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## UNIT 13 TEXTILES AND COSTUMES

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### 13.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this Unit you will know about:

- the textile tradition of India,
- present day Indian textiles with regional variations,
- various techniques used by Indian weavers in the process of weaving, printing, dyeing, embroidery, etc.,
- present day Indian costumes and their history,
- attempts made by Indian government to protect the interests of Indian handloom sector, and
- Indian textiles as source of tourist attraction.

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### 13.1 INTRODUCTION

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India has one of the richest traditions of woven textiles made from different materials using various techniques. Indian textiles are closely knitted with Indian culture to the extent that one can find various socio-cultural activities reflected through that. Textiles even have specific roles in the religious activities performed in India. Specific textiles are used for specific worship purposes, marriages and rituals, etc. In Andhra Pradesh there is a tradition of temple cloth

(kalamkari), used as a part of temple ritual. The episodes from Ramayana and Mahabharata are woven or printed on these clothes. In some regions women are expected to wear only silk sarees to perform puja as a part of ritual, because it is considered pure. Certain sarees are produced for the consumption of particular community only, e.g. the Kodalikaruppur sarees developed for the consumption of Thanjavur royal family; similarly, sungudi sarees are made for the consumption of Saurastrian community in Tamilnadu. It is a custom in Assam (among the Bodos) to offer a scarf (gamocha), woven by young women to the elders of the family. It is said that in Tripura a rebellious tribe was forbidden to use colour in weaving as a punishment. The costumes have a significant place in the life of people. In almost all parts of the country there are well defined and prescribed costumes (in some cases even the type of cloth) to be worn on social and religious occasions (marriage performances rituals, birth, death, etc.). One may notice that India has the ancient tradition of wearing unstitched costumes. However, the weaving techniques, quality of textiles and variety of costumes have undergone many changes over a period of time. The pace of change was fast after the coming of the Turks, the Mughals and later, the Europeans.

In the present Unit our focus is on hand-woven fabrics of India. We are excluding any discussion on textiles produced by industrial sector or by power-loom sector. In this Unit we will familiarize you with the famous textile tradition of India with its regional variations. We will also introduce you to the technology used by the craftsmen in the manufacturing process. Besides, importance of textile sector as one of the prominent areas of tourist interest in India is also dealt with.

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### **13.2 HISTORY OF TEXTILES IN INDIA**

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History of textiles in India is, perhaps, as old as Indian civilization. The earliest example of cotton fabric comes from Harappan excavations, c.2500 B.C. It is dyed cotton with the use of mordant technique. Rig Veda (c.1500 - 1000 B.C) refers to golden woven fabric hiranyadrapi; Epic literature (Mahabharata and Ramayan, c.1000-600 B.C.) mentions pearl-fringed fabric manichira; while Jain Bhandaras provide ample examples of Indian patto silk. Greek records are also full of references on gorgeous paithani fabric from Paithan - the ancient Pratihthan. The author of the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea (A.D. 60-100) mentions the presence of Indian dyed cotton in Rome. The Roman word carbasina for cotton is derived from Sanskrit karpasa. Kautilya refers to the superintendents (adhyakshas) of weaving during the Mauryan period (c.300 B.C.).

Bengal was the chief centre of fine cotton production. We get references of cotton trading in this region for almost 2000 years. Buddhist, Jain and Hindu text refer to the flourishing trade of the port town Tamralipti (in Bengal). Similarly, 'Periplus' mentions the port town at the mouth of the Ganges. We also get references of fine Muslin of Bengal in Greek and Roman records. Dacca Muslin in 16th-17th centuries is said to be the best cotton textiles made in India. Gujarat was another centre of cotton production. The earliest references to printed fabric in India come from Gujarat (13-17 century).

With the coming of the Turks and Mughals many new features were introduced in the field of textile production with the fusion of new culture and new technology. Turks brought with them many new techniques. They exposed Indian craftsman to **spinning wheel**. Earlier women used to spin the yarn with single spindle (**takali**). With the introduction of spinning wheel not only the productivity increased sixfold; but also the wheel attached to it greatly reduced the physical labour involved in it. Many new varieties of cloth were also introduced during this period. Fine quality velvets belong to the Mughal period. We get earliest reference to it by an Arab geographer, Ibn Khurdazabah (A.D. 826-912). It seems that velvets were at first introduced in Western India by the Arabs through the Tiraz factories (Central Asia) but the art reached its climax under the Mughals. **Mashru** and **himroo**, a mixed fabric also appears to be the contribution of Muslim weavers who must have derived the weaving tradition of the Tiraz factories of the Caliphates during the Sultanate period. **Kalamkari** of Golconda has a very strong Persian influence (of Ispahan and Iran). The rich weaving tradition of Kashmiri shawls with its twill-tapestry weaving seems to have been introduced in India by the Central Asian weavers during the reign of Zain-ul Abidin (A.D. 1420-70).

