"After its invention some 9,000 years ago cloth has become an essential part of society, as clothing and as adornment expressing self-awareness and communicating variations in social rank. For good reason, poets and anthropologists alike have employed cloth as a metaphor for society, something woven of many threads into a social fabric that is ever in danger of unraveling or being torn."

India has a wide range of textiles of varied designs and manufactured by numerous techniques when compared to other countries in the world. The styles depend upon the location of the place, climatic conditions, cultural influences and trade contacts. The varied topography of India from the snowy mountains to the rich river valleys and from the lush forests to the arid deserts as well as the various cultures brought down here from the invaders have influenced the growth of a number of textile weaves. There were regional variations to the need for colour. Bengal and Kerala having stretches of lush and green landscape tend to be attracted to and are mostly wearing white clothes. In contrast, however, the inhabitants of the desert areas, which comprises parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi prefer wearing intense sun-burnt colors with strong linear patterns. Embroidery and mirror works are predominant here. The rich river plains give way to a softer texture and milder colors with linear patterns and well-defined borders. Floral patterns, nevertheless, are popularized. In the Deccan region, the colors like dark maroon, bottle green and turquoise blue are worn by the hoi polloi bringing them closer to their environment of black alluvial soil. Colours sported by the people of these areas are a reflection of their land in more ways than one. The dry and hot climate of the Southern states, which comprises Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra, saw the people clad in rich and luminous colored silks. The Himalayan area, comprising Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and the Northern parts of Uttar Pradesh, has its people wearing a wide variety

\[21\text{ John Noble Wilford. 1993}\]
of woolen weaves worked into geometric patterns woven in tapestry weave in the primary colors making for a tantalizing effect against the muted tones of grey used as a background.

**Cotton Prints and Weaves**

Cotton is the fibre of human civilizations. It was grown as far back as the time of the Peruvian Incas and Mexican-Indians, the Indus valley civilizations in South Asia along the banks of the river Indus, the Egyptian civilization along the Nile River and the Mesopotamian along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in present day Iraq. Cotton has an ancient history. Fibres from circa 2200 B.C. have been discovered in the Indus Valley, and some from circa 2250 B.C. have turned up in Nubia, Egypt. Cottonseeds have also been discovered at Mehrgarh towards Quetta city in Pakistan, west of the Indus River. Cotton literally threads the fibres of our everyday lives. Millions of people, the world over, use cotton clothing, towels, shirts, bed-sheets and pillow covers to start and end their day.

While silk, wool, and linen were the most plentiful fabrics during the eighteenth century, it was cotton which being cheap, easy to find, and comfortable for the weather in India was sought after by the prince and pauper alike. But eighteenth-century cottons like calico, chintz, toile, and indienne, as they came to be termed, with subtle and fine differences between them were the most coveted material not only in India but in many parts of the civilized world.

The Indian subcontinent is home to the cotton fabric. Cotton fabrics are woven almost throughout the length and breadth of India. The art of weaving and dyeing cottons was known in India more than 5000 years ago. This has been established by the fact that some cotton fragments were unearthed from the Harappan era. In India, painted cottons (colors painted onto cloth by hand, either freehand or over a stencil) were developed in the fourteenth century. In
the seventeenth century, Europeans began to import these fabrics. They were appreciated for their bright colors, lightweight hand, and ease in laundering, as they expanded their trade networks. This was further accentuated when the Europeans exported the technology of block printing to India. The Indian craftsmen adjusted their designs to appeal to European aesthetics.

Such was their popularity and so great was their threat to the so-called 'domestic textile industry' of some of the European countries that they passed a legislation against the import, manufacture, and sale of painted and printed cottons in order to protect their local products (France from 1686 to 1759 and England from 1700 to 1774). However, these fabrics were very popular in the European clothing and furniture market for almost a decade after the legislations, i.e., until the 1790s until distinctive localized versions were being replicated in the mills of England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

Printed cottons were created through combinations of various dyeing processes, viz.,

1. Mordant dyeing: fixative chemicals are printed onto the cloth. The cloth is then dipped into the dye,
2. Resist dyeing: the fabric is coated by hand so that the coated areas do not absorb the dye color,
3. Relief printing: blocks carrying the entire or parts of the design are cut out of wood. The blocks are then inked or coated with dye successively to bring out the entire beauty of the design. These blocks are then pressed onto the fabric, and
4. Hand painting: Until the nineteenth century, all dyes were derived from vegetable (or, less frequently, from animal or mineral) sources. Most eighteenth-century dyes were derived from madder, which creates a range of colors from pink to red, purple, and black. Blues and yellows were added by hand penciling the colors onto the fabric. Most of the Indian vegetable dyes were turmeric, indigo, madder and leaves that gave their distinctive greens. Till date direct printing is popular throughout India and it involves a bleached cotton or silk fabric printed with the help of carved wooden blocks. In hand block printing around three or four colors are used. Wooden block used for printing is shown:
The method of hand printing of textiles is found all over India. The important cotton printing centers are in the desert regions of Gujarat and Rajasthan. Alizarin, indigo and many vegetable colors are used for hand painting in these regions. Various methods of printing like direct printing, resist printing and screen-printing are practiced in India. In a method called Kalamkari, the cloth is painted by using a pen with dyes and mordants. This method is widely popular.

In the resist method, a paste is made up of different materials and it is used for the printing areas, which are required to resist the dye. The fabric is then immersed in the dye.

Most of the prints adapted onto the cottons used for clothing were based on floral designs. To some extent the cotton print fabrics imitated the fashionable silk brocades with typically European floral designs like tulips, carnations, roses, and daises. These were incorporated [often on a white background] onto more traditionally Indian motifs. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the bolder designs with twisting stems became very fashionable. Small floral “sprig” designs with tiny motifs on pastel backgrounds were cheap, and were, thus, very popular among the working class.

