

Characteristics of Indian Traditional Costumes and its Application in Contemporary Fashion Design as a Cross-Cultural Phenomenon

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Abstract This study deals with the ongoing trend of cross-cultural phenomenon as a hybrid trend in fashion and examines the cross-culture of luxury fashion brands and Indian traditional costumes that has become a new source of attraction for designers in the fashion industry. Indian traditional costumes serve as a potential source of inspiration in the global fashion industry but it has not penetrated significantly. The motive of this study is to scrutinize the characteristics of Indian traditional costumes and derive their meaning to identify how these elements have inspired designers on the contemporary fashion stage by focusing on three design collaborations- Dior and Chanakya, H&M and Sabyasachi, and Suketdhir and Banarasi Weaves. First, it identifies how Indian traditional costumes have influenced different fashion segments in terms of fusion wear, designer collaborations, bollywood movie costume, as well as sustainable fashion. It then employs an image analysis of 30 fashion collaboration images. From the analysis, it derives the characteristics of Indian Traditional Costumes that act as a source of inspiration for the fashion brands. Ultimately, this research will form the basis for future studies as it gives a detailed outline of Indian Costumes, paving new forms of globalization and cultural exchange.

Keywords Cross culture, Cross culture in fashion, Ethnic fashion, Indian traditional costumes

Citation Shukla, A. & Park, H. (2023). Characteristics of Indian Traditional Costumes and its Application in Contemporary Fashion Design as a Cross-Cultural Phenomenon. *International Journal of Costume and Fashion*, 23(2), 27-44.

Introduction

Wherever people come from or wherever people go, it doesn't matter. The culture and therefore identity is in a continued evolution, an alter that looks back and forward in history (The Open College of Arts, 2017). This cultural change and exchange has given rise to the idea of cross-culture, and it has evolved as a recurrent phenomenon in the lives of ultra modern individuals and mankind and a major trend in 21st century fashion (Zou & Joneurairatana, 2020). Cross-culture also plays a vital role in globalization as it emphasizes the intercultural properties of different countries.

Concurrently, clothing is a worthwhile medium that distinguishes each culture and mirrors an individual's identity (Entwistle, 2015). Cultural values are directly related to the perception of an individual in terms of clothing. As clothing plays a vital role in visualizing and representing the specificity of one's identity, self-regard, or belief. Successful communication of these values through one's appearance gives individuals a sense of contentment (Choi et al., 2022).

On the other hand, the traditional attires worn by people

Received August 29, 2023; Revised November 16, 2023; Accepted December 7, 2023

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associated with peculiar ethnic groups are termed as ethnic fashion (Hayden Hill, 2023). There are many types of ethnic fashion that feature intricate designs, vibrant colors, and various shapes and sizes, each unique to its own culture, such as the dresses from China, Japan, India, the Middle East, South-east Asia, and even parts of Northern Africa. All these dresses were mixed together in the minds of Europeans (Yu et al., 2001). There are both positive and negative perspectives on this cultural hybrid, as some view that they presented the charm of oriental culture as a perfect alternative with exotic mystery (Martin & Koda, 1994), while others point out that orientalist fashion is a distorted view that is treated as a fringe idea with the concept of the other from the Eurocentric Western imperialist viewpoint (Seo, 2014). This puts forth the idea of culture interchange and interaction by the means of clothing and later the new addition to the list was mixing elements of different cultures, therefore the metamorphosis of fusion wears, hybrid fashion, and cross-culture in fashion design came into existence. Fusion fashion is a movement that incorporates amalgamation of two or more varying cultures' clothing and accessory styles and creating a distinctive look emblematic of each individual's cultural upbringing (Khan, 2021). Anything ranging from Kurtis worn over plain jeans, sarees with crop tops and lehengas with shirts are examples of fusion wear (Moledro, 2023). Hybrid fashion refers to a style that combines elements from various sources, such as different cultures, historical periods, or fashion genres. The main focus of hybrid fashion is combining the elements in the right way to make something novel and exceptional (Rose, 2018). Cross-cultural fashion, on the other hand, emphasizes the 'cross' and 'leapfrogging' between different cultures (Zou & Joneurairatana, 2020). This involves drawing inspiration from the traditional clothing, textiles, patterns, or symbols of one or more cultures and integrating them into contemporary fashion designs. Cross-cultural fashion often celebrates and showcases the diversity of global cultures. This study is focused on cross-culture in fashion design by the means of Indian traditional costumes.

Generally, cross-culture speaks to the ability of designers to design by traversing spatial and cultural boundaries. The hypothesis of cross culture has gained importance critically with the globalization of businesses. Fashion is a non-verbal

way of expressing cultural exchange. Over the years, there has been a steady stream of research in the field of fashion design on cross-culturalism, both nationally and internationally, for instance, Cross-cultural study based on traditional symbols by Zou & Joneurairatana in 2020, Characteristics of cultural appropriation by Vézina in 2019, Cross-culture study based on influence of ethnic dresses by Yu et al. in 2001, and Cross-culture study focused on the impact of traditional Indian Clothing on Italian fashion by Colaiacomo & Caratozzolo in 2010. Cross-culture between Indian embroideries and luxury houses has a long relationship, although Indian costumes have not penetrated significantly (The New York Times, 2023). Therefore, there remains enormous scope for research in this area. Thus, this study aimed to define the concept of cross-cultural fashion and the role of Indian traditional costumes to identify the characteristics of contemporary fashion styles.

