



Indian jewellery and its varieties

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Abstract.

Man has long tried to show himself more elegant and beautiful, and this thirst seems unquenchable. In these years, the use of decorations became the symbol and culture of many of those nations. In this regard, the ancient use of gold by Indians is very prominent and significant. India is one of the largest markets for gold, and growing affluence is driving growth in demand. Gold has a central role in the country's culture, considered a store of value, a symbol of wealth and status and a fundamental part of many rituals. Gold is central to more personal life events too. Gifting gold is a deeply ingrained part of marriage rituals in Indian society, weddings generate approximately 50 percent of annual gold demand in India.

Indian jewellery is unique in its design and workmanship. India and jewellery, jewellery and Indian women – terms are linked inherently. The art of making beautiful ornaments, with delicacy and acumen, has been developed throughout historical times. Jewellery is made for almost all the parts of the body and it is also designed to match with the attire. Indian jewellery inspires passion unlike any other object of desire. Every woman in India loves to wear at least a small piece of gold jewellery either in the form of glittering neckwear ornament, or dangling earrings or exquisitely crafted bangles. Even men wear simple gold ornaments like rings, bracelets and chains. Thus, we can say that everyone has been moved by the beauty of gold jewellery and it has become a part of their culture and tradition. Therefore, in this article, by studying related books, articles and sites and collecting materials on the topic of Indian jewellery, including history, gold mines, and introducing various types of jewellery, with the aim of familiarizing readers and enthusiasts and designers of clothing and jewellery, a detailed review and Its professionally done.

Keywords: Jewellery, Gold, Women, Fashion, India.



1. Introduction

We are apt to speak glibly of the "dawn of civilization" and of the "cradle of art" as farthest points in the vague past. The farthest points that our imagination can reach from the surrounding environment from which modern civilization originated and many beautiful objects that are surrounded by us. (F. W. Burgess, 1919)

It is undeniable that gold has been viewed as one of the oldest and most valuable commodity in the world. It may be the first metal used by humans for ornamentation and rituals.

Gold has been considered the most desirable of precious metals, and its value has been used as the standard for many currencies in history. Gold has been used as a symbol for purity, value, royalty. India is the leading country for Jewellery manufacture at around 650 tons annually. (Dr. Vasanthi S & Vidya P, 2014) The range of jewellery in India varies from religious to purely aesthetic types.

Gold remains a part of India's existing wealth in the form of women's jewellery, as the dowry system in that country also based on it. Giving gold for dowry was not just a direct economic deal, but also a way of expressing love and affection, so poor families also tried to buy gold for their descendants. Giving gold for dowry is an important custom not only for the bride's family, but also for the groom's family to give jewellery to their new daughter who is coming home. There is a harmony between a woman and gold. The jeweller in Baroda said without hesitation, "As long as there is marriage in India, jewellers will not go hungry." (Rahimova, 2021)

There cannot be a woman in India, who does not adore herself with minimum jewellery. In fact, jewellery is considered as security and prestige of women in the country. The attraction for jewellery has been great in India that it is no more a craft than an art. In India, gold jewellery is a store of value, a symbol of wealth and status and a fundamental part of the many rituals.

Jewellery is considered as a must wear for women on special occasions like festivals and wedding ceremonies. Jewellery is famous all over the world. The gem and jewellery industry in India has seen an unprecedented growth during the last couples of years. (Dr. K. Saxena, 2016)

2. Origin and History of Indian Jewellery

History of Indian jewellery is as old as the history of the country itself. Around 5000 years ago, the desire to adorn themselves aroused in people, leading to the origin of jewellery. (Dr. K. Saxena, 2016) (Fig 1)

Primitive men and women used flora and fauna around them, decorated themselves with seeds, flowers, feathers, and beads carved out of wood, stone and bone. "Indian jewellery frequently turns to nature for inspiration. Many designs derive from flower, seeds and fruit which can be strung and worn as such or copied in metal"

(P. K. Vyas and V. P. Bapat, 2011)



Fig 1: Royal earrings, Andhra Pradesh, 1st century BCE.