Carpet weaving also reached new heights under the Mughals. It was Mughal Emperor Akbar who brought Persian carpet weavers from Persia to India and set up the royal workshop (**karkhana**). This gave birth to the art of pile carpet weaving in silk and wool in India. Soon Indian carpet Industry picked up so well that Abul Fazl records that, "The carpets of Iran and Turan are no more thought of. All kinds of carpet weavers are settled here and drive a flourishing trade. These are found in every town but especially in Agra, Fatehpur and Lahore". By 1615 Surat became the chief centre of carpet export to Central Asia and Europe. Russian carpet weavers also settled in Masulipatnam. Later they moved to Eluru in the mid-16th century. Similarly, **tanchoi** was introduced in Surat by three Parsi brothers who brought the art from China. Since then Parsi community continued this profession until recently. European travellers Ralph Fitch (A.D. 1583-91) and Manucci (A.D. 1656-1712) refer to fine gold and silver brocades of Varanasi. Earliest references to famous **jamdani** fabric are available in Periplus, Indica (B.C. 2C.) and **Majjhima Nikaya** (Buddhist text). Abul Fazl, court chronicler of Akbar, in his Ain-i Akbari also refers to taneb (coat) made from fine jamdani. Special jamdanis were woven at Dacca for the personal use of emperor Aurangzeb. Indian cotton textile also occupied the chief place among the items of exports of the European trading companies during the 17 - 19th centuries.

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### 13.3 TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY

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In the present Section we will discuss various processes involved in the production of textiles.

#### 13.3.1 Material Base of Indian Textiles

The most common and known textile fabrics are cotton, silk and wool. After the cotton balls are picked from the fields, it has to pass through various stages before cotton could be used for weaving — i) ginning or seed extraction, ii) carding or fibre loosening done by **dhunia** (cotton carder), and iii) spinning or making yarn. Spinning was traditionally done with the spindle to which a whorl was attached to stabilize it. Later, during the Medieval period spinning wheel was introduced resulting in the six-fold increase in the yarn production.

References of silk production in India can be traced during Harappan period. India is the only country which produces all the four known varieties of silk known in the world namely — **mulberry, tasar, munga, and eri.**

The silk whose silk worms are hatched on mulberry tree / creeper is known as mulberry silk; while non-mulberry silk is that whose silk worms are hatched on other variety of trees. Mulberry is widely grown as bush crop in the plain regions and as trees in the hilly regions. It takes six months to mature and afterwards 6 crops can be hatched. Even its leaves can be sold to silkworm hatchers. Best quality tasar is produced on oak plantation. But Arjun plantation are also raised for tasar silk worm hatching. It takes four years to mature and stands for twenty years. Ed or eudi, or erandi silk is produced by a worm known as muga. It is exclusively produced in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam on Some, Soalu and Champa plants. Its worm takes 25 to 45 days to mature from hatching to cocooning.

Woollen textile is known in India ever, since the ancient period. Wool was gathered from sheep. The best quality wool (pashmina, etc.) was procured from the lower coat of the sheep which is much more softer than the wool extracted from the upper part of the sheep.

For carpet weaving both wool and cotton are used; the woollen pile gives thickness and warmth and a cotton slide back to which tufts of wool could be attached. The pile carpets are mostly made in wool, some in silk and a few in cotton. Later other materials such as sun hemp and coir are also used. The warp is always cotton except in a few special carpets like those of Bokhara which has a wool warp. The wool for the pile varies from the short rough used in inferior carpets to the best grades like **pashmina, Bikaneri, Fazilka and Joria** varieties.

### **13.3.2 Weavers' Loom**

The Indian loom is horizontal loom of throw-shuttle type and is said to resemble that, of ancient Egypt. In the famous picture of Kabir spinning the yarn one can clearly make out the use of pit loom with treadles. In the crudest form of pit-loom four bamboo posts are firmly fixed on the ground for making the loom over which warp and wefts are framed. Sometimes loom is raised high on the ground and treadles are placed below the loom instead of a pit. Other instruments used for weaving are - lay or batten; **treadles**, shuttle, temple or instrument for keeping cloth on the stretch during the process of weaving. The weaver sits, with right leg bent, upon a board or mat placed close to the edge of the pit, depressing one of the treadles with the great toe of the left foot.

The loom used for wool weaving is the same used by other weavers across the country. For carpet weaving the loom is a huge embroidery frame. The frame is set upright on the ground against a wall or laid flat on the earth with movable horizontal timbers. The warps run vertically and the wefts horizontally. The knots are tied in rows. The knots used in carpet weaving are the Persian or **Sehna**, and the Turkish or **Ghiordes**. In the **ghiordes** the two ends of the thread are twisted, each round a warp thread, whereas in the **sehna** knot only one end circle a warp thread completely. The average knots per inch vary from 64 to 400. On a big carpet 20 to 30 persons can work simultaneously.

The other kind of carpet made in India is kilim, meaning a woven fabric. The technique of weaving-is like that of tapestry. 'The kilim is without a pile (loop), with a flat stir face, and is reversible.

The hilly tribes of North-Eastern region but the Garos use back strap or loin loom. It's used solely by women (except Manipur) while in the plains frame loom is used by both men and women. But highly organized commercial weaving is solely done by men. "The back strap (loom) comprises of a series of bamboo sticks which separate the continuous warp threads, thus creating the two sheds for weaving. One of the sticks is attached to the strap which attaches the warp to the body; the other end of the continuous warp is tied to a wall, a tree or to two stacks driven into the ground. By pressing her feet against a piece of wood or a wall, the weaver creates the tension in the warp. A forward movement loosens the tension and enables her to lift one of the needles, thus raising alternate warp threads. The wooden beater is inserted in between the warp threads forming the shed through which the weft is inserted. A backward movement creates the tension. The second shed is now created by lowering the needle, moving the second bamboo closer and adding another weft thread into the shed. Since the warp is often circular, it can be pulled closer to the weaver as the weaving progresses. The warp threads are closely placed together, creating a weave." (Dhamija, Jasleen and Jain, Jyotindra, **Handwoven Fabrics of India**, p. 135).

Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh are the most important centres for **back strap** weaving. Since the body is used for creating the tension. Weaving is quite strenuous. Besides, cloth's width is also highly restricted (it cannot go beyond 50-60 cm) on account of the fact that the warp is attached to the body. That's why you will find Mishimies' woven jackets are prepared by putting two pieces together; Lotha Naga shawl is woven in nine parts.

### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Define the mulberry and non-mulberry silk.

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2) Discuss the main features of back strap loom in 60 words.

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### 13.3.3 Patterns

The third most important component of the textile technology is patterning. Since time immemorial, for patterning three techniques are used in India — i) the patterns are made in the process of weaving itself; ii) patterning is done after the cloth is prepared by using various dyes; and iii) embroidery is used for patterning the cloth.

#### i) Weaving Patterns

For patterning during the weave two different techniques are used - ikat and brocade.

#### Brocaded Textile

Among the brocaded textile Jamdani textile is the most important. The word **jamdani** is derived from jama or loom embroidered or figured. Weavers wove floral, animal or bird ornaments on the looms. The warp is, as a rule, unbleached grey yarn, the motifs being woven in bleached white yarn. Its woven both, on cotton as well as on wool. The most important centres of **jamdani** weaving in the Gangetic, plain are Dacca in Bengal and Tanda and Banaras in U.P. Banaras weavers use gold thread also. Dacca weavers use coloured cotton thread along with gold and white but the finest **Tanda jamdani** is woven only with white yarn. The ornamental figures are woven by two threads of yarn of the same count as in the background. The threads lifted up by the weaver with his fingers. The weaver directly works on the loom and no **naqshas** are used nor the design is tied on the loom. Brocade technique is also used by the shawl weavers of Kashmir.

#### ii) DYES

##### a) Resist-Dye

The most indigenous method used by the Indian weavers is the resist-dye technique for print. There are eight different techniques used in resist dye:

- 1) fold resist-dyeing
- 2) stitch resist-dyeing
- 3) wrap resist-dyeing

- 4) tie resist-dyeing
- 5) stencil resist-dyeing
- 6) paste or wax resist-dyeing
- 7) mordant resist-dyeing
- 8) resist dyeing of yarn to be woven after patterning

All these eight techniques can broadly be grouped into **two** categories **yarn** resist and tie-dye traditionally known as **ikat** and **bandhani** respectively (we have already discussed **ikat** in the first category - weaving patterns). These techniques are widely used by Indian weavers throughout India with indigenous variations.

**b) Bandhani (tie-and-dye)**

The tie-and-dye fabric is best produced in Gujarat and Rajasthan. In this techniques portions of the cloth not to be coloured are plucked up in the finger nails of the maker and wound many times with waxed or starched string, and then immersed in the dye which does not penetrate the tied parts. Beginning with the lightest colour, this process is repeated one or more times according to the design.

**c) Azarak,**

One of the oldest printing technique used in India is the resist printed cotton -azarak. The finest azarak is produced in Sind (now in Pakistan). However, Dhamadhaka, Anjar and Khanda in Kutch are the chief centres of azarak printing in India. The printing of azarak involves several stages that continue for several days. At first white cotton cloth is immersed into water and soda, then bleached, again dipped into oil till it achieve beige colour. Then the first print (asul) is done with a mixture of gum, lime and water. The motif thus printed is white or pale red or red after dyeing it with alizarine. The second print (kot) is done with a solution of ferrous sulphate, thickened with earth, gum or grounded seeds. This print turns black after being dyed in alizarine. The third print (kher) is that of resist made of a mixture of earth, flour, khunr, aluminium sulphate and water. Sometimes molasses and gur are also added. This resist covers all the parts destined to receive a colour other than blue. Then it's dyed in indigo. The cloth is now dyed in alizarine.

For printing the craftsmen use wood blocks (pur). Several blocks are needed to complete the design. Craftsmen's tools are still primitive. Craftsmen use a straw, till, for measuring the parts of the pattern and the distance between the points of the motifs. Copper pots are used for dyeing.

**d) Block Printing**

We get the earliest references of printed cotton from Gujarat at Fostat. Traditionally Pethapur in Gujarat was well known for its mud-resist prints, known as sodagiri made for export to the Far East. Wooden blocks with intricate patterns, using four colours, are prepared at Pethapur even today. The Persianised printed patterns, produced for export in the 17th century, are not seen any more in Gujarat today. Perhaps it is absorbed in the traditional design. During the medieval

period there was a large demand in the European market for Indian printed cotton cloth, commonly called chintz. It formed the major item of Indian exports to European markets.

### iii) EMBROIDERED TEXTILES

#### a) Kantha

The **kantha**, patched cloth, was mainly made out of worn out and disused sarees and dhotis. Borders of these used saris, etc. were cut, patched and embroidered. Women of all castes, but Brahman including Muslim women do this embroidery. The stitches used are of simplest kind. The running stitch is the main. Red and blue colours are generally used. The design is mostly in the square or rectangle, at the centre space is occupied by a lotus flower and its petals which manifests ancient Indian symbol of universe. Four trees mark the corners symbolising four directions. Thematically it's an enriched textile version of the art of the alpana (done on the floor). Themes from ancient mythology and legends are taken. In some **kanthas** only the figures of animals are used. However, Muslim kanthas lack figures, etc. instead they use scroll.

