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### A study on the traditional costumes of the Bishnoi community

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#### Abstract

India is a diverse country with abundant culture and traditional at its core. The tradition in the country is visible in many forms: Art, costume and ornaments (fashion). With different regions of the country, the sense of clothing and culture change at its best. Particularly, in Rajasthan, Bishnoi people have a specific tradition for their clothing.

**Objective:** To study the costume of people belonging to different areas (Urban and Rural) of Bishnoi Community.

**Methodology:** The study was conducted in the Jodhpur including urban and rural areas. For this study, the researcher employed descriptive research. A total of 300 subjects were selected purposively of which 150 (75 female and 75 male) from Jodhpur and rest 150 (75 female and 75 male) from other villages.

**Findings:** The findings show that in present time costumes are not only the basic demands of human beings but also the expression of the social status by means of decoration. Women clothing shows a significant change in both urban and rural areas. Both men and women have different patterns and specific colors for different occasions. Their designs resemble the natural surroundings and cultural context on traditional textiles. Every colour and customs has its own significance in their culture.

**Conclusion:** Overall, in conclusion women of urban and rural areas of Bishnoi community much like the region it self, are swathed in colour and tradition. Dresses among urban women are modified but still has that traditional touch in it. Men dresses are almost similar in both urban and rural areas but on regular basis men usually wear shirt and pants in urban areas.

**Keywords:** Bishnoi community, urban areas, intellectual achievement or performance art

#### Introduction

India has a rich culture and has become our identity. Whether it is in religion, intellectual achievement or performance art, it has made us a colorful, rich and diverse nation. Here people have been following various religions, traditions and customs while in the present time, India is assimilating its culture as a powerful, multicultural society and moved on. Culture in India is related to life customs, values, ethics, habits and knowledge etc., of the people. India is considered to be the oldest civilization where people follow mixed culture such as as-old and modern culture in the present time. Here, culture is seen in everything like social norms, food, dresses, music and dance etc. thus, Indian culture has become a big melting pot for the behaviors and beliefs that give the rising to different cultures. According to Pati.

“Every country or nation or society has a culture of its own. It has its own set of values, which is nothing but the reflected action of the ideal of its civilization. A country may under go change physically, mentally, politically, socially or religiously, because change is the stuff of the universe. Un-changeability, as Pati writes, is either perfection or death, but the essential spirit of the culture cannot undergo any change. The essential element in the form of eternal values is cultivated from the social, economic, political, religious and Intellectual thought soft the civilization.”

Western Rajasthan is the Eastern extremity of a much larger region of low precipitation that stretches from the Sahara through the Arabian Peninsula and the India Plateau to the Indian sub-continent. The greater pan of western Rajasthan is arid and semi-arid. It is incorrect to treat the entire tract as a sandy desert. While much of the extensive flat tracts of Jaisalmer (locally known as Thar) may be in fact more appropriately be characterized as an extremely dry steppe than a desert present.

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In the colorful Indian state of Rajasthan, many communities are living. In each community, different style of costumes and ornaments are worn. Costumes are often made from textiles using either traditional or modern printing. The main work of costumes and ornaments is covering of human body and protect on from natural calamities like rain, sunlight, winter and sense of bare body. In present time costumes are not only the basic demand of human beings but also the expression of the social status by means of decoration. Rajasthani people are fond of decorated costumes by nature and remain attractive towards costumes and ornaments since the early age. It is often called the shoppers “paradise” as it is famous for textiles, semi- precious stones and handicrafts. The attractive designs of costumes are eye catching and inviting to any shopper. Rajasthani costumes are always in demand wherever sold. The present study deals with the traditional costume of Bishnoi community.

#### Costumes of bishnoi tribe

Every community and tribe in Rajasthan has its own distinctive costume. Clothing of Rajasthan Bishnois is really outstanding and lively, showing the spirit of the inhabitants, their religion and culture. Both men and women put on colorful and beautiful designed costumes to show the great ambiance of this north-western state of India. From head-to-toe everything such as turban, jewellerys, footwear and clothing reflect the religion, identity and social and economic

status of Rajasthan.

