

Designing a line of Indo-western dresses using peacock motifs

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■ **ABSTRACT** : A line of Indo-western dresses on peacock theme was designed using twenty peacock motifs comprising of top ten motifs from each category, *i.e.* realistic and stylized motifs, adjudged best by a panel of ten judges. For designing Indo-western dresses, motif R₉ was most preferred (mean scores 4.80) by the judges followed by motif R₂₀ which obtained second rank with mean scores 4.40. Among the stylized motifs, S₂₀ motif was most preferred (mean scores 5.60) followed by motif S₁₇ which obtained second rank with mean scores 5.50. Twenty innovative designs of Indo-western dresses were developed in Corel Draw X5 by using ten most preferred peacock motifs which were highly appreciated by the college-going girls.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Indo-western dresses, Peacock motifs

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The desire to decorate or beautify the human form has existed since the Stone Age when man painted his face and body. Though standards of beauty have changed, the desire remains. The evolution of clothing has been closely interlinked with the social, economic and industrial progress of each period in the history of mankind. The compelling demands of the environment along with the dictates of fashion and the driving compulsions of the human personality have immense influence on clothing styles (Thomas, 1998). Fusion clothing enables the members of one ethnic group to be a part of another ethnic group by partially and selectively imitating their dress styles while retaining some elements of their own clothing culture. The younger generation of Indian origin in the West prefers to wear Indo-Western clothing. Similar scenario prevails in the Indian fashion market as well (Anonymous, 2013).

A theme based designed line of formal and semi-formal Indo-Western dresses developed by adapting peacock motifs would contribute to the existing design innovations. The study is expected to be beneficial to the fashion creators, merchandisers and the consumers.

Objectives :

- To study symbolic significance of the peacock motifs.

- To design a line of formal and semi-formal Indo-western dresses using peacock motifs.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Peacock motifs and their symbolic significance were documented from various primary and secondary sources such as internet, books, magazines, etc. A total of forty motifs comprising of twenty each for realistic and stylized motifs were selected for taking preferences of ten judges from faculty of Department of Apparel and Textile Science, PAU and post graduate students. Twenty motifs comprising of ten motifs with rank 1 to 10 were selected from each category for designing the Indo-western dresses in Corel Draw X5.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A line of twenty Indo-western dresses using peacock motifs was systematically designed after studying the symbolic significance of the peacock motifs and preferences of judges.

Symbolic significance of peacock motifs :

Most of the respondents seemed to be ignorant about the symbolic significance of peacock motifs. But all of them

reported the ‘peacock’ to be ‘national bird of India’. The information regarding the symbolic significance of peacock motif was, therefore, collected from the secondary sources including literature, internet, etc.

Peacock is reported to possess emblematic of qualities such as beauty, grace, pride and mysticism. It is a possessor of some of the most admired human characteristics, and is a symbol of integrity and the beauty one can achieve when endeavours to show true colours. In history, myth, legend and lore, the peacock symbolism carries portents of: nobility, holiness, guidance, protection and watchfulness. Contemplate the powers of the peacock when need more vibrancy and vitality in one’s experience. The peacock can also help on spiritual path, and to breathe new life into walk of faith. The peacock can rejuvenate self-esteem levels too. If feeling “blah” and blue, imagine the glorious, techno-colour display the peacock provides! This puts one in a proper mood to embrace your own nobility. In no time, person will be walking tall and proud as a peacock. Peacock stands for glory, vision, royalty, spirituality, awakening, immortality, refinement and incorruptibility. In Greco-Roman mythology the peacock is identified with Hera (Juno) who created the Peacock from Argus whose hundred eyes (seen on the tail feathers of the peacock) symbolize the vault of heaven and the “eyes” of the stars (Anonymous, 2005; Anonymous, 2014a; Anonymous, 2014b; Wilson, 2014).