The art of **kantha** died after the first quarter of the 20th century. It is not known when it began again, the new kantha, though same in technique, with widely spaced designs resembles more with certain type of paintings in Bihar and Bengal.

#### b) Cikan

It is done mainly in white cotton thread on white cotton. The embroidery is composed of large or small, simple or inverted satin-stitch, button holing, darn-stitch, knot-stitch, netting and applique. The art developed at Lucknow under the patronage of the rulers of Avadh. Both, Hindu and Muslim craftsmen are skilled in the craft. At present five different styles of cikan work are common: **taipchi**, **khatwa**, **bakhia**, **murri** and **phanda** and **jali**.

#### c) Applique work

The traditional homes of applique and patchwork are Kutch, Saurashtra, Orissa (Pipli), Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu. The people of Bmini in Kutch make a variety- of dhadki, spread-cum-quilt by using the applique work technique. Similarly, Kathis, Rajputs, Mers, Kunbis, Vania, etc. of Saurashtra use both applique and patchwork technique.

In applique technique motifs are cut out from coloured fabric and applied to a plain ground, normally white, to create a range of patterned spreads, quilts, costumes, etc. Motifs like human figures, animals, and flowers are also cut out and applied to the ground/plain cloth.

#### d) Phullcari (flower work)

It is a form of embroidery of Punjab done in darn-stitch over counted threads by using floss-silk thread on coarse madder red or indigo blue homespun cotton. It is traditionally done by Hindu Jat women on **odhnis**, skirts and blouses. Now-a-days, besides the traditional phulkari (in which pattern is sparsely spread) '**bagh**' (garden) technique in which dense silk embroidery is used; patterns in which only edges are covered; and sisader or mirror work (started for American exports) embroidery are also common.

**e) Ari Bharat**

It is a chain stitch embroidery done primarily by Gujarat women. In this floral medallions and peacocks predominates. The Meghvals, Ahirs, Rabaris, Kathis, and Garasias use figurative motifs, local narratives and Puranic legends unlike their counterparts the Islamic Banias

**Check Your Progress-2**

1) What is Brocaded Textile?

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2) What is azarak. Discuss various processes involved in the production of azarak.

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3) Match the following:

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| i) Bagh.     | a) Bengal                   |
| ii) Cikan    | b) Kashmiri                 |
| iii) Jamewar | c) Hyderabad and Aurangabad |
| iv) Kantha   | d) Lucknow                  |
| v) Himroo    | e) Punjab                   |

**13.3.4 Naqshabandhas**

In the history of textile design **naqshabandhas** occupy a special place. Today Banaras is the most important centre where **naqshabandhas** function on large scale and their services are requisitioned from as far as Surat, Chanderi, etc. for both silk design and brocade weaves. At first they made the design with steel pens on mica (**abhrak**). These designs are of actual size required in the fabric. Then it is transferred on the loom. The weavers then lift the design by calculating warp and weft ends, etc. per inch.

In the carpet weaving designs are transferred to the weave by the **naqash** through **talim** or boli speech technique. The **naqash** draws the actual designs on a plain piece of paper; then draws squares in red, each square expected to represent five stitches. Usually the patterns are reproduced in the full size. Then the colourist marks down each colour on this graph. With the introduction of graph paper, the designer uses one square as a stitch this makes designing far more accurate. An **Aliph** separates one unit from the other. (See Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, **Carpets and Floor Coverings** of India, pp 58-61).

### 13.3.5 Silk Technology

We have already discussed in Sub-section how silkworms are produced on various types of trees and the variety of silkworms hatched for producing various kinds of silks. You have also seen that various kinds of silk are produced by extracting raw silk from different variety of cocoons. Brushing and reeling of silkworms are done in the early stage of larva. Reeling is the part of unwinding the filament of raw silk from cocoons and it is done on locally constructed machines of great simplicity. Reeling should be done before the moth pierce out of the cocoon. Generally moth pierce out of the cocoon on the 9-10th day of cocoon formation. Reeling of tasar cocoon is quite hard. To sort and reel the silk, a skein is moistened and thrown round the pitara, a rough circular bamboo cage. Raw silk is sorted, reeled and twisted by women. In reeling women sit together with cords and the skein of silk is thrown over the cords. After reeling it is then dyed by the weaver himself and the part intended for the warp is sent to the warper.

### 13.3.6 Wool Weaving Technology

We have already seen in previous Sub-section how the wool is extracted from sheeps and goats. But it involves a tedious process to convert sheep and goats' hair into wool. For cleaning and separating a wool (from hair) husked rice is steeped in clean cold water for a day and night or longer, until it becomes soft; then it is grounded or bruised upon a stone slab, to fine flour. Thin layers of this and of the picked wool are laid alternately and squeezed with hand until they are completely intermixed. Soap is never used as it makes the wool harsh. After this being treated for an hour the flour is shaken out, the wool opened and torn to pieces, chiefly by the nails and made into somewhat square, thin, elastic pads called tumbu.