#### Women’s Costume

For centuries, the dress most widely worn by the women in Rajasthan has been a combination of an upper garment (puthia, or kanchli and kurti), a lower garment (The Ghaghra or Skirt), and the odhna (veil) draped to flow across the upper and lower parts of the body. The odhani is an integral part of Rajasthani women’s attire and deserves special mention. Coloured stones, tinsels and silken threads are used to create beautiful floral patterns and traditional motifs and enhance the rich look of the odani. Though usually teamed up with Ghaghara choli or lehenga. However, in the rural looks of the women, bright colour Ghaghara along with darker odani with gota at the edges of the odani is noticed. A Ghaghara is basically a long skirt, which has the construction of a simple gathered skirt or a flared gored skirt. Ghaghara covers the legs fully or partially, depending on the norms of propriety among different ethnic groups, although a long Ghaghara usually relates to a more puritanical modesty.

Young unmarried girls of this community wear pothdi or pada, odhna and puthia. Odhnis represent a wide range of prints such as ludi in black, sundry pakodi in cotton and rati-chunri a red colored chunri. Married women wear Ghaghara or dhabla, kanchli with kurti and odhna.

#### Women’s Costume

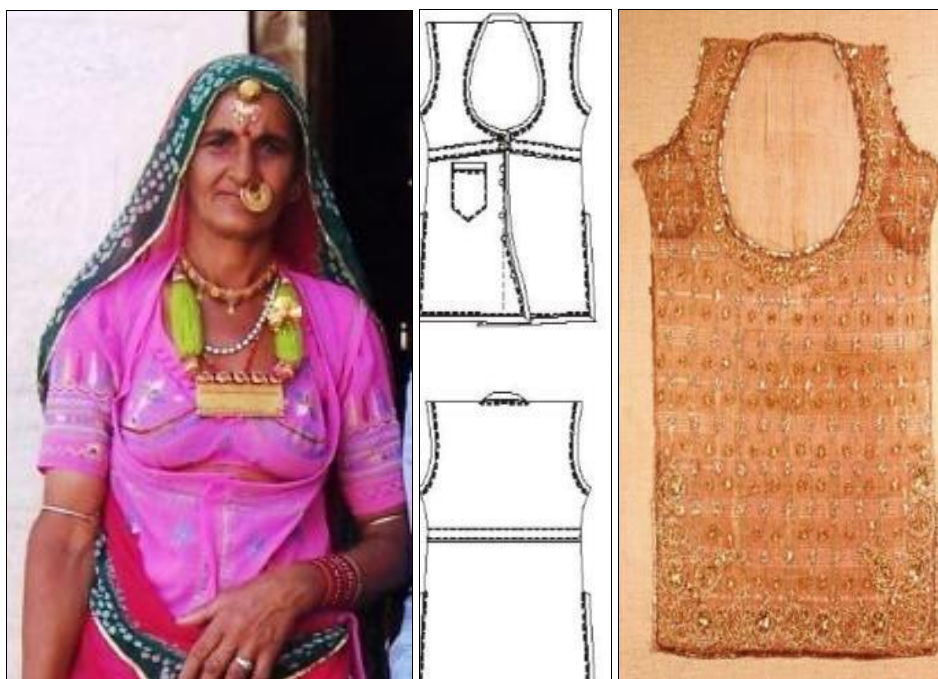


Image 1: Kachli

#### Men’s Costume

The Bishnoi man’s attire comprises the chola /kurta, the dhoti and the pagadi. The chola/kurta is worn as upper garment and is usually made of white cotton, it reaches down to the mid-thigh and has full-length sleeves. The upper garment can include a bandi and a kurta or tunic that is commonly worn across the different communities. The kurtas are loose fitting shirts that go up to knee in length. Some difference was found in length of dhoti and its style. A dhoti is worn as the lower

garment and is made of white cotton fabric and is worn atankle-length. The dhoti was the universal male garment of the ordinary Hindu. How the dhoti was worn depended upon the individual taste and preference. The dhoti is worn with a posterior tuck called kachcha. Trousers of a close fitting kind were not unknown in early India, judging from the evidence of sculptures. For special events, they prefer a silk one or the one with Zari border or embroidery.



