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# Traditional Textiles of India

Give it into all of its embroidery

Indian textile traditions are reputed all over the world and admired for their beauty, texture and durability. India has a diverse and rich textile tradition. The origin of Indian textiles can be traced to the Indus valley civilization. The people of this civilization used homespun cotton for weaving their garments. India had numerous trade links with the outside world and Indian textiles were popular in the ancient world. Indian silk was popular in Rome in the early centuries of the Christian era. Hoards of fragments of cotton material originating from Gujarat have been found in the Egyptian tombs at Fostat, belonging to 5th century A.D.

we can take the evidences of ancient textiles from

The most ancient of Indian texts and scriptures, like Rigveda, the Ramayana and Mahabharata talk of the fineness of Indian textiles. The ancient sculptures too bear testimony to India's rich textile traditions. Paintings depict figures in fine, delicate and decorated fabric. Cotton, silk, muslin, and other Indian textiles were some of the most traded products from India. Each Indian region has its own textile - characterizing it in terms of designs, weaving patterns and techniques, colors and texture. Ample evidence on the ancient textiles of India can also be obtained from the various sculptures belonging to Mauryan and Gupta age as well as from ancient Buddhist scripts and murals (Ajanta caves). Legend has it 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.

The traditional textiles of a region reflect the beliefs of that area, which are shown in their weavings, embroideries or printings. These textiles are influenced by the varied materials (resources) available in that area. They are also a reflection of the surrounding areas. Popular folk-lore and life style of an area are usually seen on these textiles.

For a country like India, its traditional textiles have been a matter of great pride since centuries. Even when the traders of East India Company came to India, Indian traditional fabrics were traded from India to the West. The Mughals when ruling India were great patrons of Traditional textiles. Akbar, Jahangir and Noorjahan are the names associated with many famous textiles of this country.) Till today, Indian embroideries and other skills seen in woven and printed Indian textiles are incomparable to anywhere in the world. If India occupies a prime position in the global fashion today, a part of credit can be given to the skill of Indian craftsmen who create and decorate the traditional textiles of India.

Fashion designers should have in-depth knowledge about all Indian traditional textiles- the woven, the embroidered and the painted/ printed ones. Although all these textiles are being manufactured till date, but the time taken and, their methods of production make the production of these textiles, expensive. Hence, the use of these textiles remains restricted to special occasions only. The fashion designers today, with their knowledge of the motifs and methods of production of these textiles, are making cheaper versions of these, to be used in their designer wears. Some traditional fabrics which were lesser in use before are even promoted by fashion designers by their use in designer wear garments. They have been responsible in taking these traditional textiles to all parts of the world. Some traditional textiles which were dyeing their natural death because of expensive production have again been revived by these designers, eg, the very expensive Jamawaar embroidery of Kashmir.

Hence, knowledge of traditional textiles (woven, embroidered and painted), which convey a picture of rich traditions and art of India, is very useful study.

## WOVEN

Of all the Indian handicrafts, textiles form a class by themselves over which the rest of the world went into ecstasies from time immemorial. With the enormous store of myths, symbols, imagery and inspiration from other art forms, Indian textile- craft never faced a slump or stagnation. On the other hand, it transcended from a craft identity to the status of an art. With the shades of classicism, folk tradition and regional flavour, the rich

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