In this process phiri or seconds' wool is extricated. The tumbu is then worked out into a thin, flat roving called mala. The mala is folded into the size of the tumbu and is deposited in a deep pot of red earthenware called taskas till it required for spinning.

### **Kashmiri Shawls**

Kashmiri woollen industry used altogether a different technique not otherwise followed in India but in Central Asia and Persia. Therefore, it is conjectured that originally Turkish immigrants must have started shawl weaving industry in Kashmir. In shawl weaving Kashmiris use twill-tapestry technique in which wefts are inserted by means of floating wooden bobbins (tojis) on a simple loom without the use of a shuttle. The weft threads alone form the patterns and the warp threads are used only where a particular colour is needed in the pattern. Even much before the weaving is actually beginning six specialists is involved. The warp-makers, warp-dresser, warp-threader, the pattern drawer, the colourist and the talim-writer. The master weaver controlled the loom. The actual weaving of one shawl is done on ten looms, each loom working on a particular section of the shawl. These sections are finally handed over to a group of specialist (rafoogars) to find out the defects in the design and to finely join the pieces so that joints would be invisible.

The combination of the woven and embroidered shawl technique is developed in the late 19th century. Here larger areas were woven in twill-tapestry technique while smaller areas were embroidered by the **rafoogars**. They are such an expert that they embroider in such a fashion that the shawl could be used on either side. It is to the credit of Khawaja Yusuf who utilized the expertise of **rafoogars** for imitating fine weaving shawls through embroidery in early 19th century. These shawls cost much less. Today, Kashmiri shawl industry is dominated by these embroidered rather than of woven shawls.

#### **13.3.7 Organization of Textile Production**

In this Sub-section we will discuss various craftsmen involved in the process of textile production.

Weavers are assisted by large number of craftsmen. Peasants grow the cotton (**kapas**); cotton carder (**dhunia**) extracts the seeds and loosens the fibre; and spinning is done largely by women. Then comes the class of weavers who weave the yarn and produce the final product. The Muslim weavers are known as **julahas** or **Momins**. In weaving role of the naqshabandha is very crucial. They are the persons who design the patterns for the weavers accordingly they weave. After the cloth is ready bleaching is done. Lime juice has long been used for bleaching in India. Bleachers are generally Hindus (of dhobi caste).

Then there are **nurdeeahs** who arrange the threads that is to be displaced during bleaching. **Rafoogars** are employed to repair cloth that has been injured during bleaching; in removing weavers' knots from threads, joining broken threads and forming gold and silver headings on the

cloth. **Dagh Dhobis** (washermen) remove spots and stains. **Koondegners** are workers who beat cloth. Special ironers iron the cloth. Cloth are folded by **murdeeahs** and formed into bales by bustabands.

For making woollen shawls also a large machinery of craftsmen got involved. **Nakatu** adjusts the yarn for the warp and weft; **tazahguru** determines the proportion of yarn of different colours to be employed. The pattern drawer draws the pattern, **naqqash** fills the colours into it; talim-writer annotate the designs by written short hand indicating the number of warp threads to be covered with different colours; work of **purusgar** is that of cleaner. He frees the shawl from discoloured yarn, ends, and knots, etc.

Women are largely employed in the handloom sector. In the carpet industry large number of children is also employed. Both the classes are highly underpaid and exploited by their employees.

### Check Your Progress-3

1) Who are **Naqshabandhas**? What role do they play in the textile production?

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2) Discuss the process of wool making.

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## 13.4 INDIAN COSTUMES

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**Rig Veda**, the earliest Indian literature, refers to two garments vasa (the lower garment) and the **adhivasa** (the upper garment). Kalidasa mentions to various kinds of dresses worn on various occasions — hunting dresses, dresses worn by repentant and love-stricken persons, by **abhisarikas**, etc. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller (A.D. 7th century) refers that, "their (Indians') clothing is not cut or fashioned.... The men wind their garments round their middle, then gather them under the armpits, and let them fall down across the body, hanging to the right. The robes of women fall to the ground; they completely cover their shoulders " Alberuni,

commenting during the 11th century, says, "They (the Hindus) use turbans for trousers ... those who like much dress, wear trousers billed with so much cotton as would suffice to make a number of counterpanes and saddle-bags. These trousers have no (visible) openings, and they are so huge that the feet are not visible. The string by which the trousers are fastened is at the back ..."

Thus very little stitched garments were used by the Indians prior to the coming of the Muslims. The use of scissors and the needle to cut and sew up pieces of cloth to make dresses come probably with the Muslims. One finds great change in the style of Indian costumes under Persian influence ever since. Abul Fazl in his *Ain-i Akbari* refers to long list of costumes prepared in the Mughal karkhanas. He says, "His Majesty (Akbar) has changed the names of several garments, and invented new and pleasing terms. Akbar affected change of fashion by ordering court dress to be made with a round skirt to be tied on the right side. Throughout the Mughal period, one of the most fancied articles of costume was a patka (girdle) into which the ceremonial daggla (sword) was slipped."