**Image 2:** Chola/Kurta



**Image 3:** Potiya

The men of the Bishnoi community prefer to wear headgears. The headgear of the Bishnoi men is known as the potiya. It is white and worn at all times Bishnoi men mostly used fabric pagri in daily life but in ceremonial and religious functions, respondents used to wear georgette and chiffon pagri. Bishnoi community usually used to decorate either by zari work or embroidery. The width of a Pagri is 8 inches and length is about eighty feet.

**Objective**

- To study the costumes of people belonging to different areas (urban and rural) of Bishnoi Community.

**Methodology**

**Research Design:** For this study, there searcher employed descriptive research which involves survey and fact finding

enquiries of different kinds. Descriptive research is also some times called ex-post facto research. The principle aim of employing descriptive research was to describe the nature of the situation as it existed at the time of the study and to explore the causes of the particular phenomena.

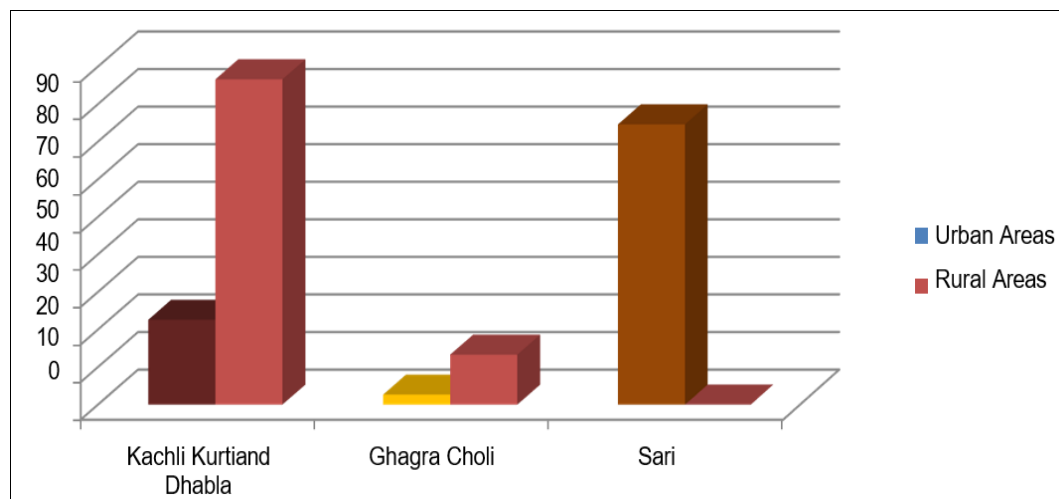
- **Locale of the Study:** The study was conducted in the Jodhpur including urban and rural areas (Rajasthan).
- **Sample Size:** A total of 300 subjects were selected purposively of which 150 (75 female and 75 male) from Jodhpur and rest 150 (75 female and 75 male) from other villages.

**Statistical Analysis:** Percentage, mean, standard deviation and ‘t’ test.

**Results**

**Table 1:** Everyday costumes of the women of urban area sand rural areas

Groups	Response	N	%
Urban Areas	i) Kachli Kurti and dhabla	17	22.6
	ii) Ghaghra Choli	02	2.66
	iii) Saree	56	74.6
Rural Areas	i) KachliKurti	65	86.6
	ii) Ghaghra Choli	10	13.3
	iii) Saree	Nil	Nil
Total		150	100.0



