ABSTRACT

The term "costume" is derived from the Latin word consuetude, which means a complete set of outer garments, including ornaments. Costumes are used not only to cover the body but also to beautifying it. It became a non-verbal medium of communication, and helps to identity a person, including his community or country. They help to understand the fashion trends prevalent during a particular historical time frame.

The story of costumes in Indian art had a long history. The multi-cultural and ethnical influences have collectively and significantly shaped the representation of costume in Indian art. This study was divided into six chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the topic. This chapter highlights on the origin and evolution of costume and jewellery. It also includes statements of problem, objective of the study, scope of the study, limitation, data and methodology, review of literature, and organization of thesis.

Indian art barely depicts the stitched garment. Neither dhoti nor sari needs any stitching but considered as a graceful one. It was highly influenced by religion. The various aspects of the evolution of costume, and the significance of clothing in fine arts were discussed in this chapter. The influence of magic and religion were also studied. This chapter also highlights the changing trends of costume through the various periods of Indian art. It was noticed that the evidence of textile making was found from Indus Valley. The dress for both men and women consists of two
pieces: a lower garment and an upper garment. The lower garment looked like the dhoti while the upper garment looks like the shawl. The information regarding the costume was found from the Vedic literature. The Vedic texts like the Rig Veda, SamaVeda, Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda, the Brahmanas and the Upanishads had provides the widely notes on the everyday life of the people. Kautilya’s Arthashastra mentions that cotton, wool, linen and valkala were used for garments by people of the Mauryan and Sunga period. One such example is the sculpture of a Yakshi or Chauri Bearer found in Didarganj, now in the Patna Museum, Bihar. It depicts the Yakshi wearing a dhoti that reaches down to the ankles and is secured at waist with a five stringed girdle. During the reign of the Satavahanas, men usually wore dhotis that reached down to the knees and one end of the dhoti was tucked at the back and other gathered in folds and tucked in the front. The dhoti was secured at the waist with a kamarband tied into bow shaped knot. Women of this period are represented wearing two types of lower garments. One end of the narrow scarf is attached to the girdle and the other tucked behind.

In the history of Indian costume the Kushan period is considered to be one of the most important ones. The Kushan rulers who basically belonged to the Turkish tribe Yueh-chi, ruled for almost three centuries. The influence of Greeks and Romans were noticed in Gandhara School whereas the Mathura School of art was highly influenced by native school of Bharhut and Sanchi.

The important discovery of a group of portrait statues of Kanishka, Vima Kadphises provides valuable information about the costumes of the
Kushan rulers. This period provides the idea about the style of Soldiers’ costumes. The indigenous group worn the loincloth, waistband and scarf/turban and the foreign group love to use the helmet, armour of the Assyrian type or the shirt, dhoti, and turban.

The travel accounts of the Chinese Buddhist monk Fa- Hien and epigraphic evidences provides a range of information on textiles and costumes during the Gupta reign. These references not only provide the idea about the uses of raw material like cotton, wool and silk but also about their quality, texture, and production centre. Besides this, the Gupta period coinage also provides the idea about the royal attire worn by the Gupta ruler. Gold coins from Samudragupta’s reign depicts him wearing a tunic, trousers and a cap. The various stylistic way of draping the unstitched garments as well as the evidence of stitched garments were studied in this chapter.

Besides the costume the representation of jewelley in Indian art also highlighted in this study. The third chapter provides an idea about the evolution of jewellery and their significance in fine arts. The changing trends of jewellery were studied. Necklace, armlet, head ornaments and earrings were usual ornaments worn by men and women of the Vedic period. These sculptures of Mauryan period found with the elaborate necklace, earrings, armlets, bracelets and belts. This period was also remarkable for the highly skilled craft of jewellery making. The Greco Roman style dominates in Kushan period, a few Indian decorative designs were also used in the jewellery of these times. Elaborate hairstyles were in fashion during the Gupta period. In sculptures people have been shown in
indigenous costumes and sporting long hair arranged in different styles. Sometimes these hairstyles were decorated with pearl string or flowers.

The history of costume in Indian art reached its zenith on 10th century onwards. The Sultanate of Delhi came to an end in 1526, when Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodhi and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire. This period witnessed the intermingling of two cultural sensibilities, that is the indigenous and the Islamic. This influenced the art and culture of this period. This period of Indian history is well recorded in the literature, architecture, paintings, costumes and jewellery of the time. The costumes worn by Babur and his courtiers were similar to those of his country of origin. Whereas the common man during Babur’s reign continued to wear indigenous costumes.

Costumes from Humayun’s reign were almost like those from Babur’s qaba, jama, jilucha, jiba. Very few paintings detailing of costumes from Babur’s and Humayun’s reigns have survived. Babur and Humayun are represented usually wearing chogas, coats, caps and cloaks in the miniature paintings during the Akbar’s reign. It suggest that the costumes were in fashion during the Akber’s period. Costumes worn by Babur and his son Humayun were largely influenced by Turkish or Mongol style. The social and cultural history of Akbar’s reign is represented in Ain-i-Akbari.

The third volume of the Akbarnama also provides idea about the cultural and economical highlights of Akbar reign. It provides information regarding the establishment of karkhanas or manufacturing units, and the toshshkhanas or treasure houses and the way how they functioned. The Persian translations of the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana depicts
Hindu gods in dhotis the indigenous attire. The jama becomes longer during Jahangir’s reign, reaching almost up to the knees with a straight, circular hem. During Shah Jahan’s reign the jama reached below the knees, with the elegant, long and floral patterned pataka. The natural charm and flow of attires from Jahangir’s and Shah Jahan’s reigns had dimmed by Aurangzeb’s reign.

The chapter four concentrates on the various aspect of costume during the Mughal period. The emphasis was given on the development of textile industry, representation of motifs, and the changing trends of costume during the period of six Mughal.

The Mughal dynasty represented a watershed in jewellery aesthetics, spurring craftsmen to greater heights. Kundan setting with exquisite enameling on the reverse was a great favorite of the Mughal. Kundan is a technique used for setting stones. The gemstones were widely used during this time. Their love for emeralds brought the gemstone into wide use. The amalgamation of Indo Persian culture creates a new form of style in clothing and jewellery which is noticed in Mughal art. Chapter five focused on the development of jewellery as well as its importance in the reign of six great Mughal.

The last chapter concludes and summarizes the study. It also highlights and provides various suggestions about further research.