

*Research Paper :*

## **Study on traditional costumes and coiffure of male and female Rajput community of Mewar region of Rajasthan**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Rajasthan is the largest state of the republic of India in terms of area. It is often called the shoppers "paradise" as it is famous for textiles, semi-precious stones and handicrafts. The attractive designs of costumes and coiffure are eye catching and inviting to any shopper. Rajasthani costumes are always in demand wherever sold. The present study deals with the rich heritage of Rajputs and their traditional costume and coiffure.

**Key words :** Costume, Coiffure, Rajput community

In India, Rajputs have a great identity and substantial contributions. As Rajputs are known for their rich treasure of culture although, it is not sporadically explored.

In the colourful Indian state of Rajasthan, many communities are living. In each community, different style of costumes and coiffure are worn. Costumes/coiffure are often made from textiles using either traditional or modern printing. The main work of costumes and coiffure 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.

Rajputs are sub-sect of Hindi speaking "Kshatriyas". In older times, the term was applied only to kinsmen of ruling dynasties. The present study was undertaken to study and document the traditional costumes and coiffure of male and female of Rajput community of Rajasthan.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Preliminary survey was conducted to collect the information about costumes and coiffure used by Rajput male and female on the basis of heavily populated Suryavanshi Rajput in Udaipur and Bhilwara districts of Mewar.

A sample of 60 respondents was selected from each district comprising of 30 male and 30 female respondents of Suryavanshi Rajput community to fulfill the purpose of the present study. The data were collected and analyzed in the light of the objectives of the present study.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The study was conducted in Udaipur and Bhilwara districts, as the heavy population of Suryavanshi Rajputs is found in both these district.

#### **Rajput female costumes:**

Upper garment:

The garments of daily use have been described in Table 1.

From Table 1 it can be seen that 60 per cent of respondents used to wear traditional clothes while 40 per cent used modern clothes in Udaipur district. Similar trend of wearing was found in Bhilwara district also were 51.6 per cent of respondents were wearing traditional and 48.3 per cent modern clothes.

In response to the question about traditional dress of female Rajputs, cent per cent respondents from both the areas informed that traditional female clothes is Lehanga, Kachali, Kurti (Plate 1).

#### **Traditional clothes:**

The use of traditional clothes has been depicted in Table 2. All the respondents said that due to requirement

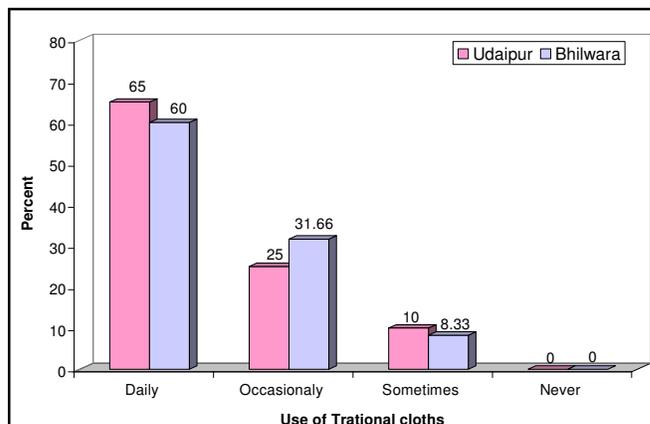


of work place, their clothing pattern changed and respondents wear modern clothes. There was not even a single respondent who never wore the traditional clothes.

Equal percentage of the respondents (65% and 60%) from both the districts Udaipur and Bhilwara wear traditional clothes daily use, respectively. But 25 per cent and 31.66 per cent respondents wore occasionally and 10 per cent and 8.33 per cent respondents were wearing some times as reported (Table 2 and Fig. 1).

Mathur (1993) agrees that in spite of similar finding of modern effect and western fashion, Rajput community prefers to wear the traditional clothes only.

Cent per cent Rajput women used to wear Kurti-kanchali as upper garments in both Udaipur and Bhilwara districts (Table 3).



**Fig. 1 : Percentage distribution of respondents of the basis of traditional clothes**

Rajput women wear short half sleeves Kanchali with a deep neckline exposing the upper part of their breasts. The neckline is generally decorated with small frill and pipings. Kanchali is well decorated with embroidery work and precious items like small silver bells, pearls and piping.