For this purpose, this study explores the possibilities of localization for fashion design development as a part of the cross-cultural phenomenon to examine two research questions; 1) What are the characteristics and meaning of Indian traditional costumes? 2) How Indian traditional costumes have inspired western brands in the contemporary world as a cross-culture prodigy? In order to achieve this, this research focuses on the cross-culture collaborations of Indian traditional costumes in the past 5 years to study the recent addition in this field while analyzing the past and finalized three collections most relevant to this category such as Dior's collaboration with Chanakya, releasing their pre-fall collection with Indian aesthetics in March 2023 (The New York Times, 2023), H&M's collaboration with Sabyasachi Mukherjee to launch the wanderlust collection in August 2021 (Zeezest, 2021), and Suketdhir's spring 2023 collection inspired from banarasi weave (Suketdhir, 2010).

The most relevant and representative images showcasing the characteristics of Indian traditional costumes in the collections were selected by 10 fashion experts, including PhD. students, lecturers and fashion practitioners within fashion fields and finally 30 images were selected by the author to give a contrasting insight into cross-culture properties of Indian traditional costumes. This research will help in delivering the elements of Indian traditional costumes

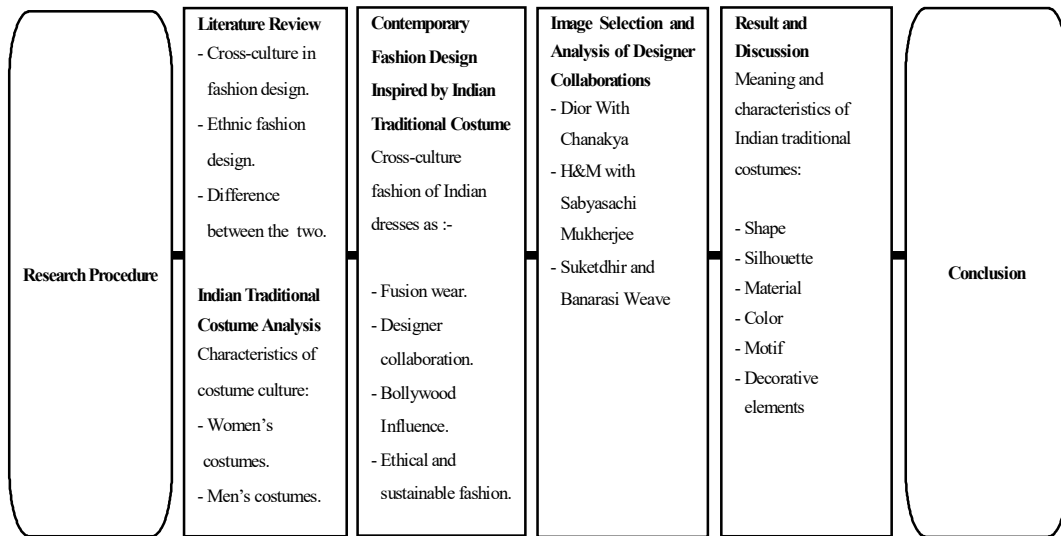


Figure 1. Research methodology

as well as artistic designs meeting and deriving the phenomenon of cross-cultural fashion. However, the analysis is conducted only for specific luxury brands with a limited amount of data. Thus, the practical application of these cross-cultural properties is also limited. Therefore, more collections focused on Indian traditional costumes need to be examined to achieve clearer results for a better understanding of this amalgamation in modern fashion.

Literature Review

Cross-Culture in Fashion Design

Associating with, or juxtaposing, two different nations or cultural zones is denoted as cross-culture. It involves acknowledging the existence and survival of many societies and classes along with the desire to create bridges between them (Kopp, 2023). Cross-cultural design indicates the capability of design products, or design-producing entities, to traverse cultural boundaries (Tai, 2008). Extracting elements from different cultures and merging them is beneficial for both cultures. Clothing is a representative channel that not only expresses an individual's identity but also symbolizes their values, beliefs, taste, cultural and social circumstances.

The provocations for dressing up are diverse and interconnected to social and cultural factors (Choi et al., 2022). As interactions among various cultures intensify around the globe, cultural mixing and blending become inevitable. In fact, cross-culture is an essential feature of multicultural and non-segregated societies (Avins, 2015). More specifically, global trends increase demand for authentic designs originating from source communities, spurring the local economy and raising their cultural profile (Scafidi, 2014).

Fashion is an important feature of cultural, social, and economic activity (Amed et al., 2018). Although fashion depends on the creativity of the designers within the fashion industry, it also depends on inspiration from other cultures. Fashion designers often indulge in taking from other cultures to such an extent that this is one of the major driving forces behind the design process (Pouillard & Kuldova, 2017; Sunder, 2000). The fashion industry's breakneck pace of innovation and overwhelming appetite for novelty and difference often push designers to look further away to foreign cultures in order to appear fresh (Varagur, 2015). This led to the emergence of the fusion of ethnic or tribal elements from different cultures. This trend involves incorporating distinct elements, motifs, textiles, or techniques from various cultures into modern fashion designs, creating a

unique and eclectic style. This style often blends elements from multiple cultures, creating a visually rich and diverse fashion trend. For instance, a popular trend in recent years has been the fusion of traditional Asian and Western fashion elements - inspired silhouettes into contemporary western-style. This blending of cultural aesthetics has resulted in stunning designs that appeal to a global audience and bridge the gap between different fashion traditions. It celebrates rich and diverse cultural heritages, while promoting cultural appreciation. The designers are involved in this not only because of the appeal of Indigenous aesthetics, but also because of the values that are uniqueness and authenticity as well as a sense of ethics and respect for the environment in the clothes-making process (Manchiraju & Sadachar, 2014). Therefore cross-culture fashion is a method of representing different cultures merged together in such a way that it represents the identity of the cultures involved uniquely. It is not only the portrayal of different cultures but also the people

and their beliefs that they carry with them. It is a major trend in the current fashion industry and has inspired various designers to look for inspirations from different cultures or regions. One of those is Indian traditional costumes. With a wide range of costumes with multiple design elements, motifs, and techniques, it is serving as a great source for cultural mix in this phenomenon.