In France, these printed fabrics were generally called indiennes (French for "Indians"), and were also known as toiles peintes ("painted cloths") and toiles imprimées ("printed cloths"). In England and its colonies, there were a number of terms used to denote them. Calico, [a derivation from the Indian port of Calicut], was a general name for Indian cotton fabrics, be they plain, printed, stained, dyed, woven with colored stripes or checks, etc.. Chintz, derived from the Hindi root word cheent or variegated, was the term used to denote printed or painted calicoes. The English and American colonialists also used the term Indiennes to refer to French-made copies of Indian printed cottons. Most of the clothing fabrics had a white background until the 1790s and the design colors were mainly pinks, reds, purples and...
The designs also usually comprised florals in a sprig or striped motif arrangement

The cotton saris of West Bengal are called Jamdani and they follow the traditional patterns. Twisted yarn is closely woven together making the saris stronger and more lasting. Initially the Jamdani saris were woven for the nobles of North India. Now this art is still practiced in Tanda and Varanasi. Their inlay technique is fully indigenous patterning and is found in the cotton centers of Venkatagiri in Andhra [these are characterized by their stylized motifs woven in half cotton and half gold threads], Morangfi in Manipur and Kodialkarruppar in Tamil Nadu.

The Chanderi denotes fine cotton saris and shallus or wraps worn by the women. The warp is silk and the weft is cotton. The saris carry motifs of roundels or asharfi buti on the body. The Maheshwaris are made at Maheshwar on the banks of the river Narmada. These are fine cotton weave saris with typically tiny checks, which are combined in complimentary colors together. Very soft colors are used for dyeing them. The Maharastrian women wear these saris with flowing pleats in the front and have one edge tucked in at the waist at the back.

The Ikat saris of Orissa and the Narayanpet saris of Andhra also have the same style but they are woven in dark earthen colors. In Ikat, the naturally grown indigo is used for dyeing purposes. Andhra has the richest variety of cotton saris. Gadwal and Wanaparti produce saris of thick cotton body mostly in checks with a contrasting silk border and pallu worked in gold. Nander is famous for its fine quality cottons saris richly worked in gold thread and having a silken border.

In Tamil Nadu, the cotton sari patterns closely resemble the silk ones. The important centers are Kanjeevaram, Salem, Pudukottai and Madurai. Coimbatore has its own style of cotton saris [less expensive and akin to the Chanderi patterns. These days the cotton saris woven on traditional silk
patterns are called Kalakshetra and are widely popular. Kerala’s cotton saris are woven as a specialty and are called the Karalkudi saris. They are made of unbleached cotton with rich broad gold borders and pallus.

Plate: 20

Sa’di is refreshed, attributed to the artist C, Gulistan – 1628/9

Looking into the various forms of material used during this age as well as the manner in which it was worn can be seen from this depiction. The painting shows a man being served some refreshment by the lady of the house and her maid. The man is wearing an angrakha in a printed material. It is rust brown with a small golden print on it and is short in length, extending up to a little below the knees. It is tied centrally and appears to have collars. It is full sleeved and teamed with a pair of dark mauve churidars. Around the waist is tied an orange patka which has a grayish white striped border. On his feet are brown shoes. He is wearing a grey-white turban on his head.

The lady of the house is wearing an orange churidar over which she is wearing a see through, red tri-foil printed, full sleeved angrakha having a sheer skirt that falls over the legs and is gathered on one side. A central beautifully patterned material in yellow and green is pleated down the front.
The churidar and the pleated material that falls down the front are both having borders at the hemline. She has draped a red coloured, floral printed sheer, dupatta around her head and upper body. Her jewelry is entirely in pearls with a precious stone encrusted in gold only used as a pendant around her neck. There are strings necklaces around her neck, wrists and ears. In fact her earlobe seems encrusted in pearls so thickly are they arranged around her ear lobe. She is wearing yellow and blue open backed moccasins on her feet and rings on her fingers.

The maid who is standing behind her mistress with a tray of some fruit probably is wearing light blue and white striped churidar while the sheer, fine material skirt falls from the empire line down to her calves. A brown, red and black checked material is pleated down the front of the angrakha. She is wearing a mehendi green dupatta that is draped over her upper body and her head. Her accessories comprise a garland of white and pink flowers and several strings of white pearls around her neck. At the base of the neck is a gold pendant on a golden chain. She is wearing hoops of ruby and pearls in her ears. Her wrists are adorned with bands of gold with some meenakari work probably on them in maroon. Golden anklets adorn her ankles.

The other fabrics visible are the rug, the cushions and the curtain all giving insights on the creativity of those times whereby block printing seemed to be the common form of embellishment of cloth materials. Cotton and muslin seem to the preferred choice of fabric in those times.

Silk Weaves

Varanasi is one of the famous silk weaving centers of India. Originally, it had been a cotton-weaving center. Silk weaving began in Varanasi and the chief products were saris, dhotis and chaddars used in worship. Later, however a variety of textiles in silk were made for personal use. The specialty of the region is the heavy gold brocade, with an extra weft of rich gold thread across the warp. The Amru silk brocades of Varanasi are very famous. These
are the *Butidar* saris enclosed by a border and a heavy *pallu*. The main motifs are flowering bushes and the flowing mango pattern.

The *Baluchar technique* of weaving brocades with untwisted silk thread was developed in the *Murshidabad* district of West Bengal. It is based upon the miniature paintings of India. The specialty of the Baluchari sari is the large *Pallu* with a central pattern of flowing *Kalga*, i.e., the mango design enclosed by repetitive frames of miniatures. Gujarat is another important brocade center. Extra weft brocade developed in Gujarat. Silk weaving continued in *Ridrol* in Mehsana district and *Jamnagar* in Saurashtra district in Gujarat.