The “Kurti” is sleeveless short tunic with a deep neckline, which is worn over the “Kanchali” and reaches a little below the waist. The “Kurti” has bias edgings called “Guna” (Piping) and the “Maghji” (Hem) at the neckline the armhole and the hem. The “Kurti” has slit on the side seams, which are around 3.5 to 4 inches long. These slit

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to their garments clothes of daily use (N=120)**

Sr. No.	Variables	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Traditional	36	60	31	51.66	67	55.83
2.	Morden	24	40	29	48.33	53	44.16

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to use of traditional clothes (N=120)**

Sr. No.	Use of traditional clothes	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Daily	39	65	36	60	75	62.5
2.	Occasionally	15	25	19	31.66	34	28.33
3.	Sometimes	6	10	5	8.33	11	9.16

**Table 3: Percentage distribution of the respondents based on variety of upper garments for women (N=120)**

Sr. No.	Variety of upper garments	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Kurti kanchli	60	100	60	100	120	100
2.	Kanchli	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Blouse	-	-	-	-	-	-

enable the odhna/odhani to be tucked at the waist of the “lengha” and to accomadate the gather of the “lengha”.

The “Kanchli” serves the purpose of brassieres. It is a backless blouse with half sleeves and fastens at the back around the neck and the waist with the help of cloth ties. The upper part of the cups of the “Kanchli” is elaborately embroidered, as the upper part of cup is visible above the neckline of the “Kurti”.

Rajput women are fond of decorated clothes. They decorate their upper garments with gota, kasida, fool Patti work and figures of birds and flowers. They also decorate their Kanchali Kurti by putting magji (hem) and phool-titli on the plain part of garments. They mostly like bright and shining fabric for their garments.

Tare (stars), mirror, gota, flower, lace, cheed (beads) and moti (pearls) are also used in the design around border of sleeves of Kurti and Kanchli.

**Lower garment:**

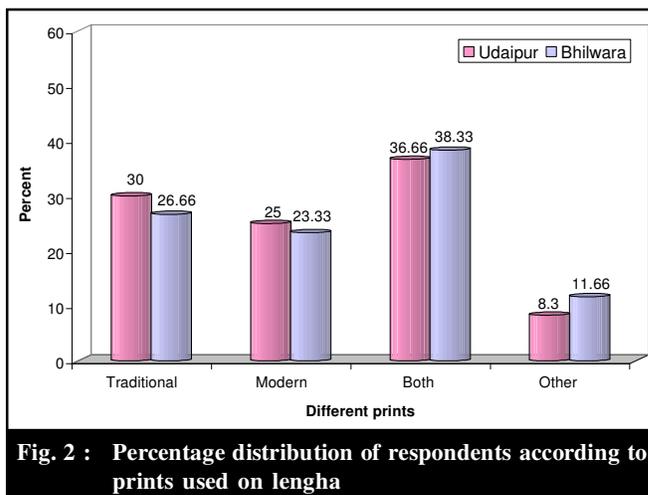
Lengha of Rajput women:

The lengha worn by Rajput women has length from waist to heel. Lengha is made of different coloured fabrics having the prints on it. Red, yellow, pink and different colours are used for lengha. The lower border of lengha” is made up of geometrical shapes in same colour of lengha which is made by some folds of clothes called “Chunnet” or silk and cotton lace (cord) is put inside the nepha to tie the lengha having the foondas, mirrors at the end of the cord. They also do ‘smoking’ Kasida (embroidery) to give it fine look.

In present time, micro, jersi, cotton khadi clothes are also used for making lengha, which is decorated by embroidery of silky and golden threads and putting the twinkling stars, pearls and tare.

Regarding pattern of Lengha, it was found that 21.6 per cent Rajput women wore “six Kali Lengha” while more than 78 per cent women wear “eight Kali Lengha” in Udiapur district. In Bhilwara district 25 per cent Rajput women wore six Kali Lengha and 75 per cent women used “eight Kali Lengha” (Plate 2). The respondents found that 30 per cent women used traditional printed cloth for lengha whereas 25 per cent women used modern printed cloth and 22 per cent women used both types of printed cloth for the lengha and 8.3 per cent women used other printed cloth for the lengha in Udaipur district (Fig. 2).