In Hinduism, the peacock is associated with Saraswati, a deity representing benevolence, patience, kindness, compassion and knowledge. Peacocks have a special relation with Lord Krishna. He wears peacock feathers on his head, and ties them with his flute. The crown of peacock’s feathers leads to a further revelation: that it is the music of the heart which can be expressed through the head. It is by keen observation that man acquires knowledge. Knowledge without love is lifeless. So, with the flute, the crown of peacock’s feathers makes the symbol complete. Peacock is also the mount of Hindu God of war Murugan, also called Kartikeya, the brother of Ganesha. Similar to Saraswati, the peacock is associated with Kwan-yin in Asian spirituality. Kwan-yin (or Quan Yin, Guanyin) is also an emblem of love, compassionate watchfulness, good-will, nurturing, and kind-heartedness (Anonymous, 2012).

The peacock is associated with Kwan-yin in Asian spirituality. Kwan-yin (or Quan Yin) is also an emblem of love, compassionate watchfulness, good-will, nurturing, and kind-heartedness. In Babylonia and Persia the peacock is seen as a guardian to royalty, and is often seen in engravings upon the thrones of royalty. In Christianity the peacock symbolism represents the “all-seeing” church, along with the holiness and sanctity associated with it. Additionally, the peacock represents resurrection, renewal and immortality within the spiritual teachings of Christianity (Anonymous, 2005, Wilbur,

Table 1 : Preferences of judges for realistic and stylized peacock motifs						(n=10)*
Realistic motifs	Mean score	Rank	Stylized motifs	Mean score	Rank	
R ₁	2.60	X	S ₁	3.70	V	
R ₂	3.40	VI	S ₂	1.30	XVI	
R ₃	1.70	XV	S ₃	2.20	XII	
R ₄	2.10	XII	S ₄	2.60	XI	
R ₅	2.00	XIII	S ₅	1.00	XVIII	
R ₆	2.80	IX	S ₆	0.90	XIX	
R ₇	3.80	V	S ₇	3.90	III	
R ₈	1.90	XIV	S ₈	2.00	XIII	
R ₉	4.80	I	S ₉	2.80	X	
R ₁₀	1.50	XVIII	S ₁₀	3.90	III	
R ₁₁	4.00	III	S ₁₁	1.30	XVI	
R ₁₂	1.70	XV	S ₁₂	2.00	XIII	
R ₁₃	2.40	XI	S ₁₃	3.20	VI	
R ₁₄	1.00	XIX	S ₁₄	0.80	XX	
R ₁₅	2.90	VIII	S ₁₅	3.10	VIII	
R ₁₆	3.00	VII	S ₁₆	3.20	VI	
R ₁₇	1.60	XVII	S ₁₇	5.50	II	
R ₁₈	0.90	XX	S ₁₈	1.40	XV	
R ₁₉	4.00	III	S ₁₉	3.10	VIII	
R ₂₀	4.40	II	S ₂₀	5.60	I	

f= frequency *Multiple responses

2009, Pragya, 2011).

Peacock can be seen on artworks in medieval paintings and manuscripts and used in decorative motifs on churches and buildings. Certainly it signified something more than pride, as in the modern maxim, "proud as a peacock". Catholics adopted the symbol of the peacock to represent resurrection, renewal and immortality. This came from the ancient legend that the flesh of the peacock did not decay. Thus one can find paintings and mosaics with the peacock as early as the 3rd century on the walls of the catacombs of Rome, a symbol of the exchanging of the mortal earthly body for the glorified body and eternal life of the glorified soul in Heaven. When the peacock displays its tail, it looks like hundreds of eyes are watching us. Because of this, the peacock has been associated with the all-seeing eye of God who sees all actions and all people, meaning that nothing escapes the universal justice. The peacock also came to symbolize the all-seeing Catholic Church, who watches over her children continually, day and night. The eyes of the peacock feathers also symbolize the beatific vision, the direct perception and knowledge of God as He truly is, enjoyed by Angels, Christ, and the Saints in Heaven, which was another reason it was a decorative motif on medieval tomb sculptures (Jordan, 2012; Flores, 2010; Tidmarsh, 2014).

Bisla (1984) too, has reported that peacock is the emblem of desire, the kindling of the senses of the mind. Pair of bird signifies conjugal happiness. Peacock is connected with the idea of immortality and divine perfection. It is also considered as a symbol of love and fertility. The cock is a symbol of rebirth and awakening of life. It is connected to an idea of scrupulous observance of the holy teaching which will guarantee eternal life to the faithful.