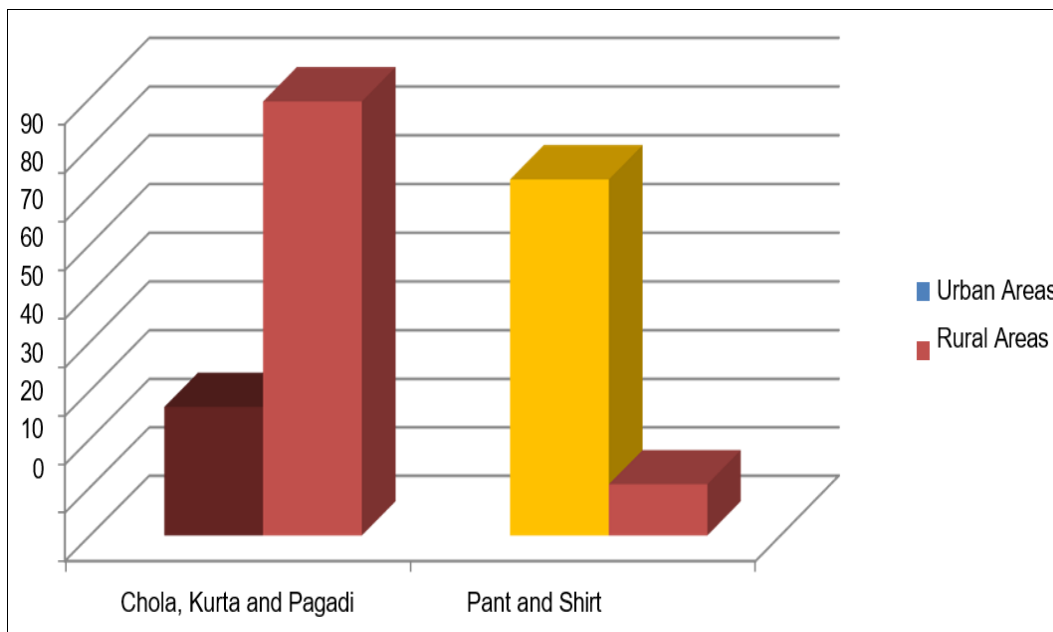
**Fig 1:** Everyday costumes of the women of urban areas and rural areas

Table-1 and Figure-1 reveal everyday costumes of the women of urban areas and rural areas. Majority of the women of rural areas 65(86.6%) wear kachli kurta followed 10(13.3%) ghaghra choli. Noone wear sarees in rural areas. Similarly, in

urban areas large no. of women 56(74.6%) wear saree followed by 17(22.6%) kachli kurta & dhabla and 02(2.66%) ghaghra choli.

**Table 2:** Everyday costumes of the men of urban areas and rural areas

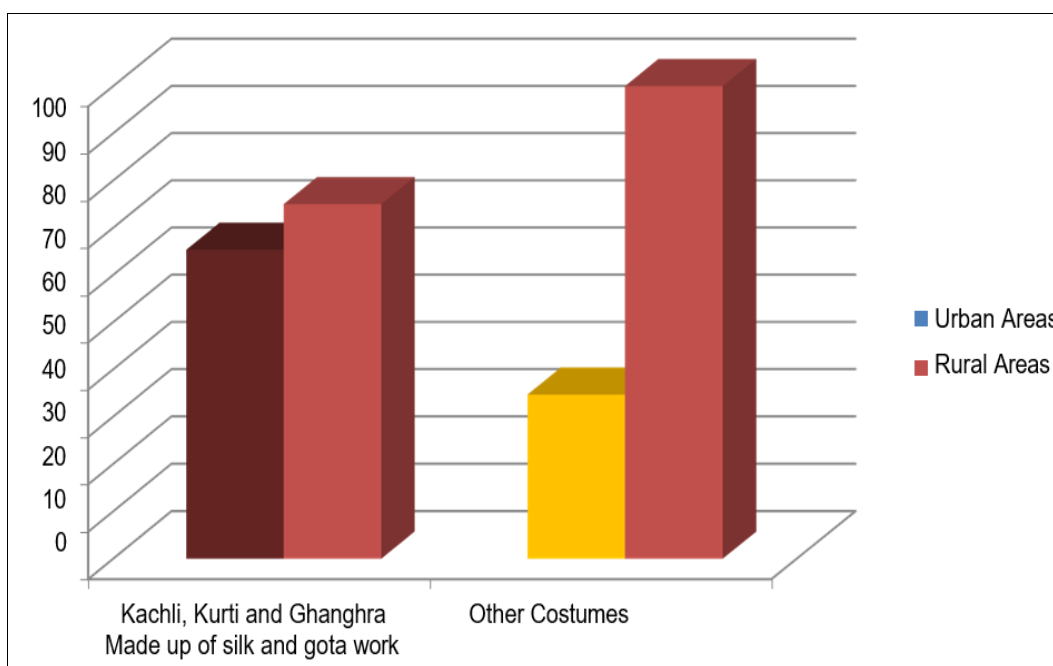
Groups	Response	N	%
Urban Areas	i) Chola, Kurta and Pagadi	20	26.6
	ii) Pant and Shirt	55	73.3
Rural Areas	i) Chola, Kurta and Pagadi	67	89.3
	ii) Pant and Shirt	08	10.6
Total		150	100.0



**Fig 2:** Everyday costumes of the men of urban areas and rural areas

Table-2 and Figure-2 illustrate everyday costumes of the men of urban areas and rural areas. In rural areas, significant no. of men 67(89.3%) wear chola, kurta & pagadi and rest

08(10.6%) pant & shirt. While in urban areas, mostly men 55(73.3%) prefer to wear pant and shirt whereas only 20(26.6%) chola, kurta & pagadi.



