

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

*“Enough research will tend to support your conclusions.”*

[Arthur Bloch]

The online Oxford dictionary defines the word *“Culture is a word for people’s way of life. A culture is passed on to the next generation by learning. Culture can be seen in people’s writings, religion, music, costumes, cooking and what they do”*. The culture of a country is also represented by the way people dress. With the improved means of communications and technological innovations the world has become smaller and influences of different cultures are conspicuous. Historical evidences have shown the reciprocal influences and amalgamation of various cultures which result in changing identities and choices of people.

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

“What motivated the human beings to wear clothes”? To understand the evolution of clothing through the ages and development of various forms of clothing, the costume historians have to study the costumes of various civilizations. According to the historians, there has been evidences of four major civilizations which prospered around rivers in the ancient times. Each civilization had its unique style of dress mainly depending on the climatic conditions and the raw materials available. The present study focuses on the Persian and the Indian women’s costumes, therefore the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia and Indus Valley civilization were studied to understand their relationship and influence. The two basic garments worn in Mesopotamia were the skirt and the shawl adorned with the fringe. In the later part of the civilization, the fringe was more elaborate and decorative. After the Persian invasion, the

people in Mesopotamia adopted the Persian trousers as the lower garment. The Persians wore a fitted coat and trousers as compared to the draped style of the ancient time. The costume of the new Persian Empire was unusually different from the ancient costumes of the people of Mesopotamia. At the same time, the Indus Valley civilization thrived near the Indus River, the Northwestern part of Indian subcontinent. The people had trade and commerce with the Persian Gulf. Evidences show that the city was quite ahead of its times and well organized. The Vedic and the Post Vedic period (1700- 600 BC) associated with the Aryans migrating from Iran into India provides literature sources to study the costumes of that era. The Vedas, Upanishads and the epics of Mahabharata and Ramayana were composed during this period. The Vedic Indian men wore three garments '*Nivi*' or loin- cloth sometimes having a long unwoven fringe, an upper garment '*Vasas*' and an over/outer garment '*Upavasana/Adhivasa*' (MotiChandra, 1973). The ancient Indian costumes were mostly draped garments consisting of *Antariya*, *Uttariya* and *Kayabandh*. The bifurcated and stitched garments were introduced in India during the slave dynasty but became more predominant during the Mughal Empire. The present day *Salwar Kameez*, popular as one of the traditional Indian costume, traces back its origin to Persia which was brought to India by the Mughals who followed Islam.

The research involves the study of traditional Arabic costumes, their influence on the Indian costumes and vice versa with particular reference to *Salwar Kameez*. The costumes which once belonged to the Arabs now belong to the Indian subcontinent. These costumes have merely become occasional wear in these countries. The Indian theme wedding events are very popular among the young generation of the Arab world. This exchange of cultures with reference to the costumes is an interesting aspect for study which focused on the connection of these two different worlds.

The study is deductive and descriptive in approach. The primary sources of information are structured interview with observation, and questionnaire to study the current status and cultural correlation. The secondary sources of information are the literature review from the libraries, visits to museums in India, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

After the initial efforts and study to understand the correlation between Persian and Indian women's costume (*Salwar Kameez*), a conceptual framework was made. To achieve the objectives of the research study, it was divided into three phases

- Phase I- Historical Perspective
- Phase II- Present Status
- Phase III- Documentation and Analysis.

A combination of different tools and techniques were used to obtain the relevant data for the study. For phase I, libraries and museums were visited to collect the relevant information about the history on Indian and Persian costumes. An extensive study of literature was carried out at various libraries in Delhi(National Museum, Crafts Museum and Indira Gandhi National Center for Arts), Muscat (Center for Omani Dress) and Jeddah (Dar Al-Hekma University, Safeya BinZager).

In the second phase, a questionnaire and two interview schedules were formulated to collect the information from the consumers, Arab designers and retailers on the following attributes -

- Choice of clothing
- Fabric choices
- Traditional clothing
- Inspiration from Indian *Salwar Kameez*
- Influence of media and Bollywood
- Embellishments and color preferences
- Construction details of *Salwar Kameez*

A systematic approach was followed for the selection of sample. Since the study was spread over different geographic locations, cluster or area sampling design was used for the study. The locale of the study was limited to Indian subcontinent, Oman and KSA. The sample size selected for consumers was five hundred, ten each for Arab designers and retailers. The locations were purposely selected as the researcher is based in the Middle East and is acquainted with the socio cultural exchanges between the Arab and the Indian subcontinent. The researcher also had the access to the sample population for data collection. Observations were also made to supplement the information obtained during the interviews and market survey. The data

collected was carefully consolidated and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and suitably depicted through tables, pie charts and bar charts. Pearson's chi-square test and Spearman rank correlation were also done using SPSS software for data analysis.