Preferences for realistic and stylized peacock motifs for Indo-western dresses (Plate 1-2) :

The data revealed that among realistic motifs, R_9 motif was most preferred (mean scores 4.80) by the judges followed by motifs R_{20} which obtained second rank with mean scores 4.40. Motifs R_{11} and R_{19} scored third rank with mean scores 4.00 for each (Table 1). Motif R_{18} was least preferred and was ranked twentieth (mean score 0.90).

Among the stylized motifs, S_{20} motif was most preferred (mean scores 5.60) by the judges followed by motif S_{17} which obtained second rank with mean scores 5.50. Motifs S_7 and S_{10} scored third rank with mean scores 3.90 for each. Motif S_1 obtained fifth rank with mean score 3.70 followed by motifs S_{13} and S_{16} which scored sixth rank with 3.20 scores for each. Motif S_9 obtained tenth rank with mean score 2.80.

Development of designs for Indo-western dresses :

Twenty designs of Indo-western dresses adapting peacock motifs were developed in Corel Draw X5 by using ten most preferred peacock motifs from each category, i.e. realistic and stylized.

Details of the developed Indo-western dresses using peacock motifs (Plate 3-4) :

Design D_1 :

Design D_1 was a straight *Achkan* of maroon base fabric with full sleeves and band collar along with cigarette pant of beige base fabric. Motif S_7 was used for hand-work at the bust level on the two sides of placket opening.

Design D_2 :

Design D_2 was a short top with square neckline and cap sleeves in mauve and green base fabric combined with mauve *Dhoti salwar* along with violet coloured scarf. Motif S_6 was used for embroidery at bust level.

Design D_3 :

Design D_3 was a sleeveless, boat neckline, green coloured top with plain orange *Lehanga* and black and white self-printed *Dupatta* with scarlet border draped in *Saree* style. Motif S_{18} was used for traditional *Phulakri* embroidery at neck in the form of necklace.

Design D_4 :

Design D_4 was a one-piece fuchsia dress with halter neckline and backless bodice along with attached *Dupatta* draped in *Saree* style over skirt. The bodice and skirt were attached with bead strings at the waist. Motif S_{10} was used as machine embroidered patch at bust in gradation pattern.

Design D_5 :

Design D_5 was a one-piece dress with shrug. Traditional *Bandhani* printed fabric was used for skirt and *Rajasthani* embroidery on the shrug was adapted by using motif S_6 on the both right and left sides of the shrug.

Design D_6 :

Design D_6 was a peplum silhouette, full sleeves and double-breast, collared coat combined with royal blue *Sharara* in self-printed fabric. Motif S_2 was used at the placket opening of coat and *Gote* in *Sharara*.

Design D_7 :

Design D_7 was a shoulderless, basque waist, purple coloured one-piece dress with sequined *Dupatta* draped and attached with a peacock feather brooch at right shoulder. Motif S_2 was used as brooch in the dress.

Design D_8 :

Design D_8 was a halter neck, red coloured *Choli* with turquoise *Farshi pyjama* and *Dupatta*. Motif R_{11} was used above the joint of *Gote* in the *Pyjama*.

Design D_9 :