Cent per cent Rajput women put magzi (hem) on their lengha. All women said that it is not necessary to use magzi on odhna during survey. It was observed that no separate cloth is used for magzi on odhna and lengha but in Rajput families women use gota on the odhani of



golden and silver colour. Similary there was no hem on lengha. 70 per cent women said that they use same coloured magzi while remaining 30 per cent respondents preferred different colour magzi on the lengha in Udiapur district. In Bhilwara, 75 per cent women used same colour magzi on the lengha and only 25 per cent used different coloured magzi on the lengha (Table 4).

**Coiffure:**

Rajput women use the traditional odhani “Poomcha”, “Laharia”, Fag”, Balachunri”, “Samandar laharia”, Chundari of Bandhej as Odhani.” The Balachunri is used in of pink, saffron, red and rani colours having the ornamentation by aari, tari, tare, gota, daliya, kalbatu, gota fool, pearls (moti) cheed, jardoji and embroidering works.

The general odhanies are ornamented with various designs of embroidery work and sitara, gota lace, silk,

**Table 4: Details regarding "Lengha" worn by female Rajputs (N=120)**

Sr. No.	Cloths used for lengha	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Cotton	29	48.33	31	51.66	60	50
2.	Synthetic	7	11.66	8	13.33	15	12.5
3.	Georgette	24	40	21	35	45	37.5
	Type of lengha						
1.	Six kali lengha	13	21.66	15	25	28	23.33
2.	Eight kali lengha	47	78.33	45	75	92	76.66
	Prints used on lengha						
1.	Traditional	18	30	16	26.66	34	28.33
2.	Modern	15	25	14	23.33	29	24.16
3.	Both	22	36.66	23	38.33	45	37.5
4.	Other	5	8.3	7	11.66	12	10
	Length of lengha						
1.	From waist to heel	60	100	60	100	120	100
	Magzi on lengha	60	100	60	100	120	100
1.	Same colour of magzi used	42	70	39	75	81	67.5
2.	Different colour of magzi used	18	30	21	25	39	32.5

coloured thread kasidas, golden thread kasida, kalabatu, chhead, pearls, golden and silver coloured staras, ghungru, mirror pieces, rings and other decorative items as available, and do aari-tari work and zari work on the odhanies (Plate 3).

Mostly cotton, voil, semi georgette, polyesters, chiffon and silk fabrics were used for Odhani, which was 2½ x 1½ m in length and 1 m width. It was found that 60 per cent Rajput women used 3 x 1 m. long, 1 m. width odhani whereas 40 per cent women used 3-meter long and 1 meter width odhani in their daily life at Udaipur district (Table 5).

Similarly, 53.33 per cent Rajput women used the 2.5 x 1.5 m. long m. width odhani and 46.66 per cent women used 3 x 1 m. long, m. width odhani used in Bhilawara district. In type of printing, 37.5 per cent respondents used both printing (traditional and modern printing) on their odhanies and 10 per cent respondents used other works like mirror work, tara work, aari tari work and embroidery etc. on odhani.

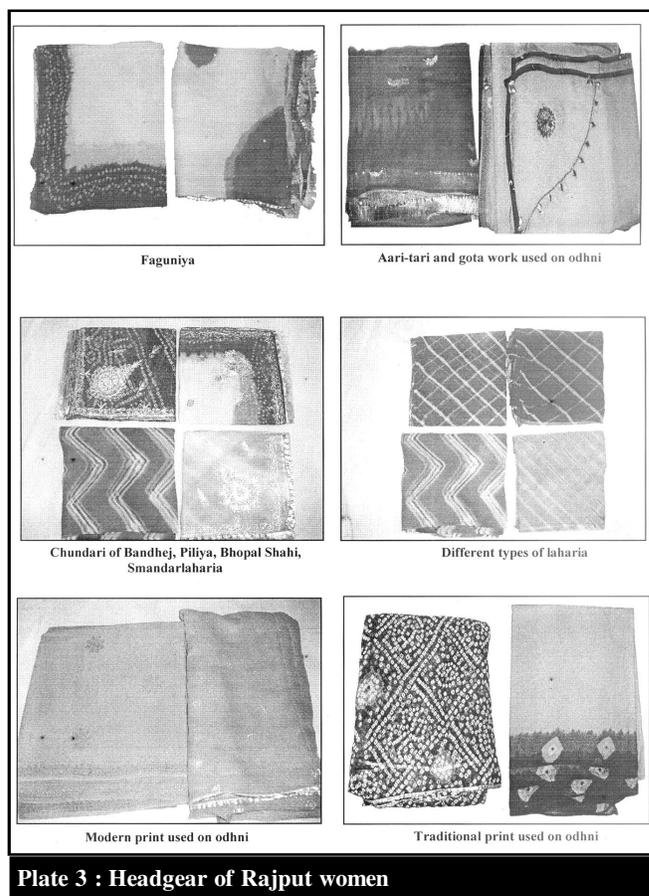
Mostly Rajput women use *Bala chundari laharia* and *chundari*. They use to wear *Laharia* and *Smander laharia* in Sawan month. *Bhopal Sahi* odhani is used in kartik month, *Faganiya* in Falgun month and *Chandania* use in Aashad month.