**Fig 3:** Clothes wear on special occasions by women of urban areas and rural areas

**Table 3:** Clothes wear on special occasions by women of urban areas and rural areas

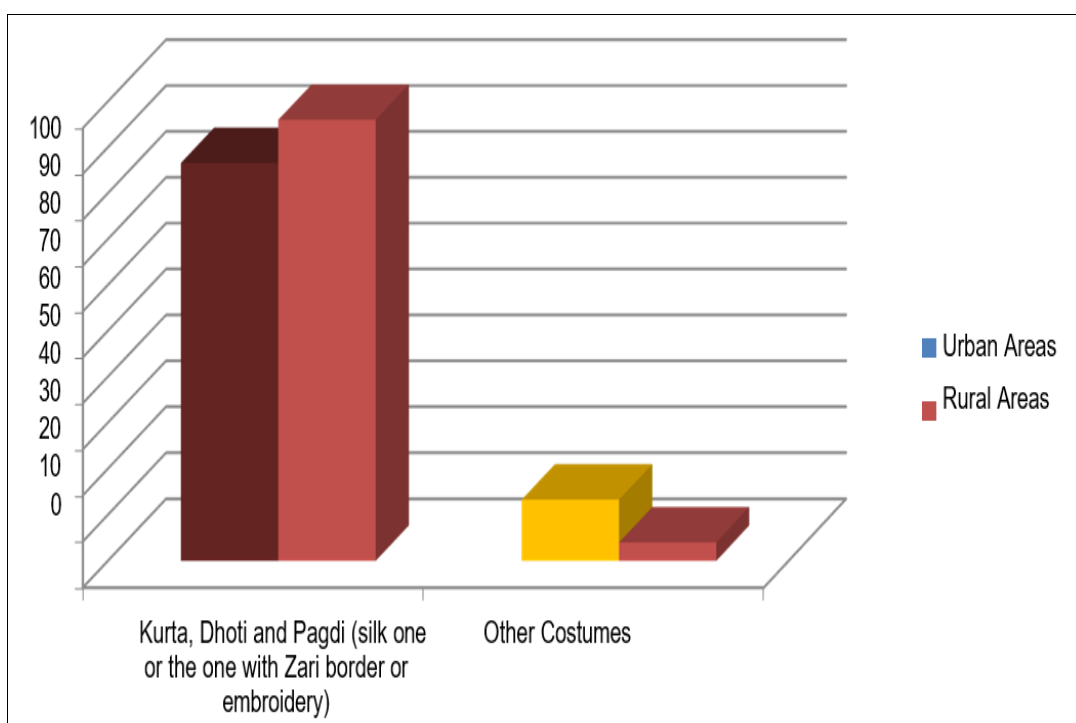
Groups	Response	N	%
Urban Areas	i) Kachli, Kurti and Ghanghra made up of silk and gota work	49	65.33
	ii) Other costumes	26	34.66
Rural Areas	i) Kachli, Kurti and Ghanghra Made up of silk and gota work	75	100.0
	ii) Other costumes	Nil	Nil
Total		150	100.0

Table-3 and Figure-3 depict the percentage of the clothes wear on special occasions by women of urban areas and rural areas. Data shows that almost all the women of rural areas 75 (100%) wear kachli, kurti and ghanghra made up of silk and

gota work. Similarly in urban areas, large no. of women 49 (65.33%) wear kachli, kurti and ghaghra followed by 26 (34.66%) other customs.