Today, modern India is filled with diversity of dresses. Rajput women wear voluminous **ghagara**, brief **choli** and **orhna**; the tight **pyjamas** and long **kurta** is worn by U.P. Muslim women, **salwar** and **kameez** by Punjabi women. But **saree** is the traditional and most common of the Indian dress worn by a peasant woman to a most modern urban lady. Its worn in almost all parts of India. But specific regions have their own style of tying it — Coorg women will tie it in an entirely different manner than a Maharashtrian women. Similar is the case with Gujarati, Bengali or Assamese style of tying sarees around. In Bihar and U.P. married women wear a veil over the head as a sign of modesty. One finds not only regional variations in the style of tying sarees around, but the length of the sarees too differed from place to place. Maharashtra women wear nine gaz saree while sarees of South India varies from seven to ten yards in length. In the North saree varies from 5 to 6 yards. Generally in Maharashtra and South India (except Kerala) women draw pleats to the rear through the legs. In Andhra Pradesh for the wedding rituals the pleats are drawn behind and tucked in at the waist. The Bengali women displays the decorative crosswise border, half in front and half on the hip. In North India and Gujarat the border shows wholly on the front. The front pleats are tucked into the peticot. The Santhal women of Bihar wear six yard saree and worn to fall just below the knee. The saree does not go over the head and part of the right breast is exposed. Generally speaking, bride wear red colour saree, preferably Banarasi. Now-a-days **ghaghara** is also in fashion and urban girls like to wear richly adorned **ghaghra** and **odhna**. But Punjabi brides wear bright colour richly embroidered salwar-kameez with embroidered odhna. Similarly, Muslim bride also prefers **salwar-kameez-odhna**, **garara**, and **sharara**.

Kashmiri women wear salwar and long tunic (**pheran**). A sleeveless jacket of embroidered velvet of a dark shade is occasionally used over the **pheran**. A scarf similar to the ordna completes their outfit. Women generally tuck their scarf into the cap. A skull cap with fine embroidery is the typical head-dress. It is customary for a bride to wear a veil at her wedding.

Dresses of both Muslim and Hindu brides are the same, but the head-dress shows a slight difference. The Hindu bridal cap (**taranga**) is more decorative than the Muslim cap (**kasaba**). The long **pheran** and salwar used in Kashmir are also popular in Himachal Pradesh.

Tribal people have their own distinctive costumes. The Assam women still wore the traditional **mekhla** or **sarong** and **chadar**. The **mekhla** is a straight cut skirt worn around the waist reaching to the ankles. The lower half of the skirt is richly embroidered. The chadar is embroidered and of a length of three yards. It is worn by unmarried women. After marriage the bride has an additional piece for the middle part - the riha, which is just a scarf wrapped around the waist.

Traditionally men wear **dhoti**, **kurta** and **chadar** gathered pyjama, short pyjama, **lungis**, **sherwani**, **achakan**, **pagree** (turban), cap, etc. But under Western influence both men and women's fashions have undergone a change. Suits and English coat has taken place of Indian sherwanis. For casual wear pant-shirt is a firm favourite. Girls too like to wear skirts and trousers.

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### 13.5 TEXTILE POLICY AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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Today handloom industry is the largest sector. It accounts for nearly 30 per cent of the total textile production in the country. There are about 3.8 million handlooms and about 10 million people depend on them. Thus, with such vast stakes involved, naturally, this sector has to attract the prime attention of the Government of India. Today, handloom sector is an important component of the policy of 'self sufficiency.'

In 1949, for the first time systematic attempts are taken by the government to develop the handloom sector with the aim i) to provide economic stability to the artisans, and ii) to make the handloom products available for export to earn foreign exchange. As a result **All India Handloom Board**, **the Handicrafts Board** and the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission** are set up. **Cooperative Units** are also set up in which membership is extended to the craftsmen. Modern research and design laboratories are established to supplement the work of the craftsmen. In almost all the prime cities **Central Handicraft Emporium** and Emporiums of state governments are set up.

Successive five year plans provided support to the handloom sector. As a result the plan outlay has gone from Rs. 11.10 crores, during the 1st plan to Rs. 168 crores for the seventh plan. In the textile policy 1978, 1981, 1985 handlooms got the primary importance. The 1981 textile policy aimed at (i) to achieve the maximum possible growth of the handloom sector, and (ii) employment generation and raising the standard of living of small weavers and revival of

dormant looms as well as their modernisation. The 1985 policy further added (i) introduction of technical innovations in the looms used by the weavers to improve the productivity and the quality of production, and (ii) transfer of technology from research institutions to the actual weavers.

Parliament has passed the handlooms act in 1985. It resulted in the establishment of three regional enforcement offices at Delhi, Pune, and Coimbatore. It also launched an intensive programme for publicity and promotion. As a result of these policies in 1992-93 38 lakh working looms produced 47180 lakh metres of cloth while exports went to 1033.27 crores in 1992-93 as against 841 crores in 1990-91.

For the promotion and development of silk industry separate Central Silk Board (CSB) was constituted in 1949. Until now **CSB** has established some research institutes for mulberry in Mysore and Berhampur and one for **tasar** at Ranchi. Besides, in almost all the silk producing **states regional research stations** are set up along with the **extension centres** to translate the fruits of the research into the fields. To accelerate the silk production a National multi-crore sericulture project with the aid of World Bank and Swiss government is presently working (1989-90 to 1995- 96). As a result of governments' efforts silk production increased from 10653 metric tons in 1988-89 to 11863 metric tons in 1991-92.