South India holds its own in the production of silk saris. Heavy lustrous silk with broad borders and elaborate *pallus* are made here. Contrasting colors are used to produce a harmonious blend of colors. Traditionally the pattern is a part of the woven fabric and not an extra weft. The checks and strips are woven into the warp and weft. *Kancheepuram, Tanjore and Kumbakonam* are the important silk centers in Tamilnadu. *Sangareddy* in Andhra, *Kolegal and Molkalmoru* in Karnataka are also famous silk weaving centers. *Tanjore* is specialized in weaving the all-over gold saris used exclusively for weddings and temple use. Then there is the distinct tradition of Molkalmoru comprising its own simple *ikat* weave combined with a rich gold border carrying stylized motifs.

**Tie and dye fabrics**

India has a great variety of tie and dye fabrics epitomized especially by the world famous *Bandhani*. This form involves a good mastery over dyeing. The fabric is first de-gummed and dipped in a mordant so that it absorbs the dye. Then the basic divisions of areas, borders etc., are carried out. In India, the important centers noted for this technique are *Saurashtra and Kutch* in Gujarat and Rajasthan state.

The dyer indicates the designs to be tied. Then tying the cloth into tiny knots creates the outline of the patterns. Womenfolk generally do the tying.
Kutch produces the finest bandhanis in India. Mandvi and Bhuj are also other important bandhani producing centers. The Gharchola is another typical material that carries tie and dyed patterns transferred onto a material already bearing gold thread checks with small golden motifs like peacock or lotus in the center. These saris are tied and dyed in Kutch. The final red color of the Gharchola saris is said to be dyed in Jamnagar because of the special quality of water there. Rajkot in Saurashtra is another important center for bandhanis.

In Rajasthan, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Sikar are important centers. Sikar produces the finest Bandhanis. Another form of tie and dye in Rajasthan is the Lahriya and Mothra. Here the opposite ends of the length of the cloth are pulled and rolled together. They are then tied and dyed in different colors producing a multicolored effect. Mothra is formed when the same process is repeated by using the opposite ends creating a criss-cross effect. This is done only in Jaipur and Jodhpur. Lahriya technique is used for making turbans for the Rajputs of Rajasthan. In Bihar, the Bandhani technique is worked to create bold patterns in single colors. The same technique is used in Madurai, Tamilnadu to produce the famous Sungudi saris, which are a must for many communities during marriages in the South.

The technique of tie and dye of threads before weaving is known as Patola. Internationally it is renowned as Ikat. Ikat weaving is done in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. In Andhra it is known as Pagdu Bandha Baddabhasi or Chilka. Ikat furnishing weaving is done in the whole of Nalgonda district in Andhra Pradesh. Orissa has a distinct style of Ikat known as Bandha. In this method the single ikat is worked in the warp and the borders are prepared separately.

Batik Printing

Batik is believed to be at least 2000 years old. It developed as a The Batik technique is a development of resist printing. The fabric is painted with molten wax and then dyed in cold dyes after which the cloth is washed in hot water. The wax melts and the pattern emerges. The effect of this resist
technique is soft while the demarcations are not clearly defined. The basic process of batik is simple. It consists of permeating an area of fabric with hot wax so that the wax resists the penetration of dye. If the cloth we begin with is white, such as bleached cotton, linen, or silk, then wherever we apply hot wax that area will remain white in the final design. After the first waxing the fabric is dipped into a dye bath of the lightest tone. After drying we see an area of white and an area of cloth that is the color of the first dyeing. Wax is now applied to those parts in which we wish to retain the first color, and the entire fabric is immersed in the second dye bath whose color is a tone darker.

This process continues till the darkest tone required in the final design has been achieved. When the fabric, now almost wholly waxed, has dried it is placed between sheets of absorbent paper and ironed with a hot iron. As the sheets of paper absorb the wax they are replaced by fresh sheets until the wax is removed. At this point the final design is seen clearly for the first time.

In another method of printing, mordants are used. The cloth is first printed with mordants and then immersed in the dye. Only the sections, which have absorbed the mordant, can absorb the dye. The cloth is then washed in flowing waters and allowed to dry in the sun when the colors develop. Then the untreated sections are bleached with local ingredients.

Hand printing is practiced in Jaipur, Sanganer, Bagroo, Apli and Barmer in Rajasthan. In Gujarat it is done in the important centers of printing fabrics like Mandvi, Dhamardhka, Mundra, Anjar, Jamnagar, Surendranagar, Jaitpur, Ahmedabad, Baroda and Deesa. Mandvi and Anjar in Kutch district of Gujarat use both techniques of direct printing as well as resist printing. Mausilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh has printers who are specialized in hand printing, Kalamkari printing, resist printing, block printing as well as Batik. Hand-painted Batik using locally grown indigo dyes is very famous in these parts.

Tanjore in Tamil Nadu produces fine quality hand printed saris with the resist method in a village called Kodial. Gold work patterns are woven in the
body of the sari and the outlines are worked with a combination of Kalamkari and printing which produces a rich and delicate look.

**Folk Embroidery**

In India, folk embroidery is a form of self-expression. The patterns are created are often related to the peoples’ own native culture, religion, and desires. In short, the pieces worked by them mirror the ethos of their day to day lives. *The Rabaris of Kutch* district in Gujarat do some of the finest embroidered decorations for clothes that they use of themselves, their children, cattle and other animals like their camels etc.

The *Bagh and Phulkari embroidery* of Punjab is a labor of love worked in silken floss called ‘patt ka dhaga’ of many colours worked in silk stitch on the surface. The hill areas of Himachal Pradesh produce a double-sided embroidery known as the *Chamba Rumal*. This may be of the simple folk type or the classical form, which simplified versions of the Pahari miniatures.