Exotic Taste Fashion

The previous researches and available data, show that the last century has seen a rise in designers incorporating non-European cultures into their designs. Historical examples range from French designer Paul Poiret's Harem pants (Figure 3) and tunics in the 1910s, inspired by the cultures of the Middle East and Turkey (Reddy, 2018) to Yves Saint Laurent's beaded and feathered African collection (Figure 4) in 1967, inspired by African handicrafts (Splendid Habitat, 2013).

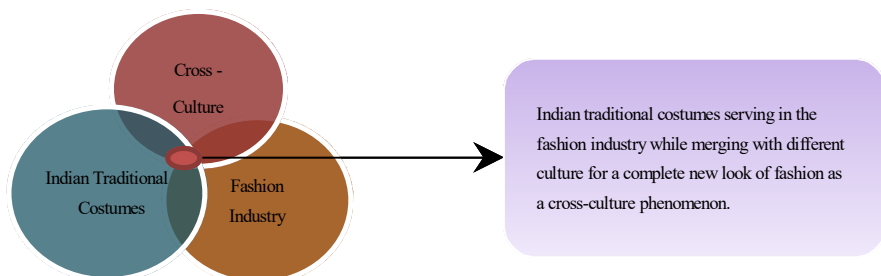


Figure 2. Cross-culture phenomenon in terms of Indian traditional costumes in fashion field



Figure 3. Paul Poiret. Fancy dress costume, 1911. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983)



Figure 4. Yves Saint Laurent: African Collection (Splendid Habitat, 2013)



Figure 5. Coco Chanel-The Russian period. Silk georgette dress, 1922. (Anderson, 2020)



Figure 6. Germana Marucelli. Evening gown. (Colaiacono & Caratozzolo, 2010)

2013). Later Coco Chanel worked with time-honored Russian embroideries on tunics (Figure 5) in her early collections in the 1920s (Mcauley, 2017). During the first international clothing conference in the fall of 1956, Italian designer Germana Marucelli represented her evening gown (Figure 6) inspired by the Indian sari (Colaiacono & Caratozzolo, 2010).

Thus, the use of traditional dress from non-European regions often appeared in the Eurocentric fashion world of the early and mid-20th century, but it is believed that it represented a mystical design tendency or a kind of exotic taste tendency through the application of some cross-cultural elements.

Ethnic Fashion Design

Ethnic fashion refers to fashion styles that belong to a particular ethnic group or society. There are many types of ethnic fashion that feature intricate designs, vibrant colors, and various shapes and sizes, each unique to its own culture (Hayden Hill, 2023). Ethnic fashion is the image of the culture and traditions of a community. It usually features the craftsmanship and artistic sensibility representing the unique colors, patterns, motifs, techniques, and embroidery, reflecting the identity of the ethnic group (Crown Fabric, 2022). Ethnic fashion not only preserves that identity but also celebrates the cultural heritage of that particular ethnic group. This fashion style varies across different communities around the world, for instance -

Japanese Kimono It is a T-shaped robe for both men and women, with wide sleeves and is worn in a wraparound style and draped from left to right. It is mostly made of silk, linen, and cotton. These are usually worn for formal events, festivals, or special occasions in Japan (Yu et al., 2001).

Indian Saree It is one of the most vivid and prevailing Indian garments. It consists of a long fabric that is wrapped around the body and accompanied by a blouse. It is made of various fabrics such as silk, cotton, chiffon, georgette etc. and mostly embellished with distinctive designs, intricate embroidery, and exquisite embellishments (Kaur & Agrawal, 2019).

Korean Hanbok It is a costume for women and was

constructed in an empire style silhouette. It includes a long skirt called a chima, worn along with a short jacket with a V-neck opening called a chogori and is fastened with a ribbon called an otgorum on the right side using a Korean style knot. Cotton, silk, ramie, and hemp fabric were preferred for the natural colors (Yu et al., 2001).

Chinese Cheongsam/Qipao This dress style features a sam, that is the tunic or jacket, worn over koo the term for trousers, and is fastened up the center on the chest. At first it was cut as a loose and long robe with slits on both sides, and later this was cut with a close-fitting waist and short length. Mostly silk fabric was used with a variety of colors (Yu et al., 2001).

Vietnamese Ao Dai It is a long dress comprised of standing collar worn with trousers. The seams of the ao dai are open on both sides upto the ankles starting from the waist with buttons on the right side. The sleeves are long and fitted on the wrist. Cotton and silk fabrics were used with blue, white, and pink being the prominent colors (Yu et al., 2001).

African Dashiki It is a loose-fitting pullover shirt with vibrant African style prints and embroideries and is commonly worn in west Africa and has become popular across the world as a symbol of African fashion (Steele, 2005).

Scottish Tartan It is a patterned fabric, consisting of crisscross horizontal and vertical stripes representing different clans and regions. This fabric is used for making different attires such as kilts, scarves, and other traditional Scottish clothing (Black, 1959).

Mexican Huipil It is a blouse featuring vibrant colors, intricate embroidery, and unique patterns, varying across different regions and worn by indigenous women in Mexico (Las Bonitas Boutique, 2021).

