

## INTRODUCTION

Mewar is a land of forts, in them were enacted some of the heroic dramas of world history. Each fort tells the story of Rajput valour, patriotism and chivalry. Chittorgarh is one such fort which witnessed the woeful end of bravery and beauty. History tells us how the Rajputs, dressed in saffron robes, embraced death as if it were their bride . Not to be left behind in this competition for bravery, the women followed Maharani Padminini and boldly leapt into the consuming flames to preserve their honour. To them death by jauhar was better than the security and luxury of inglorious captivity. The brave deeds of the Rajputs have few parallels in the annals of history. The Rajputs make the finest soldiers, keeping up the proud traditions of Rana Sanga and Maharana Pratap Singh of Mewar (29) .

The Aravalli hills provided a natural frontier to the the Mewar in the North, West and South and made the country inaccessible from three sides. The long lines of the mountains and the wide dense forest isolated the people of the state from the movements taking place in other parts of India. The idyllic beauty of its valleys and rugged terrain of its mountainous regions influenced the tastes, minds and the way of life of the rulers and the people of Mewar. The rivers and streams

extended from the principal river Chambal and its tributaries Banas, Berach, Kothari, Wakal and Khari which enabled the people to construct artificial lakes such as the Dhebar or Jai Samand, Raj Samand, Udai Sagar, Pichola and Fateh Sagar. (64).

The irrigation facilities contributed to the extensive prosperity of the state. Many times the state had to depend on the rains for agriculture and other allied occupations. A drought was seen after three or four years and famine was the biggest natural calamity. Sometimes floods due to heavy rains caused great destruction in the state.

The climate of Mewar was generally healthy and the heat was never so great as in the states of the North-West. Rich and most important minerals were zinc, iron, mica, sand-stone and marble. Manufacturers made swords, daggers, ivory and wooden bangles. A variety of embroidered cloth and fabrics printed with gold and silver leaf and sandlewood.

The boundaries of Mewar extended to Ajmer, Merwara, in the North, Jodhpur Sirohi in the West; Dungarpur, Banswara and Pratapgarh in the South; and Jawad, Nimach, Nimkher, Pragana and Bundi-Kota district in the East(18).

With the repeated external invasions of the Turks, the Mughals and the Marathas, the dimension of Mewar had shrunk into a secluded territory.

After Akbar the great defeated the ruler of Chittor, Rana Udai Singh shifted the capital to Udaipur in 1559 and changed the name of the state from Mewar to Udaipur(3).

In Sanskrit inscriptions, Medpat is the name used for Mewar which became known as Udaipur state after the founding of the city of Udaipur in 1559 A.D. Medpat reminds the historians of a period when the territory was ruled by people called Meds or Mers, who were descendents of the Sakas. Medpat was also known as pragvata, the Karanbal inscription of Jaya-Simha Kalachuri, refers to the Mewar kings Hampspala Vairisimha as rulers of Pragvata. (45).

The rulers of Mewar belonged to the elder branch of the suryavanshi or "children of the Sun" of the "Solar Race". The Maharana was regarded as the legitimate heir of the throne of "Rama" and was styled as "Hindua Suraj" or the "Sun of Hindus". (70).

They lived elegantly and wore elaborate costumes and Jewellery, however, the information regarding clothing during the early periods is negligible. Whatever is obtained is by studying the sculptures and paintings of the period.

Although Mewar was the most important centre of early Rajasthan painting of the "Golden Age" of Mewar art came about the middle of the 17th century in the reign of Jagat Singh (1628-1652). Several illustrated copies of the Bhagavata Purana, written and illustrated at Chittor in 1651, and the splendid Ragnala set in the National museum of India, New Delhi, are some of the finest works of the period (42).

The illustrations portray incidents mainly from the life of shree Krishna and his frolics with the gopis, the hero and the heroine theme of contemporary Hindi Poetry, and the pictorial representations of Indian musical modes. The illustrations from the Bhagvata and the Ramayana are conceived and executed on a wider canvas and the hundreds of figures overcrowding the scenes play their roles against the background of the social life of the times. Scenes from rural life, marriage ceremonies, processions dance and music parties, and life of the palace are convincingly and feelingly depicted (32).

The popularity of the art in the 18th Century is obvious from the tremendous output of the Mewar school, but it is now rapidly losing its charms and aesthetic merit. Although the old themes were not neglected other popular subjects like portraits of

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rulers and courtiers, realistic studies of horses, elephants, dogs and court, harem and hunting scenes were executed in large number and repainted from the same paintings give valuable information especially when very little written material is available. Existing texts and pictorial records have important gaps to be filled, because the basic evidence the costume itself, is not available as the greatest number of surviving garments date from the last century only and even these are scattered (70).

From the very early childhood the investigator had the opportunity of observing all the processions for different occasions. When the rulers paraded the streets of the city and the people who worked in the palace joined them. It was also her privilege to observe the costumes of her grand-parents and uncles who worked in the palace and wore different colours, prints and styles for the celebrations of the festivals and ceremonies.

Therefore, the researcher decided to conceptualise the details of each garment, fabric used for wearing apparel jewellery and foot wear.

For this study the author has studied the costumes of twenty three rulers who ruled Udaipur city from 1537 When its foundation was laid to the present day.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. To study the costumes and accessories of the rulers of Mewar from the 16th century to the present day.
2. To study the designs of the fabrics used for wearing apparel and produced by the following techniques:
  - (a) Tie-dye,
  - (b) Block printing,
  - (c) Waraq(Gold-Silverleaf) printing,
  - (d) Gold and silver embroidery.
3. To develop the patterns of the garments and techniques of constructions that could be duplicated by the Modern designers.

### ASSUMPTIONS

1. Old men who worked in the palace would be able to describe the costumes worn by the Maharajas of Udaipur.
2. Families whose members worked in the palace would own the garments worn by their relatives while attending ceremonies. Old garments would also be available in the palace and museum.
3. Some old tailors would be able to give demonstrations and describe the construction details of the garments, since the patterns of the traditional garments have not gone through drastic changes for centuries.

4. Information about the techniques of producing the traditional fabrics could be seen in the market and homes of the producers.