Bihar also has a rich variety of embroidery works. The *Akshida* is famous here and it has embroidery work throughout the whole surface like the Bagh. Appliqué work of Orissa is prepared in Pipli, near Puri known for the Jagannath Temple. Here special canopies, fans, umbrellas, etc used in the famous Rath Yatra festival are made. The *Kasuti embroidery* of Karnataka is a stylized form with stitches based on the texture of the fabric. Negi, Gavanti and the Menthi are the three different types of stitches used.

**Bead Work**

Transparent and semi-transparent beads are often worked into the embroidered designs. This craft developed in India in the 19th century because of the influence of the European traders. They bought beads as articles of trade. Unlike other places where the beads are stitched on cloth to form a pattern, here they are used with no backing material at all. A large number of different beads and a needle and thread are the only materials with
which the craftsmen create chaklas, door hangings, belts, bags, pot covers and a variety of other things.

The design is woven with thread and needle. The work is done row by row on a tri-bead system, three beads being taken up at each stitch. On the return row, the stitching of the beads moves one position forward, so that a tight network is created. Usually the background is white with the pattern in different colors. The beadwork of Saurashtra and Kutch is very special. This work is not found in any other part of India.

Plate: 21

Lady Observing Austerity

Hyderabad, Deccan, early 18th century
Paper, 20.6 X 14.5 cms
Acc no. 56.49/8

The painting depicts two women with one of them apparently being the prisoner of the other’s music. The white cord like string that is shown tying her knees, thighs and around her elbows seems to show the symbolic enslavement the royal personage is experiencing under the spell of the music and the environment. One of them is wearing what appears to be a ghagra in fuchsia pink. At the waist is a cummerbund or patka in yellow ochre with a pink floral motif repeated centrally. Around her upper body is draped an odhni in
transparent red sheen with a slight golden edging. The foreground is self-patterned with some shimmering golden dots in a repeat pattern all over. Her blouse has the same motif print as the waistband or patka. Her jewelry comprises a a tikka in pearls and gold, and earrings that are formed by two pearls and one emerald drop. Around her neck are pearl strings and a garland of white flowers probably jasmines which are interspersed with leaves. Her wrists are adorned with wide kadas in gold and probably meenakari work in red. These are teamed with pearl bangles. She is wearing rings on her fingers which are covered with alta or red colour. She is playing on a single stringed instrument.

The royal personage who is enraptured by her music is relaxing with a flower in one hand and probably a glass of wine in the other. She is wearing headgear that is in wraps of white and gold. The tapered top of the headgear ends I a golden tassle that probably has pearls suspended from it. She is depicted wearing a pale blue translucent angrakha with a golden edging. Under the angrakha is visible a printed ochre churidar that ends at the ankles which are wrapped in golden heavy anklets having tiny bells or kinkini. Her hands and feet are covered in red alta. Around her neck she is shown wearing white pearl strings. She is also sporting a floral garland of probably white jasmine flowers. Her earring are also made up of pearls just like the bangles she is shown wearing on her right wrist. She is shown wearing an armband in gold and a large ruby on her left forearm and pearl rings on her fingers.

The material used and the manner in which it is draped accentuate the comfort level of the individual whether he may be at work or at leisure.

Wool and Weaves

The delicately embroidered shawls of Kashmir are well known throughout the world. Embroidery is also a fine art of the Kashmiri people. They are made of superfine quality wool with intricate designs and excellent workmanship. Kashmir makes a range of shawls like the Kani shawl, the
double colored pashima, the soft Santoosh, the majestic woolen shawl, the Dhussa, the men's long shawl with its woven border and the fine Ambli or embroidered shawls.

Kashmir is known for the Kani shawls for several centuries. The Ain-i-Akbari, written during the reign of Akbar observes that during the 18th century merchants from all over the world purchased it. So complicated were the designs of the shawls, that individual craftsmen prepared small portions and later joined them together. The double-sided shawl, called the Dorukha, is another fine piece of workmanship. In fact it is quite difficult to differentiate the right side from the wrong side.

In the Aksi shawl, the design is produced on one side by splitting the warp threads into half, leaving the other side plain or embroidered with another pattern. The Shahtoosh woolen shawls are made from special wool, which is taken from the underside of the wild Pashmina goats or the Ibex which are found at high altitudes of the Kashmiri hills. The wool is collected, sorted, spun by hand and then woven by experts. The finished product is very light and very warm.

The entire Himalayan region produces a large variety of shawls and tweeds for local usage. These shawls are distinctive as they carry motifs inspired by the Buddhist traditions, e.g., the swastika, etc. They are worked in brilliant colours.

**Spinning Yarns**

In the olden times when weaving was done manually, the Master weaver was celebrated as an artist, a musician, and his loom an instrument of music on which he spun out the melodies of his creativity. He memorized the patterns. The raga was established as he threw the shuttle through the tautly stretched warp threads, back and forth, over and over again. He beat the warp rhythmically, keeping taal. The wooden pedal was depressed to synchronize the throwing of the shuttles.
The weavers were called "Julahas". However one of the greatest exponents of the Bhakti movement was a weaver-poet called Kabir [1440 to late 1500] who lived in the ancient city of Benares/Varanasi – known for its exquisite woven silks and brocades. Kabir still remains one of the most revered and popular saint-singers of North India. The tradition of weaving in India was celebrated by Kabir, who belonged to the community of weavers or "Julahas" who were considered low-caste workers. Tagore translated Kabir in his published works. Kabir’s poetry [popularly known as dohas or couplets] has been inscribed on the hearts and minds of the people of North India. The Dohas of Kabir were practical everyday tips on life and living which could be easily adapted to by the common people.