In recent years, ethnic fashion has gained in popularity, and has been incorporated into contemporary fashion trends. Designers and fashion brands often draw inspiration from ethnic styles, incorporating motifs, prints, and techniques into their collections. This fusion of traditional and modern elements is called cross-cultural ethnic fashion and it refers to the blending or fusion of fashion elements and styles from different ethnic groups or cultures, transcending cultural boundaries. It celebrates diversity, promotes cultural exchange, and challenges the notion of rigid boundaries in fashion. It

Table 1. Breakdown of cross-culture fashion and ethnic fashion

Cross - Culture Fashion	Ethnic Fashion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cross-cultural fashion involves the fusion or blending of fashion elements and styles from different cultures or ethnic groups (Osborne, 2023). - It incorporates diverse influences, motifs, and techniques from various cultures into a single fashion style. - Cross-cultural fashion is characterized by the mixing and matching of traditional and contemporary elements from different cultures (Choi et al., 2022). - Cross-cultural fashion can be influenced by factors such as globalization, migration, travel, and cultural exchange (Zou & Joneurairatana, 2020). - It promotes diversity, inclusivity, and the appreciation of different cultures by incorporating elements from various traditions into modern fashion (Avins, 2015). - Thus, cross-cultural fashion involves the blending and incorporation of fashion elements from multiple cultures to create a new and inclusive fashion style. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethnic fashion refers to clothing and fashion styles specific to a particular ethnic group (Hayden Hill, 2023). - It showcases the traditional garments, textiles, and accessories that are associated with a specific community (Crown Fabric, 2022). - Ethnic fashion is rooted in the customs, traditions, and artistic sensibilities of a particular culture (Li, 2023). - It often features unique patterns, colors, embroidery, and craftsmanship that reflect the cultural identity of the ethnic group (Hayden Hill, 2023). - Ethnic fashion is typically worn by members of the respective ethnic community and celebrates the identity of that group (Birtles, 2022). - In summary, ethnic fashion focuses on the traditional clothing and fashion styles specific to a particular ethnic group or culture.

allows individuals to express their identity through a fusion of cultural influences, resulting in vibrant expressions.

From the above literature, it is clear that ethnic fashion and multicultural fashion in particular are similar concepts but have distinct differences, which are summarized in (Table 1).

Traditional Indian Costumes

Indian Costume-Culture

In India there are a variety of traditional costumes worn depending upon the geographical region, religion, occasion, and social class. These costumes can have different meanings based upon the elements used, for instance: the color, motifs, draping method, shape, fabric type, fabric quantity used, and stitching method all have different meanings. These traditional costumes are as follows (Table 2):

Women's Costumes

Sari The word sari holds its origin from the Sanskrit word 'sati', that connotes 'a band of cloth'. The sari is a 4 to 9 meters of unstitched fabric that is wrapped around the body as a whole garment. It can be worn in 108 different ways and the most common style is called the Nivi style. Today the Nivi style of wearing sari is eminent and most admired across India (Kaur & Agrawal, 2019).

Salwar kameez It is a two piece divided garment

including slender pants called salwar, topped with a tunic called a kameez and is worn with a scarf called dupatta or odhani. It has different names in different parts of India, like patiala in Punjab, sindhi suthan in sindh, dogri pajama in Himachal Pradesh, and phiran in Jammu and Kashmir (Adegbenro, 2023).










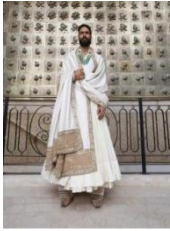


Churidar It is very similar to salwar kameez as it is also a divided two-piece garment worn with a scarf. In this, the pants are fitted from the calf down flowing above the knees. It is worn with long tunics, ranging from below knee length to ankle length (Adegbenro, 2023).

Anarkali It is most popular with north Indian women. The tunic is like a long-paneled jacket with slim pants. Jackets can be long-sleeved, half-sleeved, or sleeveless and the length can be from knee length to floor length. It is usually worn during family functions or gatherings (Adegbenro, 2023).

Lehnga choli It is the traditional clothing of Rajasthan and Gujrat. Lehnga is a form of long skirt that is either pleated or embroidered. Choli is a blouse, cut to fit the body with short or long sleeves and a low neck. In north India it is called ghaghra choli, while in Southern parts of India it is called Langa voni (Adegbenro, 2023).

Mekhala Sador It comprises two pieces of cloth for the top and bottom, which is traditionally worn by women in Assam. The bottom half is called the 'Mekhela' and the top portion is called Chador, which is loose at the end (Sereki, 2022).

Table 2 Indian traditional costumes

Indian Traditional Costume					
Women's Costume			Men's Costume		
Saree	Salwar Kameez	Churidar	Dhoti	Achkan	Bandhgala
					
Saree design (Meg, 2023)	Diwali 2018 (Vaidya, 2018)	Couture 2022. (Sabyasachi, 2022)	Manish Malhotra (Vogue, 2013)	The new collection. (Sabyasachi, 2023b)	@filmfare awards ready. (Malhotra, 2023)
Elongated section of fabric wrapped around the body as a whole garment.	Two piece garment- loose bottom called salwar, upper tunic called kurta, worn with scarf.	Two piece garment with fitted bottom called churidar and straight knee length tunic worn with scarf	Usually a plain piece of 4-6 ft long wrapped around the lower body and secured around the waist mostly using a knot.	It is a formal long jacket with buttons in front and fitted pants, mostly worn by grooms.	It is a formal evening suit that became prominent during the British era.
Anarkali	Lehnga choli	MekhalaSador	Angarakha	Headgear	Shawl
					
Vintage nude Kallidar. (Malhotra, 2021a)	The new collection. (Sabyasachi, 2023a)	Mekhala Sador designs. (Das, 2020)	Ivory angrakha (Malhotra, 2021b)	The new collection. (Sabyasachi, 2023c)	Kashmiri weave stole. (Malhotra, 2021c)
Paneled tunic, long in length, mostly long sleeves worn with slim pants and scarf.	It has a fitted upper bodice with a skirt either flared, circular or pleated and a scarf called odhani.	A two piece garment, the bottom is called mekhala wrapped around the waist and the upper part is called sador.	It is a flared tunic worn by men. The cut is inspired from the protective gears worn by the soldiers in early times.	It is a head accessory and its name and style varies across India, such as, pagri, pheta, peta, dastar, safa.	It is a woolen scarf originally made from pashmina wool that is produced in Kashmir.