But still lot more is to be done to protect and develop this sector. Research shows that minor modifications in machines and processes can increase the productivity up to 50 per cent. Therefore, there is need to concentrate on research to improve the quality and productivity of handlooms. Besides, in spite of the fact that number of Cooperatives and Corporations have emerged, weavers have to largely depend on brokers/middlemen for marketing their goods and obtaining raw material. Sericulturists face more problems in marketing their cocoons for they are forced to sell the cocoons at the prevailing prices, as the moth emerges piercing out of the cocoon on the ninth or tenth day of the cocoon formation thus rendering the cocoon useless. Still more is to be done to ensure that the real profit be reaching the weavers. Weavers also face credit problems. They need to get, both, short term and long term loans on easy terms. For this purpose though in 1983 NABARD is set up. But, these schemes have yet to reach the weavers. Even the proper costing of their products need to be scientifically done. For sericulture there is need to get better foreign variety seeds to improve the quality of the silk.

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## **13.6 TEXTILES, COSTUMES AND TOURISM**

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Today, tourism, textiles and costumes are closely linked. One cannot separate cultural tourism and textiles. You will find special visits of tourists are arranged to famous textile centres to give them firsthand knowledge about the traditional methods of weaving and printing in India.

Besides, special interest tour/packages are also organised to traditional weaving centres. Specific crafts museums are established where the artefacts are displayed. The famous Calico museum of Ahmedabad, where rare art pieces relating to costumes, textiles, and textile technology, artisans' tools, etc. are preserved, is an important place of tourist attraction.

Handloom is the present day craze. In each tourism promotional brochures textiles of the particular region forms the foremost place. Even the foreign tourist who come to visit India love to buy Indian hand-woven textiles. Increasing demand of Indian hand woven textiles in the world market is an ample proof of the interest taken by foreign tourists in Indian textiles. When a tourist visits a place, the first thing he/she would like to do is to roam in the market and enjoy watching local costumes and textiles. You can see foreigners (especially women) attempting to fold sarees around. The increase in the textile demand during the tourist season is the clear indicator that tourist is attracted towards the local costumes and textiles. You must have, as a tourist, shown interest in the regional and local costumes and cloth at the places visited. Tourist love to take textile pieces/garments, etc. as souvenir for their friends and relatives.

**Check Your Progress-4**

1) Examine the changes brought about in the Indian costumes during the medieval period.

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2) Discuss the problems faced by handloom sector.

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3) What role can the textile industry play for the promotion of tourism?

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## 13.7 LET US SUM UP

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India is perhaps one of the most ancient civilizations with a tradition of textile production. India is famous for her ikat (Orissa, Andhra Pradesh), bandhani (Gujarat, Rajasthan), **Masoria** (Rajasthan), **jamdani** (U.P., Bengal) fabrics. The most ancient techniques used by the Indian weavers are resist dye. Both yarn resists (ikat) and tie-dye (**bandhani**) was known to them. Besides, block printing was also done. Indian **jamdanis** can also be traced back to ancient period. With Turkish and Iranian contact certain new features were introduced in the Indian textiles. Kashmiri woollen industry with its twill-tapestry owes entirely to the Turkish immigrants. Kalamkari too has great Persian influences. These outside contacts influenced the style of designs too. India is also rich in its embroidered clothing. One would find large variety of embroidery done in various parts of India from fine **cikan** of Lucknow to applique of Kutch, etc. In spite of such rich tradition of textile production one would still find the weavers' loom used is very primitive in technique (pit loom). In the North-East back strap loom is prevalent which makes the weaving highly uneconomical. Government is taking special interest to develop handloom sector. Many research laboratories, corporative, etc. are set up; credit facilities on easy terms are made available; but still lot more is to be done.

As for Indian costumes, interestingly Indians continued to show their preference for unstitched costumes for long. A change is, however, visible when Indians came in direct contact of the Muslims during the medieval period. Another phase of change in the costume style came with the coming of the Europeans.

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## 13.8 KEYWORDS

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<b>Azarak</b>	resist printed fabric from Kutch and Sind;
<b>Ashwali</b>	Silk sarees woven in Ahmedabad and Surat
<b>Bandhani</b>	tie-and-dye fabric;
<b>Bakhia.</b>	embroidery on fine muslin by the short inverted satin stitch so as to create a shadow of opaque on the face of the fabric
<b>Bandha</b>	ikat of Orissa
<b>Chope</b>	Holbein stitch embroidery of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
<b>Gajji</b>	satin
<b>Garad</b>	natural colour silk
<b>Himroo</b>	a similar variety of mashru of mixed silk and cotton but with a texture that is almost as fine as muslin
<b>Ikat</b>	tie-and-dye yarn woven to make a pattern
<b>Jali</b>	embroidery done on netting created by pushing aside the warp and the weft of the material by needle
<b>Jamewar</b>	woven woollen Kashmir shawl with an all over pattern
<b>Khatwa</b>	embroidery done on calico by a combination of fine appliqué and taipchi