Design D_9 was a deep maroon tunic in *Sherwani* style

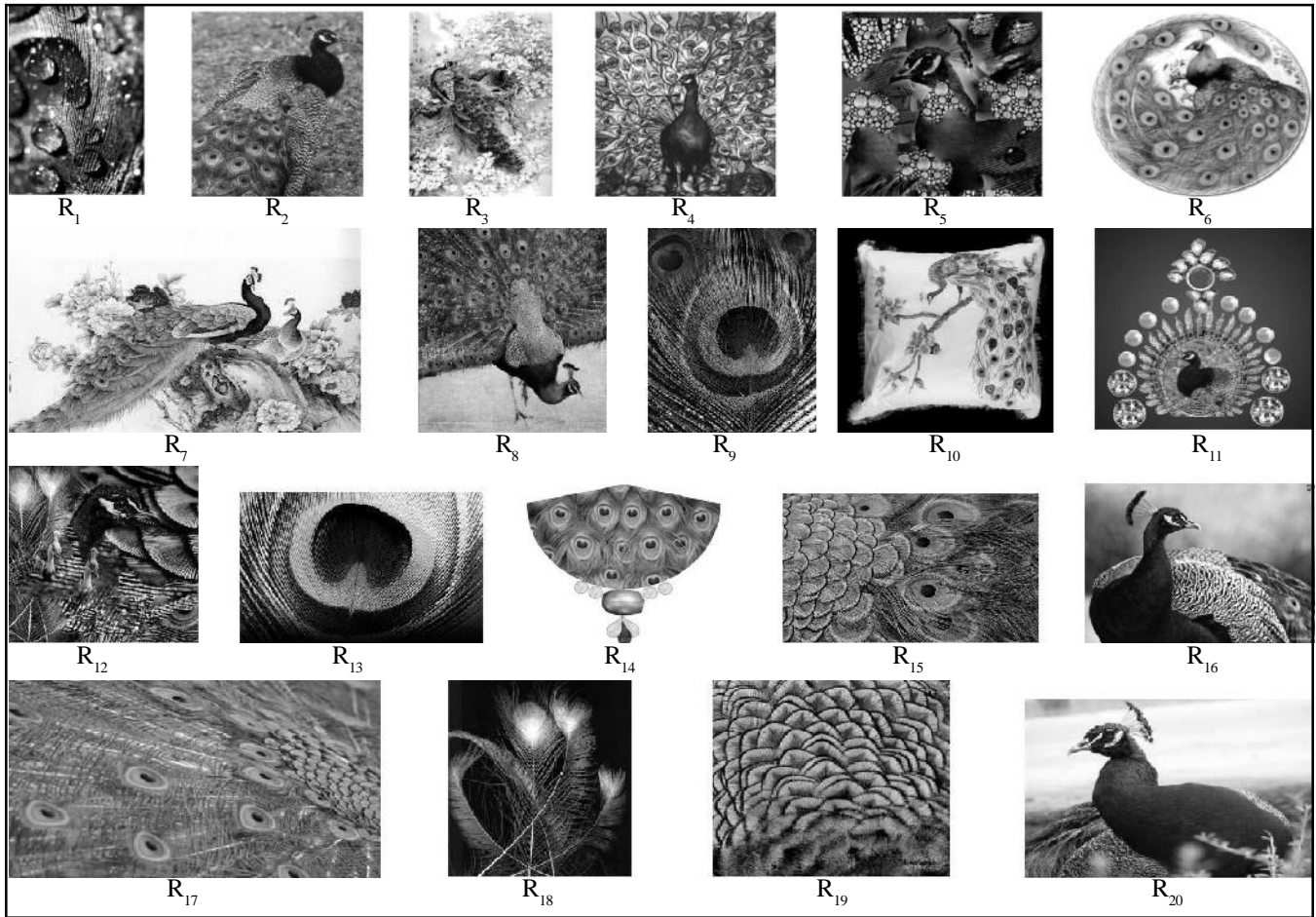


Plate 1 : (R₁-R₂₀) Realistic peacock motifs

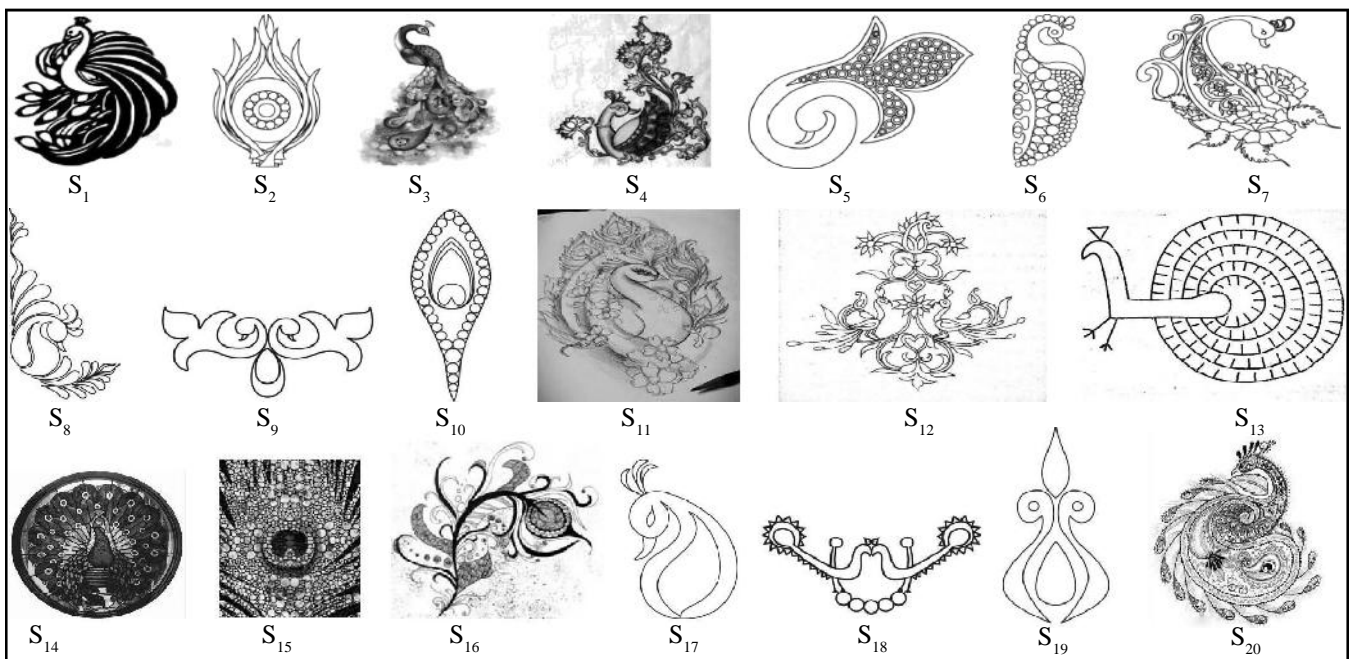


Plate 2 : (S₁-S₂₀) Stylized peacock motifs

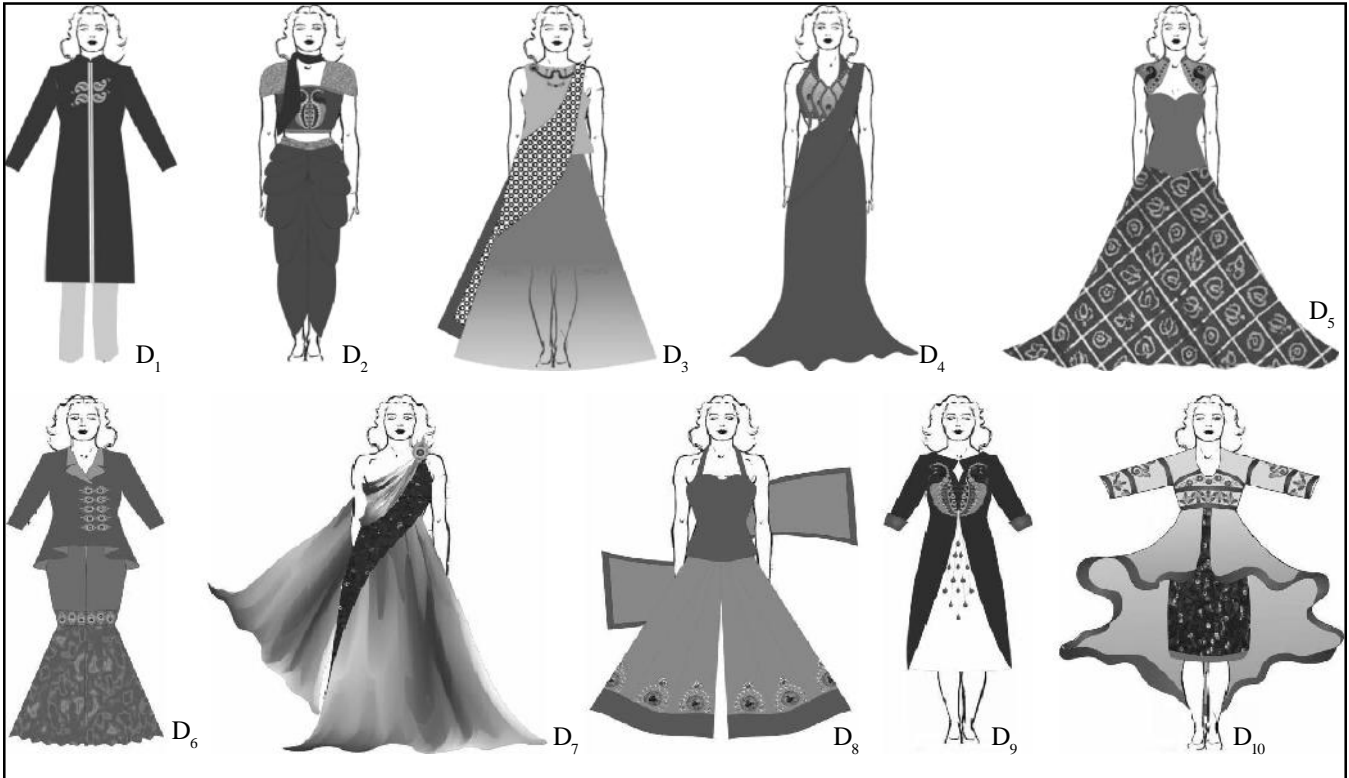


Plate 3 : D₁-D₁₀ Indo-western dress designs with peacock motifs

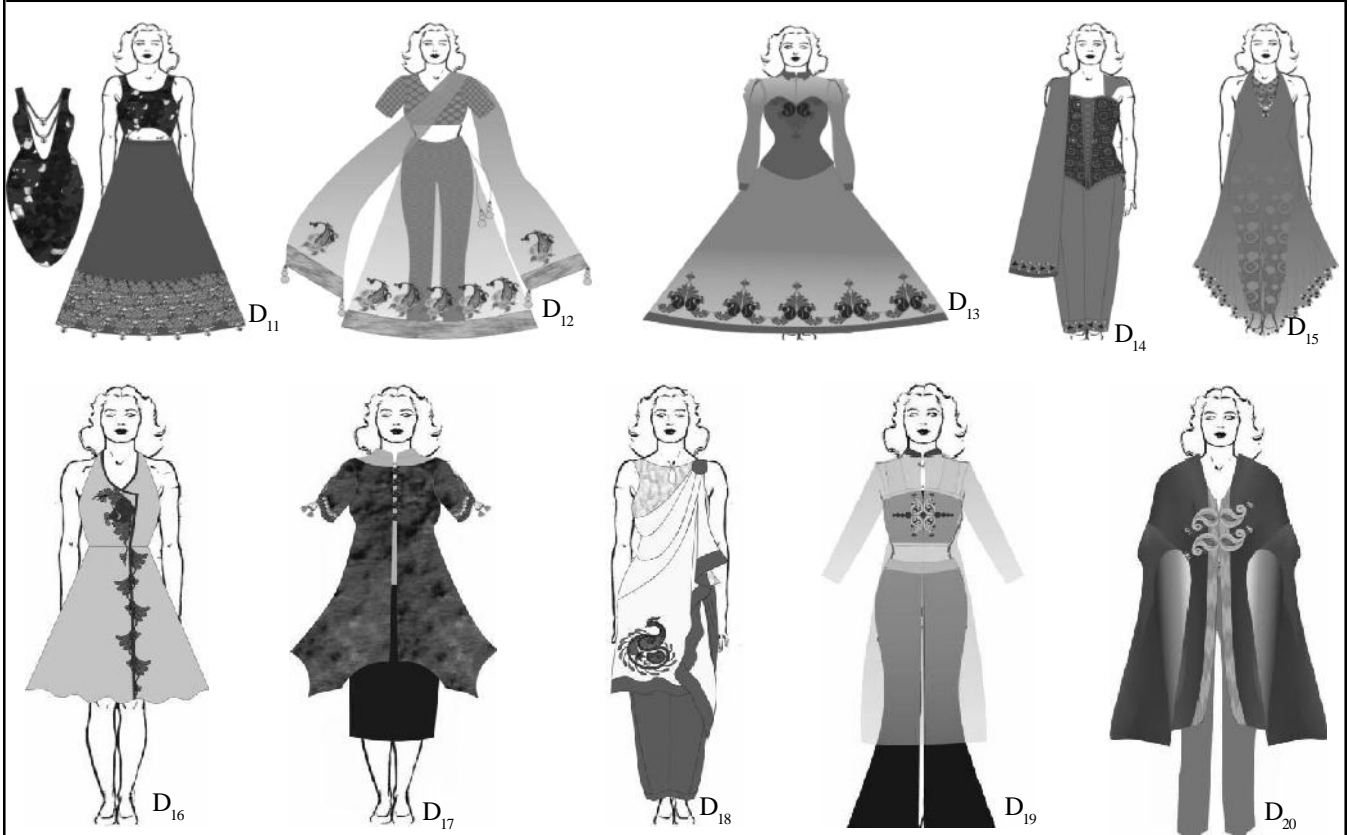


Plate 4 : D₁₁-D₂₀ Indo-western dress designs with peacock motifs

with diamond key-hole boat neck and three-quarter sleeve with upward folded cuff. Motif S₆ was used to embellish at the centre panel with hanging crystals under the bust level.

Design D₁₀ :

Design D₁₀ was an A-line westernized *Sherwani* and a sequined tunic. *Sherwani* was long at the back and short at the front. Motif S₅ was placed at the back and sleeves combined with floral motifs.