Men's Costume

Dhoti It is a 4-6 ft long plain white or colored striped cotton fabric. It is tied and secured at the waist by a knot or by using a belt. Over it, a shirt or kurta is worn. It is called by different names in different languages of India, such as in north Indian plain-dhoti, in Punjabi-chadra, in Gujrati-dhotiya, in Marathi-dhotar, in Telugu-pancha, in Tamil-veyti, and Kannada it is called a lungi (Adegbenro, 2023).

Achkan It is a jacket with buttons throughout the length. The length of the jacket ranges from just below the knee length and the buttons are placed till the knee length. It

is worn with tight trousers mostly by men of north India (Adegbenro, 2023).

Bandhgala It is a western style formal evening suit, with coat, trousers and mostly worn with a vest coat, originated in the Jodhpur city of India and became popular during the British reign. It is also called a jodhpuri suit (Adegbenro, 2023).

Angarakha This word is obtained from the Sanskrit word angarakshak, that means protective gear. It is worn in different parts of India with the same basic cut, but style and length varies from region to region. It is a traditional upper garment which overlaps and is tied near the shoulders (Sawe,

2017).

Headgear Indian turban or pagri is used in almost all regions in the country with different names and tying techniques based upon the region it is worn, such as a *dastar* which is worn by the Sikh community, mostly in Punjab, the *pheta* is worn by Marathi men in the state of Maharashtra, Mysore *peta* is worn by the royal families in Mysore during formal meetings, and the Rajasthani *safa* is the turban worn in Rajasthan. They have distinctive styles and colors that indicate the social caste, region, and occasion, such as in hot and dry regions the size is large and loose, and the saffron color denotes valor. Red, yellow, pink, or multicolored headgear is used for festivals, marriages, or family gatherings. White color stands for mourning and the exchange of turbans stands for undying friendship between the families it is exchanged between (Sawe, 2017).

Shawl It was traditionally made with *pashmina* wool or *shahtoosh* wool found in Kashmir. It is valued for its warmth and light weight. It was originally worn by Mughal royalties. In the 18th century it reached Europe and was worn by

Queen Victoria of the UK. Thus, it is considered a symbol of luxury in India as well as in the West. The mass production industries in Europe producing wool called *cashmere* is inspired from Kashmir wool (Sawe, 2017).

Cross-culture fashion design by traditional Indian dresses

The ethnic influence became more widespread at the end of 1990s and beginning of the 2000s (Vézina, 2019) and resulted in cross-cultural fashion designs that were influenced by Indian traditional dresses. The previous available resources showcase that there are four broad trends; fusion wear, designer collaboration, Bollywood influence, and Ethical and sustainable fashion.

Fusion wear It includes the combination of Indian traditional dress with western silhouettes and styles, creating a cross-cultural fashion statement such as French fashion house *Hermes* featured stylized Indian saris (Figure 7) in its spring/summer 2008 collection (Varagur, 2015). Besides this,



Figure 7. Hermes SS-2008 Runway, Look 42. (Phelps, 2007)



Figure 8. Alexander McQueen Fall 2008. (Lifestyle Asia, 2020)



Figure 9. Dries Van Noten Spring 2010 Runway. (Mower, 2009)



Figure 10. Chanel Pre-fall 2012 collection. (Elizabeth, 2011)



Figure 11. Valentino FW- 2021 Runway, Look 73. (Bowles, 2021)



Figure 12. Valentino FW- 2021 Runway, Look 15. (Bowles, 2021)



Figure 13. Stella McCartney peace silk gown 2018. (Commonwealth Fashion Council, 2018)



Figure 14. Resort'18 collection: Alberta Ferreti. (AEWorld, 2017)

Alexander McQueen Showcased his fall 2008 collection (Figure 8) as an amalgamation of Indian and British couture (Kaur & Agrawal, 2019). Dries van Noten created colorful fabric (Figure 9) with an exotic touch, using Indian ikat, batic, and tie and dye printing techniques (Mcauley, 2017). Coco Chanel showcased the Paris Bombay collection (Figure 10) for pre-fall 2012. All the designs were a fusion of European and Indian fashion (Kaur & Agrawal, 2019).

Collaborations with Indian Artisans Many fashion designers have collaborated with Indian artisans and have created such designs that represent Indian clothing in a modern and global context. Renowned fashion houses like Valentino collaborated with Indian textile artisans and incorporated the Indian silhouettes (Figure 11, 12) for the creation of its fall 2021 collection (Singer, 2021). Besides this, Stella McCartney also collaborated with Indian artisans for common wealth fashion exchange and created a gown (Figure 13) using Oshadi's peace silk, that is hand-woven and naturally dyed by local skilled craftsmen in Tamil Nadu in 2018 (Commonwealth Fashion Council, 2018).

Bollywood influence Indian cinema has played a significant role in popularizing Indian traditional dresses including colors, embellishments, and drape styles. Inspired by the film *Passage to India* released in 1984, Ferretti created Indian touch emphasizing violet madras, jungle prints, and safari tailoring in her resort 2018 collection (Figure 14, 15). She displayed her signature paradisiacal styles with delicate and unimpeachable fabrics (AEWorld, 2017). Designer Anju Modi has famously created an ethnic visual delight inspired by the Hindi film 'Ramleela' by Sanjay Leela Bhansali (Figure 16).

It represented Kediya influence to a great extent, with layered, flaring fabrics and vibrant colors, which were prominent features in Deepika Padukone's exquisite lehengas (Whistling Woods International-School of Fashion & Design, 2013).