Muslins of Dacca, Bengal

Under the early and late Mughal patronage [1500-1800], Dacca [now capital of Bangladesh] and ancient Sonargaon's cotton weavers achieved a perfection that has probably never been equaled in the history of human textile making. The wispy delicacy of Dacca muslins ["mal mal"] was such that the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb [1658-1707] was furious with his daughter when he saw that she had been wearing an 'immodest' or sheer/see-through muslin sari. Interesting the young princess justified her sari by replying that she was wrapped in seven layers of the fabric!

The "Jamdani" saris or the figured muslins are amongst the most exclusive of Dacca muslins. Dacca Muslins had exotic & poetic names such as "Shabnam" (morning/evening dew), "Mal Mal khaas" (special muslin reserved for kings) and "Abrawan" (flowing water). These muslins, when stretched on the grass and drenched with dew would become invisible because of their fragile transparency. The base fabric for Jamadanis is unbleached cotton yarn and the design is woven using bleached cotton yarns so that a light-and-dark effect is created. As far back as 327 BC, Alexander the Great mentions "beautiful printed cottons" in India. Roman emperors paid
fabulous sums for the prized Indian cotton, which was known as *mal mal khaas*.

**Court Clothing**

Before the advent of Akbar on the historical scenario of India, the Persian dress was commonly sported by royal ladies. The Mughal Emperor, Humayun introduced a new design of overcoat which was cut at the waist and open in the front. He wore this *qaba* in many colours according to his astrological fancies. It was also gifted to nobles and important personages on special occasions. Muslim women of the upper class usually wore loose drawers, a shirt and a long scarf, with the usual veil or shroud. Women were fond of prints in bright colours. The nobility had evolved a common dress code for various occasions.

It was during the time of Akbar that several experiments were conducted in the sphere of women’s costumes. This process gained impetus when the Rajput princesses entered his harem. His liberal mindedness allowed them to follow their own style of dressing. The main garments of the Rajput ladies was the *angiya* or a tight-fitting bodice [it can still be seen in Rajasthan and Haryana]. Its length diminished with time. The lower generally worn below the *angiya* is the *lehnga*. Most often the *izarband* (binding cord) had bunches of pearls attached to both ends and these were hung on the sides of the lehenga to add elegance and grace to the dress. The *odhni*, chunari, chadar, chunni or dupatta as it is known today was the covering for the upper part of the body and head. It became highly popular with Hindu and Muslim women alike. Abul Fazl mentions several dresses, with their detailed descriptions in *Ain-i-Akbari*.

Noor-e-jehan, Noorjehan or ‘Light of the World’, the consort of Jehangir, developed new styles of dress and presentation. Her seamstresses were said to have created sensations in the art of dressing as she made new
experiments and came out with several innovations. Not only did her expertise extend to dresses, she was also famous for inventing perfumes or *ittars* for the court women. Her dresses also had interesting names like the 'Nur Mahal' dress (for bride and bridegroom) and the *do dami* for peshwaj (gowns). Peitro Della Valle\(^2\), an Italian traveller, came to India during the time of Jehangir. He made some interesting observations about the dressing sense of the people of northern India, "The garment which they wear next to the skin serves as both the coat and skirt, from the girdle upwards, being adorned upon the breast and hanging downwards they wear a pair of long drawers of the same cloth, which cover not only their thighs, but legs also to the feet; and it is a piece of gallantry to have wrinkled too many folds upon the legs. The naked feet are not otherwise confined but to a slipper and that are easier to be pulled off without the help of the hand this mode being convenient in regard to the heat of the country". He was all praise for this form of dressing and said, "I was so taken up with this Indian dress in regard to its cleanliness and easiness that I could have one to be made for myself, complete in every point, and to carry with me to show it in Italy". He further remarked that the "Indian gentle women commonly used no other colour but red... and for the most part they use no garment, but wear only a waist coat, the sleeves of which reach not beyond the middle of the arms. From the waist downwards they wear a long coat down to the foot (*lehnga*). When they go abroad, they cover themselves with a cloak of ordinary shape." The clothes of the women were identical to that of men except for the colours

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The picture is a depiction of a royal personage who is depicted wearing an angrakha that is made in beige silk up to the waist and has zari embroidered organza attached to the lower part of the shift. The sheer organza allows for a peak at the churidaar which is in yellow ochre and printed in a burnt sienna floral motif. At the waist is a cummerbund in orange and ochre interspersed with a white and beige mulmul band having a thin gold edging. The coloured band is patterned with geometric, repeat, floral design. He is also shown wearing a gold edged white stole that is draped over his left shoulder. His accessories include headgear that is red patterned silk tied with a golden band and has golden tassels at the back. He is wearing a golden hoop with two pearls and a ruby in his ear. Around the neck he wears two long pearl strings and there is one pearl string close to the neck which has a ruby pendant. He is also wearing a gold chain with an oval ruby as a centre piece with two pearls on either side. On his wrists are two pearl bracelets and on his feet are slip-on maroon open mojadis. In his right hand he is holding a sword with a golden hilt and placed in a gold tipped velvet scabbard.
The materials of the time have been selectively depicted in this picture and fully represent the form and drape adopted by the royalty of those times.

The Art of Draped Clothing

Draping is ephemeral because the draped garment adopts and adapts to the form and grace of the wearer and loses this unique form the moment it is taken from the wearer's body. Draping is also almost entirely unrecorded: the techniques passing on from generation to generation through the minds and hands of skilled individuals through observation, demonstration and practice. Draped clothes are not stitched or cut to fit, but wrapped around the body, using simple panels of cloth arranged according to the taste and need of an individual. Drapery can be trim and practical, flowing and elegant, or anything the wearer wants it to be. In the ancient world, whether in Rome, Greece, Egypt, or Mesopotamia, draping was considered the most civilized way to dress. It was the art of the elite to gracefully arrange the folds of elegant togas and other draped garments.