Phase III involved documentation and analysis of costumes of the Arab world and the Indian *Salwar Kameez*. A survey of women's costumes displayed in the museums in Oman and Jeddah was carried out. Center for Omani Dress and Bait Al Zubair museum in Oman, Safeya Bin Zager, Al Tayebat Museum in Jeddah and Chaumahalla Palace Museum in Hyderabad, India were also studied. The photo bank shared by the Director of Center of Omani Dress was also studied and the relevant photographs were selected for the analysis. The constructional details of various styles of *Salwar Kameez* in the Indian subcontinent were discussed in detail. The constructional details of the Arab women's costumes from Oman and Jeddah were studied and compared with the Indian subcontinent styles. The constructional details of *Salwar/Sirwal* and *Kameez/Dishdasha/Kaftan/Thobe* have clearly revealed the similarity in construction. The Aligarhi *Pyjama* of the Indian subcontinent is like *Sirwal* of the Arab world. The construction of *Kalidarkurta* is similar to the *Dishdasha/Kaftan*. This phase also documents the style variations of *Salwar Kameez* as seen in Muslim dominated regions in India. The documentation was done using relevant photographs and sketches created using coral draw as and where necessary.

The findings of the present study thus collected revealed a comprehensive picture of the past and the present scenario of the *Salwar Kameez* in the Arab world and the Indian subcontinent. Interesting facts related to origin, influence, acceptance and adaptation in the Indian culture and the reciprocal correlation between the Arab and Indian women's costumes were also discovered.

## **5.2 ORIGIN OF SALWAR KAMEEZ**

The origin of *SalwarKameez* cannot be exactly isolated to any one country. With the emergence of Islam in the Middle East and Arab peninsula, the style of clothing was clearly defined for both men and women. The *Shalwar* (Persian), *Şalvār* (Turkish), *Sirwāl* (Arabic) is a form of baggy trousers fastened by a drawstring at the waist. The word '*Kameez*' is originally Arabic and is

sometimes spelt as *Qameez* or *Qamis*. This is used to describe a shirt usually of varied lengths. Therefore it can be easily interpreted that the origin of the garment *SalwarKameez* is either Persian or Arabic. With the establishment of Mughal rule, a blend of Persian and ancient Indian artistic sensibilities were noticed not only in art, architecture but also in clothing. Many stitched garments came to India under the Persian influence. Various types of *Pyjamas*, ranging from very loose to very tight, replaced the *Antariya*. However, the majority of Indians continued to wear their traditional unstitched garments in spite of such major influences. Fusion wear also became popular such as *Kurta* with *Dhoti* and *Kurta* with *Pyjamas* which are considered traditional Indian wear today.

According to the responses of the consumer respondents from the locale of the study, majority of them were not aware of the origin of *Salwar Kameez*. 68% of the respondents who were aware of the origin, believed Persia as the place of origin.

### **5.3 PRESENT STATUS OF SALWAR KAMEEZ**

To understand the present status of *Salwar Kameez* in the Arab world and Indian subcontinent, consumers, designers and retailers were asked about various clothing attributes including choice of clothing, awareness about traditional costumes and bridal wear. The responses received were carefully studied and analysed.

#### **5.3.1 Clothes worn during Day time in Arab World and Indian Subcontinent**

Data analysis shows that *Salwar Kameez* is preferred as day wear clothing for the respondents in the Indian subcontinent by all the age groups whereas the respondents of older age group from the Arab world (Oman and KSA) preferred wearing *Salwar Kameez*. However, *Salwar Kameez* is a chosen day wear in Oman as compared to KSA. Furthermore, most of the respondents belonging to different occupations preferred wearing *Salwar Kameez* in the Indian subcontinent due to the comfort factor. On the other hand, the students and employed respondents preferred western casuals as day time wear for the same reason of comfort in the Arab world. This leads to the conclusion that the Arab countries have elapsed their traditional costumes over the western costumes whereas the Indian subcontinent has adapted *Salwar Kameez* as their traditional costume.