Ethical and sustainable fashion The growing interest in ethical and sustainable fashion has given rise to eco-friendly collections with Indian textiles and techniques using handwoven, organic fabric and natural dyes. Anita Dongre a veteran designer, known for her vocal activities in the category of mindful fashion, employs her label Grassroot to revitalize the traditional crafts as well as to empower artisans (Figure 17). Grassroot is eco-friendly linen, handwoven cotton, and animal free by-products (Elle India, 2018). Another designer, Aneeth Arora utilizes dead-stock, upcycled fabrics and converts them into their most prettiest forms by using Indian artisan-ship for contemporary silhouettes (Figure 18) in her brand Pero (Zamindar, 2023).

Results and Discussion

Features and meanings of design elements in traditional Indian costumes

The Indian traditional costumes are studied and the characteristics are derived to determine the meaning behind them. There are 6 factors considered for the analysis, which are represented below (Table 3):

Shape During ancient times, Indian garments were categorized into three parts: antaria - the lower garment; uttaria - the upper garment and; kayabandh - the belt or scarf



Figure 15. Resort '18 collection:
Alberta Ferretti.
(AEWorld, 2017)



Figure 16. Draupadi Couture
Collection '13.
(Ritz Magazine, 2014)





Figure 17. Cool and Comfortable
styles in linen.
(Grassroot by Anita
Dongre, 2023)



Figure 18. Forget me not SS23
by Aneeth Arora for Pero.
(Adlakha, 2023)

Table. 3 Characteristics of Indian traditional costumes

Category of Indian traditional costume	Aspects of Design						
	Shape	Silhouette	Color	Material	Motif	Decorative elements	Meaning
<p>Saree</p> 	Unstitched piece of fabric	Mermaid style, fitted until hips.	Red, yellow, green, saffron, blue, white	Cotton, georgette, chiffon, silk, brocade, organza	Floral, paisley, fish, animal (elephant), banyan tree, Hindu deities	Brocade, pearl or zari embellishment, embroidery (chikankari, kantha), prints (tie and dye, madhubani, batik)	Worn on auspicious occasions like festivities, marriage, religious ceremonies and prayers.
<p>Salwar Kameez</p> 	Tunic till knee length with slits at side, balloon pants and scarf	H-Line, fitted tunic till waist, loose fit pant	Variety of color combinations.	Silk, cotton, georgette, ramie, wool	Floral, plant, paisley, parrot, geometrical	Tie and dye, ikat, batik, embroidery, embellishments, patch work.	Worn on formal occasions as well as casually on a regular basis.
<p>Anarkali</p> 	Paneled long tunic, long sleeves, fitted pants and scarf	Empire style, fitted up-to below chest and circular till floor length	Colorful designs mostly having dark backgrounds	Silk, net, georgette, cotton, brocade	Floral, plant, grapevines, paisley, geometrical	Embroidery, zari, batik, tie and dye, patch work, lace.	Worn mostly on small functions like family gatherings or get-together.
<p>Lehnga Choli</p> 	Front or back opening blouse with deep neck, circular skirt with scarf	A-Line, short fitted blouse, and circular skirt till floor length	Bright colors like red, wine, maroon, orange, yellow, pink, green, blue.	Silk, valet, net, brocade, cotton, organza, satin	Floral, paisley, grapevines	Tie and dye, brocade, zari, metal wire embroidery, pearl or mirror embellishment, pleats, ruffles, lace.	It is an evening wear mostly worn by brides or others during the marriages.
<p>Dhoti</p> 	Unstitched cloth	Baggy fit, tucked at waist, loose fitted	White, yellow, off white, cream, orange, blue	Cotton, linen, khadi, silk, terry cotton	Plain or checks with borders	Golden border, tassels.	Worn by men on the occasions of prayers or other festivities and apart from this it is also worn casually on a regular basis.
<p>Achkan</p> 	Long coat with buttons at front with standing collar, long sleeves and fitted trousers	H-line, straight fit	A variety of colors being off white a prominent color	Silk, tussore silk, jamawar, brocade, linen	Floral motif, plant motif, paisley, grapevines	Embroidered with either silk or golden thread, stone, pearl embellishment.	Worn on festive occasions like marriage, especially by grooms.
<p>Bandhgala</p> 	Western style 3 piece suit, with short coat, vest coat, fully buttoned, high collars and trousers	H-line, straight fit	Mostly single tones either dark neutral like black, gray, navy or pastel shades	Cashmere, wool, matka silk, linen, cotton chino	Mostly plain, paisley motif, floral motif	Embroidered with silk threads, sequin work	It is worn on formal occasions or on occasions like marriage or other festivities.
<p>Jama</p> 	Long coat, long sleeves, side fastening, fitted trousers	A-line, fitted bodice with skirt attached at waist	Mostly off white color, along with bright colors like orange, blue	Silk, cotton, light and warm wool like pashmina and Tus (wild goat's hair)	Floral motifs, paisley	Gold plated wire embroidery, silk embroidery, flared, gathered or pleated skirt	Represents royalty, mostly worn by royal families in India on festive occasions.

Headgear	Head accessory	Wrapped around the head	Variety of colors depending on the occasions like red, pink, yellow, blue, white, multi-color	Cotton, silk	Plain without any motifs	Tie and dye, with brooch, tussle, thread embroidery.	Worn on different occasions in different parts of India.
							
Shawl	Unstitched scarf	Used as an accessory to cover upper body	A wide range of colors are used including all the bright and dark shades	Pashmina, wool	Paisley, floral motif, plant motifs, grape vines	Embroidered like kashidakari, namda, gabba, tussles at edges.	Worn mostly in winters to cover the upper body and hands.
							

(Textile Value Chain, 2020). Thus most Indian costumes have three parts. Later, salwar kameez for common use and anarkali for court use came into existence. Jama was a long coat with side fastening (Sawe, 2017). Achkan, a long coat with fitted trousers and bandhgala, a 3-piece suit with a short coat, vest coat, and trousers (Adegbenro, 2023).