### Rajput male costumes:

Upper garments:

Cent per cent Rajputs men used to wear traditional

clothes which are mostly Kamiz Kurta, Safa/Pagri, Achkan as upper garments which are generally made of plain cloth. But young and fashionable persons can



**Plate 3 : Headgear of Rajput women**

**Table 5 : Details regarding "Odhani" worn by female Rajputs**

Sr. No.	Length and width of Odhani	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	2.5 x 1.5 m. long 1 m. width	36	60	32	53.33	68	56.66
2.	3 x 1 m. long, 1 m. width	24	40	28	46.66	52	43.33
Prints used on Odhani							
1.	Traditional	18	30	16	26.66	34	28.33
2.	Modern	15	25	14	23.33	29	24.16
3.	Both	22	36.66	23	38.33	45	37.5
4.	Other	5	8.3	7	11.66	12	10

decorate it by buttons, Kasida (embroidery) on pocket and colour.

The 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. Some difference was found in length of dhoti and its style. Table 6 indicates that more than 76.6 per cent Rajputs put on the dhoti from waist to ankle length and only 23.33 per cent put on dhoti from waist to below knee length at Udaipur district.

In Bhilwara district also pattern of wearing dhoti had some variation and the data revealed that more than 73 per cent Rajput put on the dhoti from waist to ankle length and 26.66 % used dhoti from waist to below knee length. Mostly Rajput men (63.3%) used to wear two lang folded dhoti in Udaipur district and 56.66 per cent in Bhilwara district.

The style of wearing dhoti is also reported by respondents as follows :

#### Short dhoti (Knee length or just below knees):

This dhoti is centralised. The upper selvege near centre front is gathered, twisted over each other, rolled down and tucked in the right upper selvege and taken between legs and tucked at its mid with at centre back. The remaining selvege is pleated and tucked at centre

back. However, this still leaves some of the fabric hanging free around the hip region, which is roughly gathered and tucked in at centre back itself.

Some people firstly put a knot at central front then the remaining fabric is given either of the following treatments. Both the Lallas are passed between the legs and tucked in at the centre back. All the excess fabric is tucked in at the centre back itself so that it forms a bulging bundle of cloth.

#### Do Lang Dhoti (Ankle length) :

In this style, first the dhoti is draped around the waist so that equal lengths of the dhoti are left hanging at either side and small double knots are made at the centre front to hold it on place. The whole length of the upper selvege is given knife pleats. These are tucked in at the centre front and the front fold face towards left. The width of the right Pallav is passed between that is tucked is adjusted to the comfort of the wearer thus leaving about half a meter cloth hanging. This piece of cloth is then brought over the side seen and tucked into the waist with a remainder of the cloth gently cascading down. The left selvege is also pleated with the pleats tucked over the right pleats. Hereafter it is draped in the same style as the right leg (Plate 4).

**Table 6: Pattern and styles of wearing lower garment among male Rajputs (N=120)**

Sr. No.	Length of dhoti	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Waist to ankle	46	76.66	44	73.33	90	75
2.	Below knee	14	23.33	16	26.66	30	25
Type of wearing							
1.	One lang dhoti	22	36.66	26	43.33	48	40
2.	Two lang dhoti	38	63.33	34	56.66	72	60
Difference colour of pagri among the old men							
1	Yes	18	30	20	33.33	38	31.66
2	No	42	70	40	66.66	82	68.33