### **5.3.2 Influence of Media on Choice of Clothing**

As per the results, the values for media influence on choice of clothing for variables clothing worn during day time and the buying behavior is significantly high. This proves that the respondents are definitely influenced by the popular celebrities on various print, digital and social media. The results also confirmed that the young generation follow the celebrities on various social networking sites like Instagram and Snap chat to keep themselves updated about the latest fashion trends. The television and movie actors, celebrities and the television channels promote *Salwar Kameez* in the Indian subcontinent. The young generation finds *Salwar Kameez* as a comfortable and respectable attire. The 'Indo-Western look' is popular with the working women and students in the subcontinent.

### **5.3.3 Awareness about the Traditional Costume**

Most of the respondents were aware of their respective traditional costumes irrespective of the age, education level and nationality. Nevertheless, it was revealed that the traditional costumes were worn only during festivals and marriage ceremonies in the Arab world. Observation and discussions with the locals informed the researcher that over the past two decades the marriage ceremony have two major functions- *Nikaah* (only involving close family) and the reception (friends and extended family are invited). The traditional costume is worn only during the *Nikaah* ceremony. Bridal gowns in white colour are worn during the reception party. Various researches have shown that western outfits have taken over the world fashion market by storm, but countries still make it a point to stay connected with their traditional dress. New fashion trends are regularly introduced in the way their cultural outfit is made or worn. People adopt a trend in clothing only if it is in accordance with the culture of that area ([fibre2fashion.com](http://fibre2fashion.com)).

The young women in the Subcontinent are aware of the traditional clothing in the region and are therefore attracted to wear the *Salwar Kameez*. However in India the traditional garment has always been a Sari, but the comfort factor of the *Salwar Kameez* has made the young working women and students the most popular attire.

### **5.3.4 Significance of wearing Abaya/Burkha**

Observations, discussions with the locals and data analysis revealed that the *Abaya/Burkha* was not a part of the traditional women's costume in the Arab world. According to Islam there were strict dressing codes for both men and women wherein women has to wear loose garments without revealing the curves of her body. The study of Arab women's costumes in Oman and KSA shows that the *Dishdasha/Thobe* and *Sirwal* along with the headscarf conformed to these Islamic code of dressing. Therefore an *Abaya/Burkha* was not mandatory during that time. However, in the recent years with the influence of western culture on the young generation has changed the clothing choices in the Middle East, especially for women. The young generation prefers to wear western casuals like jeans, pants, skirts and tops/blouses for daily wear and bridal gowns for wedding ceremony. Therefore to the wearing of *Abaya/Burkha* is more of a religious obligation. It is mandatory by law in KSA to conform to strict dressing code as per Islam. The Muslim women in the Indian subcontinent are not obliged to wear *Abaya/Burkha* as they wear *Salwar Kameez* as daily wear which conforms to this code of dressing. In Pakistan, the women cover themselves with *Chador* while going out in public; a trend quiet prominent in Punjab region in India as well.

#### 5.4 RECIPROCAL CORRELATION

Review of literature and study of museum pieces have shown that *Salwar Kameez*, as seen in the Indian subcontinent, has originated in Persia. Centuries in invasions, conquest and trade links between the subcontinent and the Arab world has contributed to the blending of cultures and traditions not only in clothing but also in food habits and lifestyle. The respondents in the Indian subcontinent are not clearly aware about the origin of the *Salwar Kameez* and have always thought it to be a part of the subcontinent. There are various styles of *Salwar* and *Kameez* which have evolved within India and within the subcontinent over the past few decades. This popularity of *Salwar Kameez* has lead the leading designers in the subcontinent to experiment and innovate with various silhouettes keeping the basic element of comfort and modesty along with latest style and trend.

The respondents from the Arab world who are aware of their traditional wear could find some similarities in design and style between *Salwar Kameez* and their traditional costume. However they were not aware of the fact that *Salwar Kameez* has actually being adopted and adapted from the Arab culture by the Indian subcontinent. The young Arab population eagerly awaits the release of new Bollywood movies and request for the latest Indian *Salwar Kameez* styles for their traditional ceremonies. Since the Indian *Salwar Kameez* has attractive fabrics, colors,

embroideries and embellishments and also conforms to the Islamic code of dress, it is the most preferred wear during festivals like Eid and weddings. The trends of the latest *Salwar Kameez* as shown by popular Indian designers in the Indian movies are prevalent as occasion wear.