Silhouette The silhouette of the costumes vary depending on the type of clothing and the technique in which it is worn. The silhouettes of Indian costumes range from A-line, H-line, straight fit to baggy, loose and mermaid fit. Saree has a mermaid fit (Tia bhuva, 2017), that is fit until the hips and flared below that till floor length. Lehnga choli has a fitted blouse and circular skirt either pleated, gathered or flared. Achkan is also known as sherwani. It is H-line clothing. Bandhgala mostly has a straight fit and it is an evening suit also known as a jodhpuri suit, thus it is a symbol of royalty.

Color It is a very important feature of Indian clothing and each color holds a different meaning. Saffron stands for the search of light, representing sacredness, selflessness, and courage (Przybylec, 2021). Green colors represent stability, faith, fertility, prosperity, and nature (Huedee, 2019). Red stands for love, passion, divinity, purity, sensuality, dynamism, magnetic, and marriage (Przybylec, 2021). Blue is related to spirituality, calmness, determination, trust, and strength. Yellow is considered religious, auspicious, and representing wisdom, and is also used as an offering in religious ceremonies (Przybylec, 2021). Purple represents wealth, royalty, and fame. Black is considered negative, evil, dark, representing death, and is also used to ward off evil. White represents honesty, purity, and peace, however this

color is also used in mourning as it shows an absence of colors and repels all light. Hence it stands for detachment from worldly pleasures and luxuries (Huedee, 2019).

Material The materials used in Indian costumes depend on the region, occasion, and social class, for instance cotton and linen is used by the people living in hot and tropical regions, especially in the northern part of India (Saxena, 2021). Chiffon and georgette are worn on a regular basis by upper class society. Velvet, brocade, net, and organza are mainly used on special occasions like marriages or family gatherings. Silk is used during festivities, especially in southern parts of India. Wool, pashmina, and cashmere is mainly used in the cooler regions of India (India Fashion X, 2022).

Motif Traditionally, the motifs involved were the daily life activities or objects such as flowers, plants, animals, creepers, geometrical symbols, and humans, including gods and deities. Fish demonstrates prosperity and the banyan tree resembles protection and immortality (Ratner, 2012). Lotus flowers show wealth and good luck, birds resemble love and freedom, while creepers show connection. Grape vines depict transition and well being, the elephant motif demonstrates strength and the parrot motif shows passion. Paisley represents life and fertility (Kapila, 2017) and geometrical motifs include oval, triangle, square, circle and diamond shapes etc. The shapes with curves looks softer and stand for connection and community, while shapes with straight lines and angles emblemize structure and order (Olesen, 2013).

Decorative Elements It clearly states the type of occasion it is worn, for instance any costume with more embellishments such as gold or silver embroidery, zari,

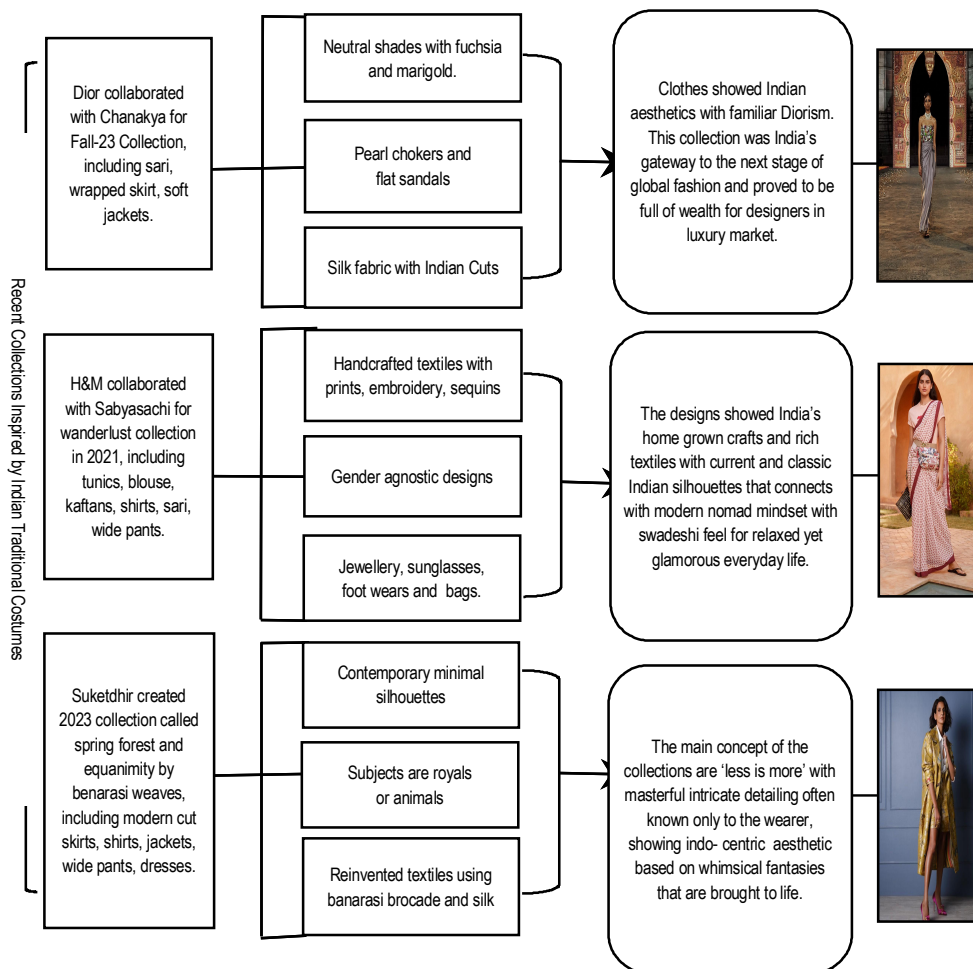
sequins, pearls is considered to be worn mostly in bridal wear or by others at such occasions (Berawala, 2020). While normal cotton embroidery or prints such as ikat, batik, tie and dye, and patchwork are worn on a regular basis. showing royalty, dignity, and preciousness. The more the intricate embroidery, the more it is considered to be rich.