This tradition survives even today in the unequalled grace of the sari. Yet at the same time, draped clothing has been the daily working attire of ordinary people, e.g the sarong and dhoti of southern Asia. This art has been on the brink of vanishing almost every century when it undergoes some drastic changes but has managed to survive till day. Hindus, Jains and Buddhists committed themselves to draped clothes not only as an expression of taste, but as a religious duty. The simpler drapes (such as the Roman toga) though elegant, were unsuited to daily work. Hence, these ancient Indians developed more practical drapes such as the dhoti, which neatly wraps each leg separately and looks like a pair of trousers. Indians devised other draped clothes as well, such as the veshti [which graduated into the sarong of the Orient] and the Buddhist cloak, which is not unlike the toga.

The Sari is the draped garment of choice of 75% of the Indian female population, of the Indian sub-continent, due to its versatility. This unstitched
piece of cloth, with the aid of manual skill, can be worn like a gown, a skirt, trousers, and even shorts. If women have stolen many hearts wearing the sari like a regal gown, they have also fought many wars on horseback, and conquered their enemies, wearing the sari in trouser fashion! Psychologist Carl Jung\textsuperscript{23} has waxed lyrical about the elegance of the sari: "It would be a loss to the whole world if the Indian woman should cease to wear her native costume. India is practically the only civilized country where one can see on living models how woman can and should dress".

Historical Buddhist texts report that when Amrapali, a courtesan from the kingdom of Vaishali, met Gautam Buddha, she wore a richly woven semi-transparent sari, which speaks volumes of the technical achievement of the ancient Indian weaver. Legend also has it that when Lord Buddha attained Nirvana, his mortal remains were wrapped in a Banarasi material i.e. brocade which radiated dazzling lights of yellow, red and blue. Another form of the draped cloth was the veil. It is now generally accepted that the purdah (seclusion and veiling) was existent in India since ancient Aryan times. In fact, women from the more affluent households refused to entertain strangers without wearing their veils.

Draping took different forms for different people. One of the most popular dresses that took draping to exalted heights was the Lehnga which has transcended from the Royal Courts of yore to the marriage palaces of the present day. India has patronized the sari as its national dress from time immemorial. From the period of Lord Krishna, the gopis have been known to be wearing saris during raas lila. However, during 1000-1500 A.D when India was facing invasions from several conquerors it became important for the Indian women to cover themselves with more than just the one piece sari did. A fuller skirt called lehnga, a piece of cloth to cover her head called orhini, and cloth tied to cover the bosom, which was called the choli, became the most appropriate attire for the womenfolk.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid

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An exquisite depiction of a formal exchange between two royal personages, this miniature painting.

The Maharaja depicted on the left of the plate is wearing a rich saffron angrakha with a gored skirt having about 50 panels having maroon piping. Around the waist is a heavily bejeweled cummerband which has one end hanging down the front to almost the entire length of the skirt. It is deep maroon in colour with golden edging with the lower end having its weave interspersed with embellishments. The angrakha has tight-fitting sleeves edged with embroidered cuffs. The armhole is also embellished with a gold edging. The Maharaja’s cummerband has a dagger in an ornamental case pushed through its folds. In his left hand the Maharaja is holding an ornate necklace which he seems to be gifting to the other Maharaja. His right hand is shown holding onto the hilt of the sword that is inside an ornate maroon and gold scabbard. On his feet are mojadis having gold printing of paisley motifs in the khari style on a maroon base.

The Maharaja’s turban is crisply starched and almost hat like leaning towards the rear of the head. It is golden in colour and has a black kalgi at the back. The edge of the turban is an ornate, maroon and black stones bejewelled band which holds the turban in place. The peak of the turban has a
pendulum black and red stone ornament suspended from it which is seen placed at the forehead of the Maharaja.

The Maharaja on the right who is receiving the gift of the gold necklace is wearing a white angrakha having a gored skirt that has about 20 panels edged with red. The cummerband at the waist has a long end suspended down the front of the skirt. It is greenish black in colour with its lower border richly embroidered in gold having grey, maroon and saffron motifs. The arm hole of the angrakha has a gold edging and at the end of the collar of the angrakha there is a golden fan like cloth that hangs upto the waist. It has chevron edges. The sleeves of the angrakha have golden cuffs.

The mojadis of this Maharaja are akin to the ones described above.

The turban is tied in a more structured way having two peaks at the front and back. The base of the turban is colored in red, gold, yellow dots. There is a large, round, gold ornament on the left side of the turban.

Both the Maharajas are wearing jewelry as befits their rank which is almost similar. They are wearing a long, waist length two strand pearl necklace interspersed at regular intervals with rubies and emeralds. The Maharaja on the left is wearing two pearl necklaces – one next to the neck base and one slightly longer from which are suspended emerald and ruby pendants. Almost next to the neck is worn a fine beaded necklace of green beads [could be tulsi beads]. Both the Maharajas are depicted wearing earrings that comprise loops having two pearls and a ruby each. The Maharaja on the right is wearing a head ornament comprising a ruby drop that hangs right above his left temple. Both of them are wearing bracelets and bajubands which are formed on the motif of a central emerald surrounded by rubies held together by a circlet of pearls. A similar formation is observed in the wristbands.
Materials Unique to India

Another exquisite form of the draped garment that has survived to the present day is the shawl. Also spelled Cashmere, this type of woolen shawl is created in Kashmir.