During the interview with Arab designers, the researcher came to know that one of the designers, Huda Taha Nasib (from Oman) also had Indian collection besides traditional Omani wear. She elaborated that there are lot of clients who ask for Indian *Salwar Kameez* with a specific look in their mind. She emphasised that popularity of Bollywood movies in Oman is the main reason for the demand of Indian garments with respect to style, colour and embellishment. On the other hand only one designer in KSA had traditional collection. Most of the designers had ready to wear collection catering to the young Arab population in the region as they feel that there is a lot of influence of western culture on the younger generations.

Responses by the retailers in Oman and KSA revealed that people residing in the Middle East desired to wear their traditional clothes during the festival season. This trend was observed more in Oman rather than KSA where the young generation seems to have moved away from their traditional clothing. It can also be inferred that people residing in the Arab world were influenced by Bollywood movies and demanded for the latest fashion. The business of *SalwarKameez* was blooming year by year, as a result of transition of *SalwarKameez* fashion from Indian subcontinent to the Arab world.

## 5.5 CONCLUSIONS

*“Clothing is a cultural phenomenon and an aesthetic medium for the expression of ideas and beliefs circulating in society”*(Wilson, 2003) There has been a considerable change in the cultural identity of both the Indian Subcontinent and the Middle Eastern countries popularly known as the Arab countries with respect to women’s costume. *“The Salwar Kameez- in all its flexible, stylish glory is India’s national dress”* (Alluri, 2017). The *Salwar Kameez* has displaced the Sari across India over the past few decades. For many modern day Indian women, the *Salwar Kameez* is regarded as a functional outfit that suits their modern lifestyle better than the



traditional Sari. Some of the schools in India have also prescribed *Salwar Kameez* as school uniform for girls over the age of 15 years. Colleges also insist for traditional dress code for women in smaller towns and cities. The ease of wearing has categorized it as a practical office wear as it facilitates free movements.

The famous French and Italian designers look at India and Middle East for inspiration and popular markets for their collections. The famous French Couture House – Chanel took inspiration from India showcasing the Pre Fall collection 2012 ‘Paris-Bombay’ or more accurately “the Paris version of the idea of India,” according to Karl Lagerfeld (Menkes,2011). The collection depicted the *Churidar*, *Salwar Kameez* style dress and Pant combination. The block prints and heavily embellished garments were inspired by the Mughal Era. The most interesting fact is that the designer took inspiration from the *Salwar Kameez* from India which originated in Persia (Iran). On the other hand, the famous Italian Design House Dolce and Gabbana recently launched their *Hijab* and *Abaya* Collection for the Muslim customers in the Middle East. This clearly shows that the origin of the *Salwar Kameez* is no longer considered as Persian or Arabic. The Arabic costumes are only perceived as the *Hijab* and the *Abaya* by the designers.

According to the article by Aparna Alluri in the *Hindustan Times*, the *Salwar Kameez* which has been perceived as a Punjabi outfit till now has gained popularity in South and East India as well where Sari was predominant. She quotes many respondents in her article who confirm that comfort and convenience are the motivating factors for these Sari wearing regions to adapt to ready to wear *Salwar Kameez*. Bollywood also is a major factor in promoting the *Salwar Kameez* among the young generation in South India especially in Chennai and Bengaluru. Rani Mukherjee’s brash *Patialas* in ‘*Bunty aur Babli*’, Kareena Kapoor’s white *Salwars* in ‘*Jab We Met*’ and Deepika Padukone’s *Churidars* in ‘*Love Aaj Kal*’ were an immediate hit among the young all over India. Over several decades, along with the Sari, *Salwar Kameez* has also become as the default Indian costume for women.

After extensive study and analysis, it can be easily inferred that the traditional dress of Persian (Iranian) and Turks travelled to the subcontinent during the medieval period. This easily got amalgamated into the culture of Indian subcontinent and with transformation over time, a unique style was created. Even though different from the original it still resembled the former in many ways. Among its royal glory, inscrutable feel and feminine charm *Salwar Kameez*, has an historical progression. With its origin hinting at the Mughal courtroom, *Salwar Kameez* has been synonymous along with the Sari as the Indian National dress. For many modern day Indian women, the *Salwar Kameez* is regarded as a functional outfit that suits their modern lifestyle better than the traditional Sari.

The study leaves a scope for the future upcoming designers of the Middle East to take pride in their traditional garments and try to revive them in more contemporary and fashionable way as daily or casual wear among the young generation. The upcoming designers of the Middle East should take inspiration from their traditional garments and create a new collection of “Arab Western” garments which respects the idea of modesty as per Islamic laws.