

Abstract

The inherited royal costumes and crafts of royalty had faced many challenges responsible for its recognition and appreciation. It is essential that the world at large recognize them and they receive the appreciation they deserve on the world map. This should be compensated in accordance with for the future generation to thrive, learn and achieve mastery in it for the survival of the traditional costumes, textiles and craft.

Regal costumes of different states have always been a part of the individual's curiosity. The uniqueness, the elegance of costumes and textiles has always attracted human nature. Textiles of Rulers of Kachchh are a gauge of taste, a fashioner of personality and a mirror of royal life. The researcher was keenly interested in knowing the rich traditional textiles and costumes of Gujarat's princely state-Kachchh, the place where various ethnic groups have survived over centuries with the Royal legacy. The personal interview method coupled with observation was followed to collect the data pertaining to the use of different textiles in royal costumes of Kachchh.

A methodical process was followed to accomplish the framed objectives. The study had been divided into three different phases. Detailed historical research was conducted during first phase while second phase included the collection and documentation of the data. Earnest efforts for the preservation and popularization of the traditional royal costumes were made during the third phase of research.

Results revealed that the geographical region of Kachchh was more suitable to grow cotton crops. Climate of this region varied from extreme cold during winters to extreme hot during summers. Cotton being breathable and absorbent in nature, was more appropriate for their clothing for leisure and routine. Silks, velvets, *mashroos*, *kinkhabs* and brocades were used enough to express the royalty and power of wealth. Variety of silk fabrics such as *gajji silk*, *atlas* and *chirmin* fabrics were used for garments. Cotton was the fabric for summer and silk and wool were for winter. Intricate and bold woven designs of gold and zari in *kinkhab* brocades were observed. The draped garments were often embellished with *badla*, *kamdani* and *mukaish* work. *Gold khadi* prints were seen on various garments.

The traditional costume worn during the early 19th century by Maharao Shri and Maharani Saheba i.e *kachchhi poshak* included *jama*, *kachchhi kediyu*, *boriyawadi izar*, *modhiyawadi izar*, *paagh*, *bheth* and *aadiyu* for king and ensemble of *kanchali*, *ghaghra* and *odhna* for queen. The traditional costume gradually started fading away with the passing time.

The era of late 19th to early 21st century affected more by the cultural intermingling, political influence and increased exposure to the overseas. The Maharaos were keen to import the high quality fabrics for the contemporary wear that were in fashion during that period. Gradually the *zenana* became extinct and the women of royalty began to move out of the palace due to their social and cultural involvement. This made them to be aware of finer materials and contemporary wear. But the tradition of the Kachchh's royal court never lose its charm during it's customs and festivals. To be laden in traditional costumes in recent scenario conferred the impression of being a museum piece to the present members of the royal family but they maintained the dignity of royal legacy with traditional textiles, silhouettes and ornaments whenever required.

The traditional textiles never lose its charm from the wardrobe of Maharaos and Maharanis however as Indian royalty slowly relinquished its power, the textile crafts and non textile crafts engaged in royal court degenerated due to lack of patronage and Kachchh's traditional royal apparel changed with the times and was no longer in vogue.

Unveiling the history and exploring the mystery is the focus behind the whole. An effort towards publishing the database will preserve and popularize the heritage and give them a distinguished place in all over the world.