It is said that even in the times of Emperor Ashok (3rd C BC) the shawls from Kashmir were famous. Shawls have been worn and used as a warm protective garment by kings and queens since ancient times. However, the Mughal emperor Akbar experimented with various styles and encouraged weavers to try new motifs, which helped establish a successful shawl industry. Though the history of shawl weaving, with which the history of woolen textiles is closely associated, is rather obscure, references to shawls were first found in the Ramayana and Mahabharata and the Atharvaveda\textsuperscript{24}. The shawl has been mentioned in ancient Buddhist literature as being one of the articles of clothing among the recorded inventories of woolen garments.

Derived from the Persian shawl, the shawl in India was worn folded across the shoulder, and not tied at the girdle, as the Persians did. Even today, we sometimes see old Parsis with a shawl tied around their waist during their religious ceremonies. The Pashmina is unmistakable for its softness. The yarn of the Pashmina is spun from the hair of the ibex, a species of goat found at 14,000 ft above the sea level, although pure Pashmina is expensive, the cost is sometimes brought down by blending it with rabbit fur or with wool.

Shahtoosh, the legendary ‘ring shawl’ is incredible for its lightness, softness and warmth. The astronomical price it commands in the market is due to the scarcity of raw-material. High in the plateaux of Tibet and the eastern part of Ladakh, at an altitude of above 5,000 meters, roam Pantholops Hodgsonoi or Tibetan antelope. During grazing, a few strands of the downy hair from the throat are shed and it is these which are painstakingly collected until there are enough for a shawl. Yarn is spun either from

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid
shahtoosh alone, or with pashmina, bringing down the cost somewhat. In the case of pure shahtoosh too, there are many qualities - the yarn can be spun so skillfully as to resemble a strand of silk. Not only are shawls made from such fine yarn extremely expensive, they can only be loosely woven and are too flimsy for embroidery to be done on them. Unlike woolen or Pashmina shawls, Shahtoosh is seldom dyed - that would be rather like dyeing gold! Its natural color is mousy brown, and it is, at the most, sparsely embroidered.

One of the most renowned textiles of India are the brocades of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The brocade or 'kinkhwab' (fabric of dreams) is the weaving of pure silk and gold strands to create a beautiful fabric. Skilled weavers use a special method of interweaving coloured silk, gold or silver threads to form fascinating designs. A variety of motifs like creepers, flowers, birds, animals, and human forms are the various motifs that could be incorporated into a single design. Another form of the delicate material famous from India is the Chikan work embroidery of Uttar Pradesh which was originally done on sarees but is today much preferred for the gauzy suit material worn all over India and abroad.

Gujarat and Kutch are known for their mirror work embroidery in which tiny pieces of mirror are fixed to the fabric using herringbone and satin stitch. It is popular for its rich and vibrant colours. From the Maharashtrian town of Paithan, comes the regal Paithani. A Paithani sari takes months to weave and because it was so expensive it was owned mostly by the royal households. Once bought, the Paithani is treated as an heirloom for generations to come. Motifs of parrots, peacocks and flowers are very popular in Paithani design. In Orissa many ancient costumes and jewelry styles have survived to this day with only slight modifications.

The Tanchoi was brought to India from China by the three Choi brothers (hence the name) who settled in Surat to weave the fabric with a different technique - a combination of the Indian and Chinese styles of weaving. The colours are subtle, the drape is light and the intricate work with
extra floats which are blended into the fabric gives it an embroidered look based on the satin weaving style. One of the most coveted of Indian fabrics, the double Ikat Patola, originates in various states like Gujarat, Orissa and Pochampalli in Andhra Pradesh. The double Ikat resist dyed Patola from Orissa and Patan in Gujarat are very intricate in their weave. While the single Ikat from Rajkot is more affordable it is the double Ikat that is regarded as a masterpiece. Prices can be quite exorbitant because a Patola is valued for its purity of silk. From the south comes the Temple Sari, or the Kanjeevaram, from the town of Kanchipuram. To own it is every woman’s dream because of its grandeur of weave. The Kanjeevaram sari was first woven around 400 years ago and since then this vibrantly coloured saris, very often checks in silk yarn or gold threads, is a favourite. Many of the designs are variations of vertical and horizontal lines and checks.

Plate: 24

Illustration to the Dhola Marwar: A Lady and Maids in a Palace

Jodhpur, C 1830. 27.2 X 39.6 cm.
Mehrangarh Museum Trust, Jodhpur. No.F.22.

The scene is one of a lady of noble birth surrounded by her maids and the abject similarity in their dress and ornamentation is remarkable in the fact that they all are emulating the example of the Noble Lady. They are all wearing the dress.
made from a similar stiff material which takes its own form while sitting. The skirts have a lot of gores that may have been interspersed with gotta strips or tissue panels between the gores. Only the maid on the extreme left is wearing what looks like a khari print on her ghagra or skirt having a jaal motif. One of the maids on the extreme right is wearing a dress in a different colour i.e. pink and green.

The similarity of their raiment continues in their head dress and ornaments. All of them have sheer chunri or odhani [again all in the same red and orange shades] draped around the head and shoulders. The Noble lady is leaning against an enormous bolster that has been covered in a printed jaal motif in maroon and black and gold. All the women are wearing bajubands of emerald and rubies. On the wrists are plain gold bangles while they are wearing head ornaments of pearl and some precious stones. The necklaces are chains of gold having pendants of emerald and ruby placed longitudinally. They are all wearing golden bodices.

The canopy over their heads is also of a similar motif printing as is visible on the bolsters. In the foreground are the tiny figures of men and women. In the near right corner a group of women are going around in circles and the horizontal stripes on their skirts accentuate the movement. The men are all wearing similar white attire comprising a pyjama and jama. It can be said that the material used is the same for the garments of all women and men. The form of dress provides to them the freedom to indulge in all forms of activity like dancing and horse riding and also enable them to sit around in comfort and ease for long sessions.