<b>Kani</b>	multiple weft patterned Kashmir 'shawl
<b>Kalamkari</b>	patterning of cloth with dyes and use of pen
<b>Kimkhab</b>	gold brocade
<b>Muri and Phande</b>	embroidery on muslin by means of extremely fine knots created minute satin stitches
<b>Mashru</b>	a mixed variety of striped cotton and silk weave. The basic warp is of silk and the woof or weft is of various coloured cottons. The wearing of pure silk fabric at prayers is prohibited among Muslims. Hence this fabric was introduced
<b>Moga</b>	golden coloured silk of Assam
<b>Masoria</b>	fine net like cotton cloth of Kota, Rajasthan
<b>Pashmina</b>	fine quality sheep wool extracted from pashm sheep
<b>Patola</b>	double ikat of Patan
<b>Pachedi</b>	long cotton dhoti with coloured cross border worn in Saurashtra
<b>Pile Carpets</b>	technique of carpet making with the help of loops made on the surface of the fabric
<b>Sarong</b>	a shorter length of cotton (or silk) cloth worn around the breast below the arm pits, reaching halfway between knee and ankle
<b>Shahtoosh</b>	kind of quality wool, from the undercoat of mountain goats
<b>tanchoi</b>	silk brocade, originally woven in Surat
<b>tantair:</b>	cotton
<b>taipchi:</b>	embroidery done on muslin in the simple darn stitch

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### 13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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#### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Differentiate between two different variety of silks. See Sub-Sec.13.3.1
- 2) See Sub-Sec.13.3.2

#### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-Sec.13.3.3 i(a)
- 2) See Sub-Sec.13.3.3 ii(c)
- 3) i) Punjab ii) Lucknow iii) Kashmir iv) Bengal v) Hyderabad and Aurangabad

#### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sub-Sec.13.3.4
- 2) Discuss the process involved in making wool from sheeps' hair. See Sub-.S Sec.13.3.6.

### APPENDIX

## TEXTILES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Appplique and **patch work** Rampur (U.P.); Kutch, Saurashtr. (Gujarat); Pipli (Orissa); **Bengal; Bihar; Andhra Pradesh; and Tamilnadu**

<b>Ari Bharat</b> (Embroidery)	Gujarat
<b>Ashwali</b> :	Ahmedabad Sarees
<b>Bagh</b> :	Punjab
(Embroidery)	
<b>Baluchari</b> :	Baluchar (Bengal)
Sarees	
<b>Bandhani</b> (tie and dye)	
:	Jamnagar, Bhuj, and Mandvi (in Kutch); Jodhpur, Jaipur, and <b>Sikar</b> (in
<b>Rajasthan)</b>	
<b>Bed Spreads</b> and	<b>Haryana</b>
rough coarse cloth	
<b>Blankets</b>	Garhwal and Kumaun (in U.P; gudma and thulma variety of blankets are produced here); Amritsar (Punjab)
<b>Carpets</b>	Darjeeling (West Bengal); Chamba and Sangla (Himachal Pradesh); Warangal and Eluru (Andhra Pradesh); Obra (Bihar); Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh); Panipat (Haryana); Palampur, Amritsar (Punjab); Srinagar (Kashmir); Mirzapur (U.P.)
<b>Cikankari</b>	Lucknow (U.P)
<b>Chope</b> (Embroidery)	Haryana
<b>Dhanekhel</b>	Bengal Sarees
<b>Garad</b>	Murshidabad (Bengal silk) sarees
<b>Himroo</b>	Aurangabad (Maharashtra); Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)
<b>Jamdani</b>	Tanda and Banaras (U.P.); Dacca (Bengal)
(Brocade)	
<b>Kalamkari</b>	Masulipatnam (Andhra Pradesh)
<b>Kantha</b>	Bihar and Bengal
(Embroidery)	
<b>Karalakudi</b>	Kerala
(silk sarees)	
<b>Kota sarees</b>	Village Kaithon (Kota, Rajasthan)

### **Kodalikuruppur sarees**

Thanjavur (Tamilnadu); it is specially produced for the consumption of Thanjavur royal family

### **Moga Silk**

Assam (Sualkonchi is the major centre of moga silk **production**)

### **Molkalmuru sarees**

Karnataka (with ikat patterns)

**Pachedis (Lungis)** Saurashtra and North Gujarat

**Patola :** Patan  
(ikat Patterns)

**Pochampalli** Pochampalli village (today the whole Nalgonda district expertise in  
(ikat patterns) ikat weaving)

**Phulkari** Punjab  
(Embroidery)

**Sarongs** North-East (Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, and Arunachal Pradesh)

**Saugandhi sarees** Madurai (Tamilnadu; produced for the consumption of Saurashtrian community settled at Tamilnadu)

**Shantipur** Bengal

**Sodagiri** Pethapur (Gujarat)

### **Prints**

**South Cotton sarees** Nagercoil, Coimbatore, Salem and Madurai (in Tamilnadu); Arni, Puddukottai, Armur, Narayanpet, Siddipet, Sangareddy, Peddapuram, Wanaparti, eladwal, and Ponduru (in Andhra Pradesh)

**Tanchoi** Surat (Gujarat now its production is closed down here); Banaras (U.P.)

**Tantair** Bengal

### **Sarees**

**Telia rumals** Andhra Pradesh (it has great demand in Gulf Countries)  
(with ikat patterns)

### **WOOLLEN SHAWLS**

**Shahtoosh** Kashmir

**Pashmina** Kashmir (Dhusa)

**Pankhis** Garhwal and long Pashmina Kumaun (U.P)

**Jamewar** Kashmir, Amritsar (Punjab)

**Tie-and-dye shawl** Saurashtra and Kutch (Gujarat)

**Checked and  
plains shawls  
Thick Tweed  
Shawls**

Kinnaur, Lahul, Spiti and Kulu in Himachal Pradesh

Garhwal and Kumaun (U.P.)



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