**Table 4:** Clothes wear on special occasions by men of urban area sand rural areas

Groups	Response	N	%
Urban Areas	i) Kurta, Dhoti and Pagdi (silk one or the one with Zari border or embroidery).	65	86.6
	ii) Other costumes	10	13.3
Rural Areas	i) Kurta, Dhотиand Pagdi (silk one or the one with Zari border or embroidery).	72	96.0
	ii) Other costumes	03	4.0
Total		150	100.0



**Fig 4:** Clothes wear on special occasions by men of urban areas and rural areas

Table-4 and Figure-4 illustrate the percentage of the clothes wear on special occasions by men of urban areas and rural areas. In rural areas, majority of men 72 (96%) wear kurta, dhoti and pagdi (silk one or the one with zari border or

embroidery) followed by 03 (4%) other costumes. While in urban areas, significant no. of men wear traditional costumes like kurta, dhoti & pagdi whereas 03 (4%) other costumes.

**Table-5:** T-Test: Significant difference in the everyday costumes of the women of urban areas and rural areas

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	'T'	DF	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference
Urban Areas	75	4.61	2.056	7.013	148	.000	1.953
Rural Areas	75	4.89	2.004				

Significant difference  $p < 0.01$

Table-5 shows the significant difference in everyday costumes of the women of urban areas and rural areas. The mean scores and t-values have been tabulated here. The difference are statistically significant since 't' = 7.013;  $p < 0.01$  with regards to everyday costumes between women of urban

and rural areas. It has been found that women of rural areas are more into their traditional clothes in comparison to women of urban areas. Urban women mostly prefer to wear traditional costumes on special occasions only.

**Table 6:** T-Test: Significant difference in the everyday costumes of the men of urban areas and rural areas

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	'T'	DF	Sig. (2-Tailed)	Mean Difference
Urban Areas	75	4.11	2.722	.377	148	.706	.453
Rural Areas	75	4.41	2.483				

Significant difference  $p < 0.01$

Table-6 shows the significant difference in the everyday costumes of the men of urban areas and rural areas. The mean scores and t-values have been tabulated here. The difference are statistically significant since 't' = .377;  $p < 0.01$  in case of everyday costumes between women of urban and rural areas.

It has been found that men of rural areas mostly prefer to wear traditional costumes than the men of urban areas. In urban areas men mostly work in offices and traditional customs are not supposed to wear in offices. Therefore, they mostly wear shirt and pant on regular days.

**Table 7:** T-Test-Significant difference in the clothes wear on special occasions by women of urban areas and rural areas

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	'T'	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Urban Areas	75	4.61	2.056	4.885	148	.000	1.67
Rural Areas	75	4.95	1.851				

Significant difference  $p < 0.01$

The data in this Table-7 involves the significant difference in the clothes wear on special occasions by women of urban areas and rural areas. The mean scores and t-values have been tabulated here. The difference are statistically significant since 'T' = 4.885;  $p < 0.01$  with regards to clothes wear on

special occasions by women of urban areas and rural areas. I thus been found that significant number of women in rural areas wear traditional clothes like Kachli kurti and ghaghra on special occasions in comparison to women in urban areas.

**Table 8:** T-Test-significant difference in the clothes wear on special occasions by men of urban areas and rural areas

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	'T'	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Severe	75	4.89	2.056	7.013	148	.000	1.953
Both	75	4.95	2.004				

Significant difference  $p < 0.01$

The Table-8 shows the significant difference in the clothes wear on special occasions by men of urban areas and rural areas. The mean scores and t-values have been tabulated here. The difference are statistically significant since 'T' = 7.013;  $p < 0.01$  in case of clothes wear on special occasions by men of urban areas and rural areas.

It has been found that significant number of men of rural areas wear dhoti, kurta and turban on special occasions in comparison to men of urban areas.

### Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion people of Bishnoi community display their tribal costumes in their clothing. Both men and women fond of traditional clothes. They have different types of clothing for special occasions. Findings show that women of rural areas are more into their traditional clothes in comparison to women of urban areas. Costumes of women of urban areas are modified with the changing time. Women in urban areas are working therefore they only wear traditional costumes on special days.

While men's attire comprises the chola, dhoti and the pagadi. The chola and dhoti are made of white cotton fabric. In both urban and rural areas, men wear same kind of costumes but in urban areas, men mostly go out for work and therefore traditional costumes are not supposed to wear.

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