Feelings in Fabric

Sensuality of a fabric, its drape, fall, content, weight and texture may be attributed to what goes into the making of that fabric. This would also determine how it responds being draped on the body of an individual. Other aspects of the draping process are the layering of the material, embellishments on it and the finishes that are given to it also determine the
drape. The technical terminology of layering, fall, drape etc were created by those who had made it their business to dress others and do it with a certain élan. Thus the choice of materials over the centuries has been on the basis of their drape and the heavy materials were given more preference e.g., velvet, jacquard, satin, flannel, thick cotton, woolens, etc.

Perhaps no other country in the world has such a variety of materials for clothing. India is, perhaps, the only country that gives all four types of silk viz. Eri, Tussar, Muga and Mulberry. We avers, dyers, printers in India are producing fresh designs virtually every day making the Indian textile industry an exciting and seemingly un-ending passage of exploration. India is the only country where textiles are produced in four sectors viz, Khadi, handloom, powerloom and mill. Lack of coordination and phased planning often tends to create situations of unhealthy competition. Powerlooms are not organized and the consequent mushroom growth of unauthorized powerlooms is cause for concern. To make matters worse the Khadi and handloom sectors are so heavily subsidized that they are made quite unviable in the market. Yet there is a resurgence of interest every now and then when there is a move to make the khadi sector more acceptable to the common man.

Plate: 25

Braving all hazards, she hurries to her lover: The Abhisarika Heroine

Folio from an Ashta Nayika series
C.1810-20, 20.4 X 15.3 cm,
Acc.no 339Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh

Material that is light yet forms an adequate covering for the body is what seems to have been the vogue in these times as
depicted in the multi-piece garment adorning the protagonist in the painting. She is shown wearing an unusually single toned raiment which extends to all pieces of the garment but not to the churidar that can be seen from under the skirts. The lady is wearing a lehenga and blouse that are edged in orange/rust coloured border. There are many gores in the lehenga which gives the appearance of being very voluminous some folds of which are also held by the lady. The choli or the upper covering is in the same material but made to cover the bust and some part of the torso. It is full-sleeved and has a keyhole neckline. It is teamed with an ochre printed churidar whereby the combination of the under and over garment presents a pleasing illusion of harmony. The odhani is also heavy and draped around the upper torso of the lady. The interesting part of the garment is the two loose ends or pallavs which are heavily encrusted in gold for a large part while the entire edging of the odhani is golden with a frizzy border [kiran]. She is wearing red and golden mojadis on her feet.

Among the accessories that she is wearing are a bajuband made of big turquoise, gold and pearl stones. With golden jhumars hanging from the inner arm. The other bajuband is made of gold, sapphires and rubies lined with pearls on both the edges. She is shown wearing four sets of bangles. At the end on the other side away from the wrist, at the very top can be seen the twisted orange-rust frill of the sleeve. She is depicted wearing a set of two ivory karas and the second last one is a gold kara towards her palm. Finally is a pearl and gold bracelet which is stringy and falls over her hands giving it a feminine look.

Around her neck she is seen wearing four kinds of neckpieces – a string of big pearls around her neck, like a chocker, is a golden necklace that sits at the base of her neck. She is wearing a pearl and precious stones long double strunged necklace that fall to her waist. Between the two lengths of the choker and the waist length necklace is a single string black beads and pearls necklace that has an oval, golden, precious stones encrusted pendant suspended from it. Hanging from the left hip and suspended over the right
thigh is a long kardhan made in gold pieces and edged with pearls. Precious stones are encrusted in each of the gold bits. On her feet she is wearing an anklet in gold and pearls. The other one seems to have come off and is lying at a distance from her feet.

The over-all effect is of subdued dressing and yet the aim is on maximum appeal. The forehead ornament comprises a beautiful blue stone embedded in gold and suspended from a pearl string. She is wearing a nose ring probably made of pearls, a few of which can be suspended on the side of the right nostril. The left side of the head has a delicate clip made in gold and precious stones with a pearl suspended at the bottom.

Plate: 26

Balwant Singh of Jasrota standing smoking in his Garden

Dated February-March 1744, 29.3 (23.3) X 21.3 (15.8) cm
Acc. No. D 130
Government Museum And Art Gallery, Chandigarh

The drape of the angrakha worn by the royal personage is simple yet elegant. It is a left hand tied angrakha. printed material with a white and red small, flower or booti motif all over the foreground. The angrapha is full-sleeved and ends in a red-orange edging. The orange-red sash tied at the middle of the waist with the loose end falling over the right hip
makes for a good combination. The sash has a woven pallav and a small edging all over the sides. On his feet are orange coloured, open, flat mojadis and a yellow turban with a kula in the same colour and material. Around the turban is tied a multi-coloured sash with dominant red and orange coloured pin strips. Towards the back of the head are some delicate feathers stuck into the turban. Over the turban is tied a serpesh in gold and a blue stone. From it is suspended a large pearl. In his right hand is the tube of the hookah and his right hand is folded over the hilt of a sword in a scabbard made of a yellow printed cloth that has a floral motif in red and green all over it.

He is wearing golden kadae at his wrists and a pendant suspended from a chain around his neck is made of stone encrusted gold shaped in a star-like pattern. His bajuband is flower shaped and is made of gold and precious stones and tied with a string at the upper arm.

The attendant who accompanies the royal personal and is holding on to his hookah is depicted wearing a black angrakha which has a blue leafy motif all over it. A mehendi green sash is tied at the middle of the waist and there is a red cloth tucked into it. This red cloth is probably a cleaning cloth to hand over the hookah to the lord or to stoke up the fire in the chillam with the tool tucked into the waistband. He is wearing a red kula turban and no ornamentation except for blue coloured mojadis.
Literary References

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