Source: <https://mapacademy.io/article/a-pair-of-royal-earrings-andhra-pradesh>

Although India is a multicultural nation embracing different cultures within the country, Indians are perceived to be deep rooted in their conservative traditions and customs and possess an inherent resistance to accept practices outside the Indian culture. (Dr. N. Priscilla Joys et al., 2016)



The dominant characteristic of traditional Indian art and culture is its spirituality. From birth to death, life is keyed to shrine, temple, or mosque, enriched by prayer, chanting, and spiritual exercises, and enlivened by rites of passage and religious festivals. ornament might prove equally, or even more, transcendental. (S. C. Welch, 1985)

With the advance of civilization, the materials changed to copper, ivory, agate and semi-precious stones, and later to silver, gold and precious stones. (Dr. K. Chitra Chellam, 2018)

In ancient India, gold was highly valued. Gupta gold coins are the best-minted currency in terms of quality and purity. Some coins depict royal fame and achievements. For example, gold coins depicting rhinoceros hunting or the king playing a stringed instrument were completely new and attractive and actively used in practice. (Fig 2)



Fig 2: one of the first Gupta coins
Source: coinindia.com

If we look at the fine arts of ancient India, we often see male figures decorated with jewellery in sculpture. Almost all the male figures depicted in these sculptures represented gods, and their costumes and ornaments based on the appearance of the kings and nobles of the time. (Rahimova, 2021) In the ancient times jewellery was deemed as a status symbol. High profile people like the king and rulers used to adorn themselves with precious jewellery. The status accorded to jewellery in the ancient times has remained totally unchanged even in the modern time. (Dr. K. Saxena, 2016)

3. Gold Production and Mining

Gold is a rare metal. In India, gold was first mined in the area of the Kolar Gold Field (KGF) in Karnataka. Kolar gold fields in Karnataka which was operated by Bharat Gold Mines Ltd., (BGML) is considered to be the world's second deepest gold mine. Kolar gold field was shut down a decade ago, it turned uneconomical. (Fig 3)

India has massive refined gold reserves estimated at 14,000 tones. Most gold is sold to Indian nationals. Hutti Gold Mine Company is the only company in India producing gold and produces approximately 3 tonnes of gold a year from reserves estimated at 600 tones. Deccan gold mines limited, which mainly deals with gold exploration is the only one gold mining company that is listed in stock exchange. (Dr. K. C. Chellam, 2018)



Fig 3: Gold Mines, Location in Karnataka, India
Source: (Author)



4. Contemporary Jewellery Industry

The jewellery of Indian women varies from province to province, meaning that each province has its own style of making. Unfortunately, in recent years, only three cities in India - Delhi, Jaipur and Varanasi - have mastered the art of ancient jewelry. Large diamond deposits were among the first to discover in India and historically, precious and unique diamonds such as the "Kohinoor", "the Great Mongol", "the Seri Hope", "the King", "the Florentine", and "the Regent" found in India. (Rahimova, 2021) (Fig 4)



Fig 4: The "Koh-I-Noor" in the front cross of Queen Mary's Crown

Source: www.britannica.com/art/crown-jewels

Now jewellery is regarded as more of an investment and less of an accessory. (S. C. Welch, 1985) In earlier days' Indian gold jewellery were heavy with lots of stones and pearl entrusted in it. But, now jewellery items have become much light weight and simple to look at. The reason is people prefer simple jewellery models with a single stone or diamond in it so that they can wear it for occasions as well as for office.

Today, Indian jewellery can be bought through online. The e-commerce websites have secure shopping carts and payment systems. These sites are also known as online jewellery shops or stores. In modern times Indian jewellery reaches far and wide to different countries of the world. It's unique and traditional design and artistic excellence find great appeal in global market. (Dr. K. C. Chellam, 2018)

5. Types of Indian Jewellery

India has become world's largest gold consumer and this status is expected to grow further. Women purchase jewellery at various occasions as wedding, anniversary, birthday, baby birth, New Year, festivals, and bonus or sudden financial gain. (N. C. Sanjula, 2017)

There is jewellery for almost all the body parts, including neck, ear, nose, arms, ankles, fingers, waist, hair parting, etc. In India, jewellery is designed to match with the attire. Traditionally, Indian jewellery has been made of heavy and voluminous gold pieces, but recently jewellery made of silver, platinum and other metals has become quite popular among people. In the following lines, we will tell you about the different kinds of jewellery in India:

5.1 Bridal Jewellery

On the wedding day, the bride pays special attention to her dress, jewelry, accessories, makeup, and hairstyle to be beautiful. There are a number of items in jewelry that cover almost every vital part of the body. These items are specially made to compliment the wedding dress. Bridal jewelry includes the following:

5.1.1 Hair ornament (Maang Tikka & Jadanagam)

They are mostly seen in bridal jewellery. The Maang Tikka is placed in front of the forehead and for this the bride's hairstyles are parted in the middle. It can be in various shapes and decorated with



various precious and semi-precious stones. In different cultures, the shape of Maang Tikka is different. It is even seen as a crown in some regions. Jadanagam of south Indian, used by brides to



decorate braided hair. Initially, a group of women were accepted as temple dancers or Devadasis, who considered themselves the bride of the temple deity, and this tradition has continued to this day. These beautiful Jewellery are usually accompanied by silk tassels held by hidden threads. (Fig 5 & Fig 6)

5.1.2 Necklace

Necklace is the most eye catchy piece of jewellery, worn by the bride. It comes along with matching ear rings and nose piece. Moreover, attention is paid that it complements the colour of your attire and neck line. 'Linga Padakka Mutthu Malai' this necklace has been used as a wedding necklace since ancient times, and this gold gift for the bride seems more important and necessary than anything else.

5.1.3 Ear ornament (Ear ring & Karanphool Jhumka)

The ear rings usually match the necklace. You can choose between varieties like long heavy ear rings or short loops, from antique ear rings to small studs, depending upon your wedding outfit's colour and design. The most popular ear jewellery in the north has been the Karanphool, with floral motifs at the centre of the decoration. There are two series of pearls around the ear, and its protrusion is such that it sticks to the hair, which minimizes the weight of the ear.

Fig 5: Multicolor Maang-Tikka

Source: mirraw.com

Fig 6: jadanagam studded with rubies and emeralds

Source: southjewellery.com

5.1.4 Nose Ring

This is another essential jewellery item to be worn by the bride. The traditional nose piece is known as 'Nath', which consists of a studded nose ring with a long chain hooked up in the hair. In case the nose is not pierced, there are nose studs available, which can be temporarily worn by the bride for the ceremony. Using Nath for a woman in India means the presence of her husband and commitment to him.

5.1.5 Ornaments for hands (Bangles & Kada)



Bangles are the symbol of the nuptial rituals. As a result, the bride wears both gold as well as glass bangles on her wedding day. The glass bangles are mostly of the colour of the wedding dress. However, the gold bangles are the ones gifted by the mother in law.

Indian jewellery called "Kada", which are mostly in pairs, the inner part is covered with flower design and the outer part is covered with different coloured diamonds. In the past, bracelets or kadas of various types were used in North India, such as Bangdi, Chori, Nagari, Kangan and Patri, and it is considered the most beautiful gold gift in India, especially as a bridal gift. (Fig 7)

5.1.6 Arm Bands

Arm bands or armlets enhance the beauty of the bride, elating her grace and elegance. It is a traditional and regal jewellery item, which has become quite a fashion statement today. For a more stylish look, they are worn only on one arm. A famous example of armband is "Vanki", which is unique due to their inverted V-shaped design. It appears from old paintings and sculptures that the roots of its use can be traced back to snake worship.



Fig 7: Kada, an ornament for the hand
Source: hsaatchi.com

5.1.7 Rings

Rings are also vital to the embellishment of the bride. Usually the bride wears a 'Hath Phoolhar' in her hands. This consists of one or five rings for the fingers, connected with a central piece, further connected with a bracelet, to be worn in the hand.

5.1.8 Foot Ornament (Anklets & Toe Rings & Paizeb)

The bride also wears anklets and toe rings in her feet. These are usually made of silver as gold is not worn in the feet. They are available in intricate designs, decorated with works of Meenakari, Kundan and beads. Paizeb also is an ornament for feet originating from Hyderabad. It is a chain with uncut diamonds which drops downs and looks like twinkling bell.

5.1.9 Waist Band (Oddiyanam)

Waist band is worn on the waist, over the Saree or the Lehenga. This is a heavy jewellery piece, which is quite traditional in look and design. Oddiyanam is a gold ornament which originates from South India is worn around the waist. The main purpose of Oddiyanam was to hold saree. But because of its beautiful appearance it came in the category of ornaments. (Fig 8)



Fig 8: Antique Gold Oddiyanam
Source: brilliantcut.co.in

5.2 Antique Jewellery

The jewellery which is not in mainstream production and of which the mode of production is no longer popular is known by the name of 'Antique Jewellery.' The jewellery pieces in antique jewellery usually belong to a particular period of history, when its popularity was at its peak. Those pieces of antique jewellery that are extremely rare are usually sold at auctions, in antique stores and curio shops. They include the jewellery that belongs to the early period of history. It is this rarity of antique jewellery that makes it so appealing. However, at times, jewellery that is furnished in antique



pattern is also given the name of antique jewellery. Antique jewellery embodies the unadulterated jewellery tradition of the country, in the earlier times, concentrating on ethnic motifs and stones, metal and design. The antique jewellery of India is popular not only within its own territorial boundaries, but also finds favour amongst people belonging to UK, USA and other western countries.