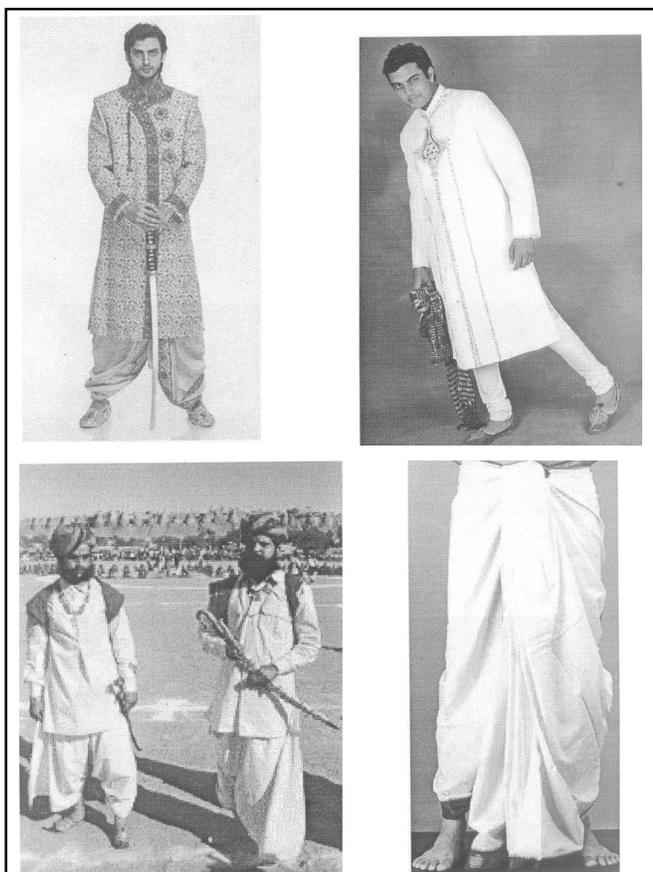


Plate 4 : Modern and traditional costume garments of Rajput men

Cent per cent young men use pant shirt and casual wear and old men use Dhoti, Kurta, Pagri and Safa and pant coat.

#### Coiffure:

With regards to two types of head gear wear used by Rajput males, it was observed that among safa/turban and pag, the old people used to wear, “pag” in daily use, where as young adults wear Safa on ceremonial occasions (Bhanawat, 1980). The frequency and percentage have been described in Table 7.

Table 7 depicts the different colours of Pagri commonly used by young adults and old people among

Suryavansi Rajputs.

In Udaipur 25 per cent, 23.33 per cent, and 20 per cent, Rajput families liked to wear mahroon, red and yellow coloured pagri, while 16.66 per cent and 15 per cent people liked Laheriya and orange coloured pagri, respectively.

Likewise in Bhilwara district, 26.66 per cent, 21.66 per cent and 20 per cent of families liked orange, Laheriya and red colour pagri while 13.33 per cent and 18.33 per cent liked mahroon and yellow coloured pagri, respectively (Table 7).

#### Type of fabric use in pagri:

The type of fabric use in pagri in both the districts has been given in following Table 8.

Table 8 shows that Rajput men mostly used fabric pagri in daily life but in ceremonial and religious functions, respondents used to wear georgette and chiffon pagri. Rajput community usually used to decorate their pagri by separate printed cloth called “Lapeta” in their language, which is decorated either by zari work or embroidery. It reveals that 60 per cent Rajputs use zari Lapeta, 18.33 per cent used embroidered Lepeta and 13.33 per cent used printed Lepeta to their pagri, a very few respondents (8.3 %) used plain Lapeta in Udaipur district.

Similarly in Bhilwara, Rajput men used zari Lepeta 56.6 per cent, 21.6 per cent used embroidery Lepeta, 10 per cent use printed Lepeta and 11.6 per cent men used plain Lepeta. In Bhilwara district, 33.3 per cent old men changed the colour of their pagri but 66.6 % old men did not change their pagris colour in old age.

It was observed that 20 per cent Rajputs changed the tying style and colours of their pagri according to the place but 80 per cent did not change style and colours of pagris in Udaipur district.

