# Chapter 1

History of Fashion

The chapter introduces and highlights the necessity of knowledge regarding the origin and evolutionary process of fashion since clothing is the inevitable outcome of the socio-cultural-political influences prevalent in society at different points in time. The nuances in terms such as fashion, garment, clothing and costume have been clarified. The diverse points of views regarding the origin and need for clothing propounded by sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists are given. Section 1.1 gives the sources of information based on archeological remnants of clothing and accessories. Section 1.2 focuses on the range of psycho-social, cultural, economic, political, historical, geographical factors and the spread of information technology which interact mutually and affects fashion.

Section 2 traces the origin and evolution of draped and war costume. Some costumes were integral to everyday and ceremonial civilian life while others were designed to meet the specific functional requirements of warfare. A brief classification of clothing into five broad archetypes is provided. Section 2.1 explains the history of draped costumes in different continents and civilizations as geographically apart as India, the ancient Near East, Egypt and the West, with their salient features.

Section 3 shows the links between the history of mankind which has been synonymous with war, necessitating the use of specialized clothing and accessories such as helmets and leg and arm guards specifically, for effectiveness in battle. Section 3.1 gives a brief history of armour, which was central to all forms of traditional battle uniforms in terms of construction and design of protective accessories. Section 3.2 highlights the distinctive features of ancient war costumes while Section 3.3 focusses on Oriental (Japanese) and ancient Indian war costumes. Section 3.4 notes key features of uniforms during the World Wars and the incorporation of design details into contemporary civilian clothing.

Section 4 traces the history from mid-18th century when the existing segregation of society between the royalty and the commoners gradually disintegrated with the Industrial Revolution. The growth of the middle class and the increased speed of production resulting in opening of new markets explains the genesis of ready to wear clothing. Section 4.1 focuses on the mechanical inventions and their effect on transforming the small-scale home based industry to the system of mechanized mass-produced textiles. Section 4.2 shows the debilitating effect of the Industrial Revolution on India during the British Raj, even as the demand and appreciation for Indian textiles grew in Europe and particularly in England.

Section 5 shows the transformative effect of World Wars on fashion and the industry. Section 5.1 traces the rise of couture in the 20th century and the effect of World War I, particularly on women's liberation from traditional social roles and thereby on fashion. The effect of the
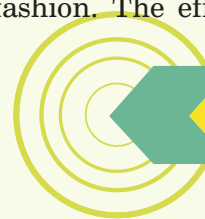
economic recession in the period between the Wars on society and the role of designers are explained in section 5.2. Section 5.3 illustrates the improvisation in fashion due to war austerities and the birth of the ready to wear garment industry.

Section 6 traces the evolution of Indian fashion from the 20th century. Clothing during the British Raj reflected Western influence co-existing with clothes indicative of regional or national identity. The post-Independence years which have witnessed the fusion of very divergent perspectives with a strong craft revivalist movement on one hand and a global, competitive market in fashion have been discussed.

Section 7 focuses on India as the producer of the largest number of feature films in the world. Since Hindi films have a tremendous reach into the homes and hearts of millions, costumes in movies are very influential in stimulating fashion trends across the nation. The synergy between reel-life movies and real-life fashion, the roles and achievements of costume designers are highlighted.

Answer Keys to Objective Questions

Exercise 1: Fill in the blanks

1. Much of our knowledge about prehistoric textiles used in surviving specimens comes from Archaeology.

2. The belief that parts of animals like claws, hooves and teeth would enhance the wearer's strength and imbue the characteristics of that creature stems from the ritualistic factor affecting clothing.

3. Clothes are the most visible index of the status of a person identifying the class, caste and profession.

4. The four factors affecting clothing are protection, ritual, adornment and identification.

5. Beautification of the self has been the pre-occupation of humans and is achieved through clothes and body adornment.

6. In 14th century Europe, the exaggerated length of men's shoes called poulaines was indicative of their socio-economic status.

7. Scarification involves elaborate incisions in a delicate pattern on the skin which on healing, leave characteristic scars and raised pattern-like marks.

8. Historically, rulers have attempted to maintain the status quo between themselves and commoners through sumptuary laws.

9. Uniforms of security personnel and robes of judge are indicators of profession.
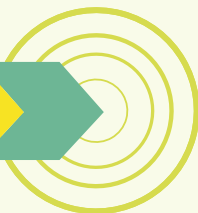
10. In parts of India, the coloured powder put in the hair parting called <u>sindoor</u> is a visual indicator of married status of women.