5.3 Bead Jewellery

Bead art in India is five thousand years old and dates back to the time of Indus Valley Civilization. People of that civilization used to make beads out of gold, silver, copper, clay, ivory and even wood. India is amongst the largest producers of glass beads. During Mughal era also, bead jewellery was in vogue. Later on, when Europeans came to India, the bead work became more transparent and semi-transparent. Now is the time for fancy glass beads, coloured glass beads and crafted metal beads too. Today, glass beads have become a part of the jewellery worn by urban women in India. Beads made from semi-precious stones also continue to be popular in the country. Beads come in an assortment of shapes and colours and at times, are carved also.

5.4 Copper Jewellery

In buying these products, you are contributing to the continuation of one of India's most traditional art forms. Handcrafted from copper and brass product range has been inspired by the sights and sounds of Ancient India. Copper has long been associated with the planet Venus. Since Venus is also the Goddess of Love, Copper is thought to be a powerful love charm. (Fig 9)



Fig 9: Bridal copper jewellery set
Source: ebay.com

5.5 Fashion Jewellery

Fashion jewellery is also called costume jewellery, mainly for the reason that it is not made of precious metals and stones, rather than using precious ingredients, like gold, silver, platinum and white gold, fashion jewellery designers use cheap products, like jute, leather, paper mache, wood, bone, stone, oxidized metal, horn, lac, terracotta and so on. Indian fashion jewellery industry is growing in quantum, patronized mainly by the youngsters. Following are the most popular products forming a part of the costume jewellery of India:

- Spiral bangles and rings
- Glass beads, strung on nylon
- Chunky tribal jewelry
- Surgical steel jewelry
- Ornaments with symbols and messages
- Charm jewelry, such as mood rings, charm bracelets and others.
- Tattoo jewelry
- Chandelier earrings
- Sterling silver jewelry, studded with artificial stones



- Abstract jewelry
- Body piercing jewelry

5.6 Filigree Jewellery

India's history of filigree work goes back to early centuries. Indian filigree work is unique in its aesthetics. It is immensely inspired by Greek filigree work, the same style and old charm has been kept intact till now, by Indian artisans. (Fig 10)



Fig 10: Sterling Silver Filigree Earrings
Source: indianshelf.in

5.7 Ivory Jewellery

Jewellery that is made from the tusk of an elephant is called ivory jewellery. Importance of ivory jewellery can be guessed from the fact that in Gujarat, the bride receives an ivory bangle from her family just before marriage as jewellery. During marriage ceremony wearing of ivory bangles is must for bride in some regions of the country. For example, in Rajasthan also, ivory bangles form a part of bridal jewellery. Other than bangles, ivory pendant that is attached to a necklace or earring is quite popular in India and lately its charm has been observed in campuses in India. In fact, these days you will find many college students in India, wearing ivory jewellery. (Fig 11)



Fig 11: Ivory Jewellery in India
Source: culturalindia.net

5.8 Jadau Jewellery

Jadau Jewellery forms one of the major examples of high skilled craftsmanship that was brought into India by Mughals. Jadau jewellery is also called engraved jewellery and is unique. Considered to be a traditional jewellery of India, it is used in many traditional and auspicious occasions, like marriages and festival celebrations. Significantly, each jadau jewellery piece has a name such as 'Tewata' or 'Timaniya' (Necklace), 'Bangari', 'Gajre', a different type of 'Kare', which are interchangeable terms depending on whether male or female. The Peacock-inspired designs are also from Jadau traditional motifs. (Fig 12)



Fig 12: Jadau Jewellery
Source: anuradhaartjewellery.com

5.9 Kundan Jewellery

Kundan jewellery is one in which glass pieces form the top layer with the base metal of gold. It has been popular with the royal families of North India and the craft has been born in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Similarly, it went on to flourish during the Mughal era. Kundan is such a specialized work that it is carried by a group of craftsmen, each carrying out a specific task. The chiterias make the basic design, the



Fig 13: Kundan
Source: mymandap.in



ghaarias are responsible for engraving and making holes, meenakari or enameling is done by the enameller and the goldsmith takes care of the Kundan or gold. The jadiyas, stone setters, set stones such as jade, agate, garnet, emerald, rock crystal, topaz, amethyst, and spinel into kundan. (Fig 13)

5.10 Lac Jewellery

Lac jewellery, also known as lacquer jewellery, originated in Rajasthan and has gained considerable popularity in India today. Among the various items in lac jewellery, the bangles need a special mention. Bangles made of Lac are of bright colour and glass work done on them makes them more attractive and using it is considered good.

