

Obsession of Ornaments of the Mughal Ladies

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Abstract-

As we know the Mughal period is not only about war and conquest but they too equally interested in beautifying themselves. The ladies of Mughal era were fascinated towards different type of ornaments. They feel themselves more beautiful after putting on ornaments. Various contemporary sources and the accounts left by the foreign travelers and the paintings of the Mughals reveal the fascination and liking of ornaments by the ladies. They wore different varieties of ornaments and think the ornaments as the joy of heart.

Keywords- *Kotbiladar, Sis-Phul, Kundala, Karnphul, Champakali, Nakmachi, Chur, Gajrah, Dundhani, Khalkhal.*

Jewellery has always been an obsession to women of all ages. The place for Jewellery remains a prominent place in the life of a woman. Ornaments worn by the women are not only to look beautiful and attractive but also, they wear as a mark of status, rank and dignity. During the Mughal period the royal Mughal ladies were much obsessed with the ornaments of different types and forms. During the Mughal era women were accustomed to use of ornaments right from the childhood. Almost every child had a gold or silver chain with the bells tied around their waist and anklets round the legs. Ornaments of different types were put into special attention by the emperors of the Mughal era. Goldsmiths with expertise in stone setting were employed in their *kharkhanas*.

Different types of ornaments by which the royal Mughal ladies are obsessed include

The royal ladies were fond of head ornaments and they decorated every part of their bodies from head to toe with different types of ornaments. As mentioned in *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl writes about the thirty-seven different kinds of ornaments worn by the ladies of Mughal era. There are five types of head ornaments like *Sis-phul* which was a raised bell-shaped piece of gold and silver, hollow and embellished from inside with attachments fasten to their hair over the crown of the head. *Mang* was worn on the parting of the head. *Kotbiladar* which consisted of five bands and a long center drop was worn on the forehead. *Sakra* mainly used in marriage ceremonies and other special occasions. *Binduli* another important ornament of the ladies worn on the forehead.

Ear ornaments- the Mughal ladies wore ear ornaments of different sizes and shapes. They generally wore ear ornaments almost touching the shoulders. *Bauli* was worn in the upper part of the ear while *Kundala* was worn on the lower part. According to Abul Fazl ear ornaments like *Kuntala* a tapering shaped earring, *Karnphul* which shape like a flower of *Magrela*, *Pipal-Patti* crescent shape worn as a bunch of eight or nine in each ear, *Champakali* smaller than red rose worn on the shell of the ear.

Nose ornament as shown in Mughal paintings reveal that the Mughal ladies use to wear nose ornaments of different types. As mention by Abul Fazl there are various types and names of the nose ornaments like *Besar*, *Phuli*, *laung Nauth*, *nakmachi* etc.

The hand ornaments of the Mughal ladies as mention by Abul Fazl in *Ain-i-Akbari* is *Kangan* surmounted with small knobs, *Gajrah*, *Chur*, *Bahu*, *Churin* are the types of hand ornaments worn by the ladies. The design and types of the hand ornaments are so beautiful that it highlights the Mughal age as age of Fashionable items used by them. The bracelets as mention by Abul Fazl were in the form of pearl bands which went around the wrist nine or twelve times. The Mughal ladies considered arms without ornaments is not a good omen. The royal ladies of Mughal era are also fond of wearing rings of different designs on their fingers and that also studded with precious stones like diamonds and Sapphires.

The ladies of Mughal period also wear waist belt of gold that also two fingers wide and decorated with precious stones. In *Ain-i-Akbari* a gold belt called *Kati-mekhla and Chhudr- Khantika*, which had golden bells strung on gold wires and twisted round the waist was worn by the begums of the Mughals.

The ladies of Mughal were also obsessed by the ornaments worn on ankle, as mention by Soma Mukherjee in her book” *Royal Mughal Ladies and their Contribution*” she has beautifully mention about the three types of gold rings like *Chura*, *Dhundhani* and *Masuchi*. The ankle ornament known as *Khalkhal* produced a jingling sound when the wearer moves around. They also wear rings on their toes and *Shekles* on their legs which generally make a noise like a rattle snake.

Lastly, the Mughal ladies wore various types of ornaments from head to toe which reveal the excellent craftsmanship of the goldsmith and from the ornaments we come to know about the Mughal grandeur and their taste for the ornaments. The ladies can afford the costly ornaments as they use to get gifts for the Emperors and had personal source of income. No doubt Mughal ladies loaded themselves with ornaments but they were also some ladies of Mughal who were concerned to give new design and patterns ornaments.

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