Design D₁₁ :

Design D₁₁ was a sequined, round neck, sleeveless blouse with plunging neckline with long tail at the back, paired with red coloured *Lacha*. Motif R₁₄ was located at the bottom of *Lacha* in traditional style.

Design D₁₂ :

Design D₁₂ was a half sleeved blouse in brocade, with cigarette pant under *Lehanga* along with *Dupatta*. Motif S₇ was used at the bottom and *Pallas* of *Dupatta*.

Design D₁₃ :

Design D₁₃ was a turquoise coloured blouse with brocade collar and peasant sleeves ensemble with turquoise-grey *Lacha* and corset. Motif S₈ was located at the centre of corset and hem of the *Lacha*.

Design D₁₄ :

Design D₁₄ was a mirror worked maroon corset style top with Queen Anne neckline, paired with *Salwar* and *Dupatta*. Motif R₂ was used at the bottom of the *Salwar* and *Pallas* of *Dupatta*.

Design D₁₅ :

Design D₁₅ was a pink coloured *Kaftan* with printed jeggings. Motif R₁₄ was used for digital printing at neck and embellished with beads.

Design D₁₆ :

Design D₁₆ was an A-line, halter neck, *Angrakha* style knee length yellow coloured dress. Motif S₈ was used at the placket opening.

Design D₁₇ :

Design D₁₇ was a green coloured, half sleeve *Sherwani* ensemble with sleeveless, band collar top in peach colour and black straight skirt. Motif S₁₉ was placed at sleeves and embellished with pearls and *Zardozi* work.

Design D₁₈ :

Design D₁₈ was a sleeveless, brocade top with key-hole neckline paired with *Salwar* finished with trouser belt and

Dupatta draped in roman style by attaching it with a brooch. Motif S₂₀ was used for hand embroidery on *Dupatta*.

Design D₁₉ :

Design D₁₉ was a broad strap, black short top with broad shoulder straps paired with black bell bottom style trouser and green *Sherwani*. Motif S₇ was used for embroidery at the centre panel embellished with beads and crystals.

Design D₂₀ :

Design D₂₀ was a red coloured *Kaftan* with turquoise cigarette pants. Motif S₇ was used as patch at placket opening of *Kaftan*.

Conclusion :

These designs were shown to college-going girls who appreciated all the designs. According to them six best designs were D₁, D₄, D₈, D₁₀, D₁₃ and D₁₈ in the order preferences. Thus, there was higher chance of adoption of these designs by them.

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