Exercise 2: Match the columns

1	Fastening/pin to hold the ends of the Greek peplos together	**Fibula**
2	Egyptians unisex garment	**Kalasaires**
3	Only free Romans permitted to wear this garment which could be draped in various ways to indicate social status	**Toga**
4	Sumerians skirt with an excess tail-like waistband	**Kaunakes**
5	Roman counterpart of the Greek Palla	**Himation**
6	Detail which indicated rank among Assyrians and Babylonians	**Fringe**
7	Upper garment worn by ancient Indians	**Uttariya**
8	Garment worn by Egyptian men across all social strata	**Schenti**
9	The Greeks wore this versatile garment like a tunic which could be belted, lengthened, draped it like a cloak or shawl.	**Chiton**
10	Indian draped lower garment	**Antariya**

Exercise 3: Fill in the blanks

1. The Gupta soldiers wore the metal-plated <u>urastrana</u> to protect the chest.

2. The Rajput armour studded with nails was called <u>chilta</u> <u>hazaar</u> <u>masha</u>.

3. The Mughals wore waistcoat of armour with hinged front and back plates called <u>char</u> <u>aina</u>.

4. The Mughal amour called <u>zirah</u> <u>bakhtar</u> was a chain mail shirt worn over a quilted inner garment.

5. Generally body armour was worn with three other items namely helmets, leg guards and <u>gauntlets</u>.

6. The arm armour called <u>bajubandh</u> was a part of the Indian armour ensemble but has now become a jewelry item.

7. <u>Khaki</u> as a word indicates both a colour and a garment.

8. The Greeks and Romans wore chest armour called <u>cuirasse</u>.

9. <u>Camouflage</u> prints are designed to blend in the surrounding terrain.

10. Protection of the torso from bruising caused by wearing armour, necessitated <u>padding</u> technique, which led to the development of jackets.

Exercise 4a: Match the following

Designed loom which could create complex weaves and developed later into computerized punch-cards	Joseph Jacquard
Invented the first synthetic dye	Sir William Perkin
Invented the first domestic sewing machine	Isaac Singer
Obtained several colour shades which provided textile manufacturers with numerous colour combinations	Johan Tobias Mayer
Invented and patented an automatic Ginning machine for cotton	Eli Whitney

Exercise 4b: Fill in the blanks

1. Indian peasants were forced to cultivate and dye cotton in indigo within an oppressive system called indigo slavery.

2. Chintz was a popular Indian print with small flowers used in European clothing.

3. Cotton revolutionized European clothing and accessories with the production of exclusive fabrics like lawn, gauze and muslin.

4. Malmal is the Indian name for muslin fabric.

5. Stringent taxes imposed on weavers who specialized in hand-made fabrics resulted in some textile weaving techniques becoming extinct.
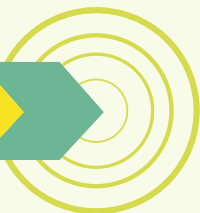
Exercise 5a: Fill in the blanks

Fill in the blanks

1. The French word for High fashion is Haute Couture.

2. The French word for ready to wear is Pret a Porter.

3. White knit ensembles worn for sports like tennis were called Tennis Whites.

4. The restrictions called austerity measures in clothing were enforced on the general publi during World War II

5. The women's uniform during World War II was called Victory Suit.

6. Co-ordinated designs gave women the freedom to mix and match their clothes.

Exercise 5b: Match the following

Practical elegant clothing	Coco Chanel
Avoided designing corset dresses	Paul Poiret

Use of bias grain on fabric	Madeline Vionnet
Whimsical motifs on clothes	Elsa Schiaparelli
Creator of the 1920s Flapper Look	Jean Patou
New Look	Christian Dior

Exercise 6: Fill in the blanks

1. Wills India Fashion Week (WIFW) in Delhi is organized by <u>Fashion Design Council of India</u>.

2. Lakme India Fashion Week (LIFW) is organized in the city of Mumbai.

3. An event which focuses on wedding wear is <u>Bridal Asia</u>.

4. Wedding wear is also called <u>trousseau</u>.

Exercise 7 : Name the costume designer of the following movies

1	Black	Sabyasachi Mukherjee
2	Gandhi	Bhanu Athaiya
3	Life of Pi	Arjun Bhasin
4	Taare Zameen Par	Priyanjali Lahiri
5	Umrao Jaan	Muzaffar Ali
6	Devdas	Neeta Lulla