

Abstract

The Mughal rule is considered a 'Golden Age' of delicacy in the sub-continent. It is the least treaded path in the history of the Mughals, which being glorious and vividly colourful yet we know so less. On this perspective it is an attempt to bring this side of the fusion culture in India to light.

The priceless legacy of miniature paintings and chronicles from the Mughal era provides an insight into the dress code of the nobility at the time. By examining them one can easily determine that 'fashion and designing' was a major art form that received special encouragement by all the Mughal emperors.

Each emperor maintained his own contemporary style of dressing in court and otherwise. Babar, who was brought up in the cooler climate of Turkistan, retained the costumes of his homeland (Mongol clothing); the most popular garments in his period were '*chafan*' (long coat) and '*postin*' (sheep skin coat). It can be said that he must have worn them for traditional Mongol tunics, wearing a layered look composed of a striped *nima* (undershirt), a blue long-sleeved shirt, a $\frac{3}{4}$ th length sleeved Asian style tunic and a purple *chogha* with short sleeves.

In the period of Akbar there was a combination of Indian and imported skills and techniques, which led to the flowering of classical forms and shapes and they later became an integral part of Indian dress design. Akbar took the initiative of introducing local textiles, which were best suited to the hot climate of the region. He himself took interest in the fashioning of court dresses and introduced the '*chakdar jama*' to his court, which was a cross over tunic, with slits around the skirt and an asymmetrical hemline. Although it was in fashion in India since medieval times,

Akbar restyled the garment and developed it into a formal gown by removing slits, rounding the hemline and increasing the fullness of the skirt.

There had been great motivation for beautiful garments. The Mughal grandeur famed worldwide which was very well reflected in the clothes worn by the Mughal men and their ladies. Their garments revealed not only their riches and tastes but also excellent work done by the tailors in those times. Mughal emperors like Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan took equal interest as their ladies in wearing beautiful garments. The role and contribution of the royal Mughal ladies were also quite apparent in the field of dress. The ladies certainly had no difficulty in getting costly materials for their cloths and expert tailors to switch these clothes. Cloth came from foreign lands and different part of India including southern India famed for its woven fabric. The riches and the most of the exquisitely wrought brocades, fine linens and *alachas* or silk stuffs interwoven with gold and silver were among the present which passed between the great Mughal and the neighbouring kingdoms. Some of these items were exhibited at the fairs and festivals held in the royal seraglios. Among the various *karkhanas*, or manufacturing house under the Mughal emperors, we find a separate dress and apparel making units known as *Tushak Khana* and a shawl department. Shawl was a very popular garment among the Mughals. For weaving shawls there were one thousand *Karkhanas* in the city. Silk weaving also received special encouragement; silk cloth produced in Punjab gained fame throughout the world. Even embroidery was done here. Beautiful costly dresses were only used for few hours. Akbar is said to have employed eleven thousand tailors for the manufacture of clothes for his household.

The fashion in garment introduced to our land by the Mughals have legacy come down to their various modified forms. But the study of fashion and designing under Mughal has limited and scarce records and a few researches have been done. In this wide area of fashion under Mughals, it is a very meticulous and cumbersome subject to handle with. Traditional and cultural bondage in certain cases is yet again a giant feat to come up with. Most of the literatures available are superficial to this subject, either being secondary or the subject being handled in a less perspective to the knowledge of the intrinsic relevance of the entire and apparel to the traditional and evolutionary blending in the sub-continent. Very little work has been done in relation to its modern context.