Indian Traditional Costume as Cross-Cultural Design in Luxury Fashion Brands

India and its sartorial legacy has inspired various designers from time to time in different aspects. Indian hand looms with age-old weaving techniques, embroideries, and fabric

painting techniques are carried out through generations of artisans. India is a source of inspiration in the mature phases of their respective careers: Indian textiles and clothing styles are seen, by designers, as archetypes of immemorial vestimentary practices (Colaiacomo & Caratozzolo, 2010). While multitudes of Indian designers have spent their time preserving and reinventing traditional textiles and fabrics, many international designers have rejigged them with a slant of their creativity and design ideologies and come up with collections that are a new take on the East-meets-West aesthetic. Indian traditional costumes have been responsible for the development of couture collections of various luxury brands, as designers get inspired by this phenomenon. Some

Table 4 Indian Traditional Costumes as an inspiration for different designer collections



of the more recent collections are as follows (Table 4):

Dior collaborated with Chanakya and released their pre-fall collection (Figure 19, 20) with Indian aesthetics in March 2023. The designs consisted of the sari-wrapped skirt, soft jackets with Nehru collars, in neutral shades with an optimum amount of fuchsia, marigold, and chartreuse colors (The New York Times, 2023). The collection included the silhouettes and embellishments inspired from the Indian traditional costumes, the designs represent Indian cuts along the modern element for global acceptance.

H&M collaborated with Sabyasachi Mukherji and launched the wanderlust collection (Figure 21, 22) in August 2021. This collection was an amalgamation of modern and traditional silhouettes focusing on Indian textiles and tropical prints (Zeezest, 2021). The collection included the traditional fabric development like prints and embroideries and included contemporisation of traditional silhouettes, to give it relaxed yet glamorous feel.

Suketdhir approaches Benarasi weaves with a sophisticated and modern perspective (Figure 23, 24). Looking beyond the

traditional use of the fabric, the label re-imagines brocade with its boundless possibilities. Contemporising the weaving heritage in a unique style, Dhir brings the grandeur of handwoven silk brocades to slick, new-age dressing (Suketdhir, 2010). He gives the traditional Benarasi weave a complete new outlook by utilizing this technique on modern silhouette by giving it a whimsical look creating a fantasy environment through his garments.

Conclusion

Global trade and the transfer of cultural elements is not something new, but the degree of interaction and the speed of this cultural exchange has accelerated enormously during the last few decades. As a result, the interaction among differing cultures moving towards the cultural interchange has become part of everyday life. Therefore, this study examined and explored the designs that holds the influences of traditional costumes from India in the cross-culture fashion field. The



Figure 19. Look 9, Dior Fall 23 collection. (Design Scene, 2023a)



Figure 20. Look 16, Dior Fall 23 collection. (Design Scene, 2023b)



Figure 21. Wanderlust by Sabyasachi. (Zeezest, 2021)



Figure 22. Wanderlust by Sabyasachi. (Zeezest, 2021)



Figure 23. Equanimity. (Suketdhir, 2023a)



Figure 24. Spring forest. (Suketdhir, 2023b)

academic implications confirm that Indian traditional costumes have had a great impact on the fashion industry and have proven itself to be a great source of inspiration in cross-cultural design. Many designs analyzed in this research, reflect creative uses of elements and styles of Indian costumes that are very well-adapted as new fashion designs. The cross- culture is no more limited in the category of jewellery and intricate embroideries but it furnishes insight in the elements of Indian traditional costumes for coming up with the contemporary designs.

The practical implication of this design analysis revealed important factors of these costumes that are adapted for cross-cultural fashion designing. The surface pattern and the features of the fabric have had the most notable impacts on modern fashion. The surface patterns of these costumes, such as motifs and decorative elements, seem to provide deep inspiration for modern fashion designers. Their impacts were apparent in many contemporary styles. Apart from these, the features of fabric such as color and material, have also had a great influence on cross-culture fashion design. In addition to the fabric-related aspects of Indian traditional costumes, the silhouette and shape of these costumes is worth mentioning because of its complete incorporation and contemporisation into Western fashion. In fact, the sari and its style of wrapping around the waist is the most prominent Indian costume influence on modern Western dresses.

The overall result of our study suggests that as the world has begun a new era, with Indian traditional costumes predicted to be in vogue. Even though the popularity of these costumes have disappeared in the normal fashion cycle, it is probable that as the current trend in cultural interaction heading forwards, this artistic and experimental blending of Indian traditional costumes will persist as a result of globalization. Despite the increasing importance of the elements of Indian traditional costumes in cross-cultural fashion, little systematic investigation has been conducted into the influences of traditional costumes on modern fashion, and more specifically, how the adaptation of the elements of Indian costumes has taken place. There have been various designers who have been presenting new styles fused with elements of Indian traditional costumes. However, it is yet to be seen if the adaptation of these styles will remain in the

coming years, or if it will take a new creative path. It is analyzed that as per the current popularity of Indian traditional costumes in cross-cultural fashion, it will become an even larger influence in global fashion.

Certain limitations of this study are mentioned. Only three luxury brands were examined and mass brands remained unexplored. In addition, the time period was limited, therefore the investigation in this study can affect source materials, especially in terms of the number of designs showcasing cultural interchange. Despite these limitations, this study presents the results of a systematic analysis on the adaptation of Indian traditional costumes with various luxury brands, showcasing the merger with other cultures. The results provided in this study will be useful as a groundwork of reference for future studies, as this subject is becoming important and has proven its value to various scholars, as the demands of globalization continue to cause sweeping cultural interchanges.

Acknowledgment

This research is funded by the Financial Program of basic protection science fields at Changwon National University in 2023.

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