despite the distinctiveness of their political and military systems, despite a common cultural heritage and the sense of broader community inherent in social customs such as clan exogamy and related marriage ties, the Rajput states of Rajasthan remained an assemblage of individuals, often warring kingdoms, each pursuing its own interests, and each displaying varying degrees of hostility or dependence in its relations with the central power (Schomer and Erdman, 2001).

The Mughals had enough diplomacy to take advantage of the Rajputs generosity and after having impressed the Rajputs by their mettle, they won them over to their side. They made the Rajputs their friends and supporters in their task of conquering the Afghans. Though meeting with a situation far more perplexing than any that had confronted Mahmud Ghazni, Muhammad Ghori or Qutb-ud-din Aibak, they succeeded in handling it admirably, and left a name that is at once good and great. The circumstances were perplexing because (i) the Mughals had not merely to justify their attack on Afghans who happened to be Muslims like themselves. (ii) They had also to destroy the political power of the Afghans and Rajputs in order that they might rear their own (Agarwal, 1983).

Thus the Mughals found Hindustan under the sway of two powerful people, drew one of them to their side in order that they may subjugate the other, and here lies the real greatness of the Mughals that made the conquest of Hindustan an accomplished fact as between Babur and Akbar (Agarwal, 1983).
Rajasthan, the erstwhile abode of princes, is India at its colourful best. The earliest inhabitants of this part of the Western India were tribes who settled in a few fertile tracts. These tribes were ruled by chieftains, who gradually carved out their own fiefdoms. These early fiefdoms developed into flourishing kingdoms over a period of time. Trade sustained these kingdoms, for the trade route into India passed through the deserts of the Western India. Collectively these princely states came to be known as Rajputana or the Land of the Kings, and today it is known as the modern Indian state of Rajasthan.

There were eight states in the Rajputana, great and small, of which the three premier ones, Amber, Marwar (Jodhpur), and Mewar played a leading part in her history. With the rise of the Mughals, these and other Rajput kingdoms, gradually lost their independence, and became obedient and trustworthy vassals of the Mughal Empire. The Rajputs were a warrior caste, a race of chivalrous princes known for their bravery and some of the best military men in the emperor’s army were Rajputs (Agarwal, 1983).

The association of the Rajput Rulers of Marwar, i.e. present day Jodhpur, with the Mughals began from the reign of Rao Maldeo who ruled Jodhpur from A.D. 1532 - 62 A.D. Subsequently, Marwar was under direct Mughal rule from the reign of Emperor Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.) until the disintegration of the empire under Aurangzeb (1658 – 1707 A.D.). The corresponding reigns of the rulers of Jodhpur were Raja Udai Singh (1583 – 95 A.D) to Maharaja Ajit Singh (1707 – 24 A.D). The rulers of Marwar, i.e., Jodhpur were under active imperial service of the Mughals. The rulers of Marwar were honored Mansabdars of the Mughal throne. They conducted and participated in many campaigns on its behalf and were entrusted with important missions and commands. They attended the Mughal court as grandees and had to obtain leave from the emperor for returning to their patrimony. This vassalage brought the Rathor rulers wealth, influence and dignity and to their dominions consolidation, peace and prosperity.

The rulers of Jodhpur were not only politically allied with the Mughals but some of the princesses of the Jodhpur house were married to the Mughals. According to the
literature, Raja Udai Singh (1583 – 95 A.D) of Jodhpur in 1586 A.D gave his daughter Jodhbai in marriage to the emperor Akbar’s son and heir-apparent, Prince Salim later to become emperor Jahangir. Subsequently, Maharaja Ajit Singh’s (1707-24 A.D) daughter Indra Kunwar, was married to the Later Mughal Emperor Farrukhshiyar in 1715 A.D. The tradition of the marriage of the Mughal Emperors with the princesses of the Royal Rajput Kingdoms was started by the emperor Akbar himself and was continued by the emperor Jahangir and Shahjahan, wherein many matrimonial alliances were formed with different Rajput houses. As a result of this multi-dimensional association with the Mughals socio-cultural exchanges took place between the Rajputs, specifically the rulers of Jodhpur, and the Mughals. Therefore, costumes’ being one of the important facets of the culture of people, was greatly influenced by this association.

The Rulers of Marwar while presenting themselves before the Mughal emperors in the imperial court, had to wear what was the established norm at the Mughal court. In addition, due to the marriage of Rajput princesses, specifically of Jodhpur, in the Mughal court, the costumes of women also got modified and altered in the process. Thus the Rajputs, specifically the rulers of Jodhpur, were gradually influenced in their dress among other things such as court etiquettes and system of administration etc.

Therefore, it is significant to mention here, that a need arose to inquire in-depth into the history of the Costumes of the Mughals and its influence on the Costumes of the Rajput rulers specifically with reference to Marwar, i.e., the erstwhile princely state of Jodhpur. In addition, the information relating to the above period is available from a number of sources, but it is partial and incomplete because of the fact that the field is still largely unexplored. This provides a lot of scope for research and other related works.

A study of costumes during the said period would provide -

- Analytical insights into the Mughal Costumes and Royal Costumes of Jodhpur
- Necessary design inputs for contemporary Indian fashion
- Resource material for scholars and connoisseurs of Indian culture.
With this in view, the study was undertaken with the following objectives -

1. To study the costumes of the Mughal emperors (AD. 1526-AD. 1707) and the Rulers of Jodhpur (A.D. 1583 – 1707 A.D.) through paintings, with reference to the upper and lower garments, headgear, footwear, jewellery and accessories.
   a) To study the costumes of the Royalty (men & women) with a brief reference to the costumes of the people associated with the court.
   b) To observe and analyze the changes that took place in costumes, headgear, footwear, jewellery and accessories between the 16th–18th centuries in paintings.
2. To carry out a comparative analysis of the costumes of the Mughal Emperors and Rulers of Jodhpur to study their influence on each other, if any.
3. To develop a catalogue of garments (men and women) preserved at the Mehrangarh Fort Museum, Jodhpur with an emphasis on the techniques of construction and pattern making to provide an in-depth insight into the subject.