Similarly, in Bhilwara, 31.66 per cent Rajputs changed the tying style and colour of their pagri according to the place but 68.33 per cent Rajputs did not change style and colours of Pagris. Mostly Rajput men did not change tying style and colour of pagri because they are rigid and abide by rules and tying or colour of pagri which show that a

Table 7: Frequency and Percentage distribution of respondents by their pagri colour (N=120)

Sr. No.	Colour of pagri	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Laheriya	10	16.66	13	21.66	23	19.16
2.	Red	14	23.33	12	20	26	21.66
3.	Orange	9	15	16	26.66	25	20.83
4.	Mahroon	15	25	8	13.33	23	19.16
5.	Yellow	12	20	11	18.33	23	19.16

**Table 8 : Distribution of respondents according to that type of fabric used in pagri N=120**

Sr. No.	Type of fabric use in pagri	Respondents					
		Udaipur		Bhilwara		Total	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1.	Cotton	38	63.33	39	65	77	64.16
2.	Georgette	14	23.33	16	26.66	30	25
3.	Chiffon	8	13.33	4	6.66	12	10
4.	Other	-	-	1	1.66	1	.83

person belongs to particular area and community Metha (2000) (Plate 5).

### Changing of pagri as per seasons:

There is change in the colour of pagri of Rajputs as per the seasons and weather. It was found that in both the districts nearly equal percentage of respondents (68.3%) and (63.3%) changed the colour of their pagri according to the seasons and weather while 31.3% and

36.6% Rajput did not change pagri colour according to seasons in Udaipur and Bhilwara, respectively.

Dark coloured pagri was used in winter season, light coloured pagri in summer. In rainy season, men used to wear Laharia and in Spring (Basant) used to wear Basantia Pagri.

### Conclusion:

Rajput women wear Kurti-Kanchli as upper garments. Rajput women wear short half sleeves Kanchali with a deep neckline revealing the upper part of their breasts. The neckline is generally decorated with small frill and piping.

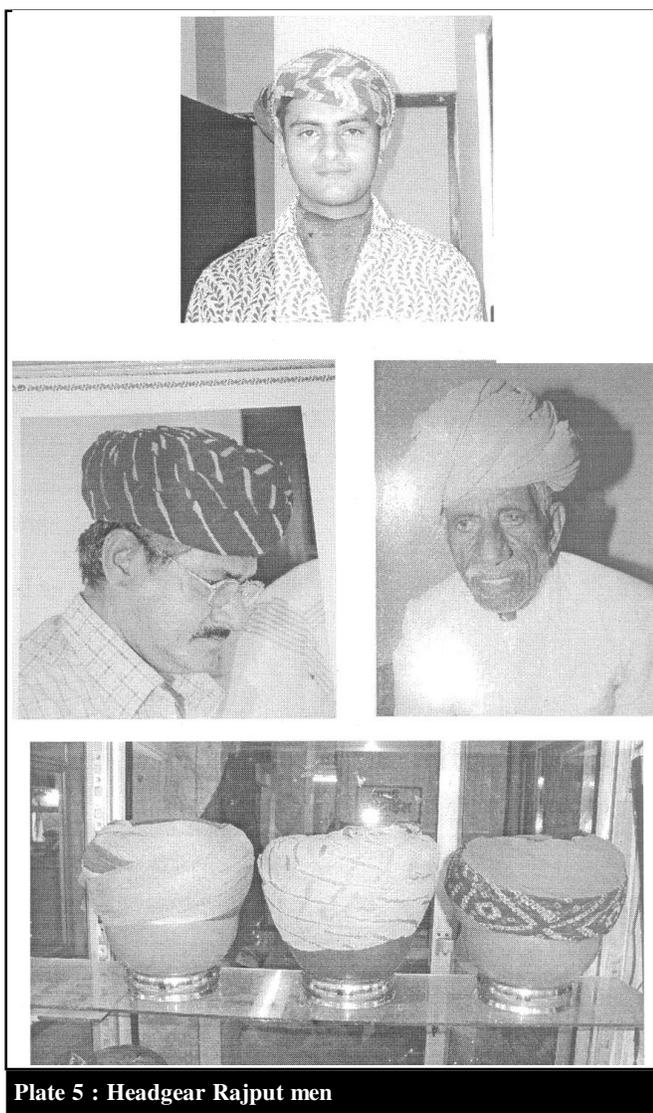
Rajput women usually wear red, pink, orange, yellow and parrot coloured garments. Their main lower garment costumes are "Lengha" which is like a modern petticoat of round shape which is long from waist to heel and having beautiful printing and designs on it. Some women use "Magzi", same color of the lengha but some women use different coloured Magzi. Rajput women use traditional odhni with larger dimension. The Odhni is being decorated by Gota- Kinari, Tara and piece of glass (mirror) work, zari work and danka work.

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**Plate 5 : Headgear Rajput men**