

Evolution of Textiles in the Indian Subcontinent

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Abstract : The objective of this paper is to trace the origin and evolution of clothing in the Indian Subcontinent. The paper seeks to understand the need for mankind to shed his natural state and adopt clothing as an inseparable accessory for his body. It explores the various theories of the origin of clothing. The known journey of clothing of this region started from the Indus Valley Civilisation which dates back to 2500 BC. Due to the weather conditions of the region, few actual samples have survived, and most of the knowledge of textiles is derived from the sculptures and other remains from this era. The understanding of textiles of the period after the Indus Valley Civilisation (2500-1500 BC) till the Mauryan and the Sunga Period (321-72 BC) comes from literary sources, e.g., Vedas, Smritis, the eminent Indian epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, forest books, etc. Textile production was one of the most important economic activities of this region. It was next only to agriculture. While attempting to trace the history of clothing the paper draws the evolution of Indian traditional fashion through the change of rulers of this region and the development of the modern Indian traditional dress, i.e., sari, salwar kamiz, dhoti, etc. The major aims of the study are to define the different time periods chronologically and to inspect the major changes in textile fashion, manufacturing, and materials that took place. This study is based on secondary research. It is founded on data taken primarily from books and journals. Not much of visuals are added in the paper as actual fabric references are near nonexistent. It gives a brief history of the ancient textiles of India from the time frame of 2500 BC-8th C AD.

Keywords : evolution, history, origin, textiles

Conference Title : ICCTCA 2018 : International Conference on Clothing, Textiles and Cultural Aspects

Conference Location : San Francisco, United States

Conference Dates : June 06-07, 2018