5.11 Meenakari Jewellery

Similar to lac jewellery, Meenakari hails from Rajasthan. Historically found in Persia and later brought to India by the Mughal invaders. Interestingly, soon after Rajasthan it spread to Lucknow, Punjab and Delhi. Silver and gold are used for the base of Meenakari. Choice of colours, in case of silver, has to be green, yellow or blue, as these are the colours which stick with it. As for gold, all the colours can be applied to it and this is also the reason why the metal is preferred for Meenakari jewellery. (Fig 14)



Fig 14: traditional-meenakari-jewellery

Source: shaadiwish.com

5.12 Navratna Jewellery

Navratna is a Sanskrit term for 'nine gems' and Navratna jewellery pieces. In India, Navratna jewellery has been given major importance, because of its astrological significance as well as its innate charm. The combination of these nine gems holds a special meaning in Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, as well as in other religions. The types of this Navratan jewellery are as follows:

- Ruby for Surya (Sun),
- Pearl to Chandra (Moon),
- Red Coral for Mangala (Mars),
- Emerald for Budha (Mercury),
- Yellow sapphire for Brhaspati (Jupiter),
- Diamond to Shukra (Venus),
- Blue sapphire for Shani (Saturn),
- Hessonite for Rahu (the ascending lunar node)
- Cat's Eye for Ketu (the descending lunar node)

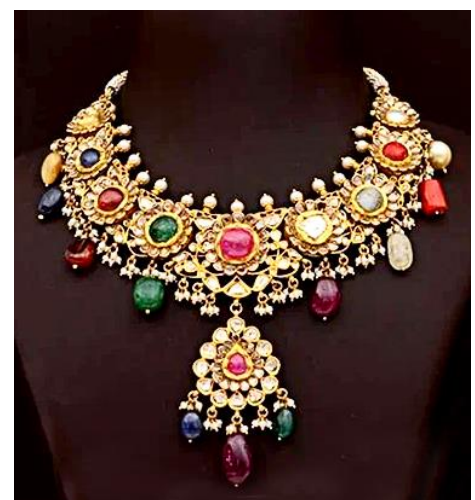


Fig 15: Navratna Jewellery
Source: fashionlady.in



Since each of these gemstones represents a celestial deity the combination of these nine gems invokes the cosmic powers of heavenly bodies together. (Fig 15)

5.13 Pachchikam Jewellery

The word Pachchikam is from the word ‘pachchigar’, which translates into Goldsmith, as this piece of jewellery is purely a product of the hands. Pachchikam jewellery includes various ornaments such as rings, jhumkas, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, chokers, and much more. In the world of fashion and design, old trends tend to come over again and again, though with slight changes. Pachchikam jewellery making craft is one of the examples of jewellery that has come back once again. Pachchikam jewellery is quite flashy and can be worn on formal occasions. (Fig 16)



Fig 16: Pachchikam jewellery
Source: culturalindia.net

5.14 Tribal Jewellery

Tribal jewellery in India is quite rich. Each tribe has kept its unique style of jewellery intact even now. Jewellery that is made of bone, wood, clay, shells and crude metal, by tribes, is not only attractive, but also holds a distinct rustic and earthy charm. The unrefined look of their jewellery is something that attracts people most. As has been said each tribe has its own indigenous jewellery craft, here is the list of the tribes, with their jewellery art described in brief:

5.14.1 Banjara

This nomadic tribe of Rajasthan is known for its colourful heavy jewellery. Beautiful ornaments and belts that are embellished with shells, metal-mesh, coins, beads, and chains are major jewellery art work by this tribe.

5.14.2 Bastar

The tribes of Bastar (Madhya Pradesh) make jewellery out of grass, beads and cane. Traditional ornaments made of silver, wood, glass, peacock feathers, copper and wild flowers are also popular. Necklaces made of one-rupee coins are also worn by the Bastar women. (Fig 17)



Fig 17: Bastar Art Handicrafts from
Chattisgarh

Source: blog.authindia.com

5.14.3 Arunachal Pradesh

The tribes in Arunachal Pradesh make jewellery from cane and bamboo. These tribes use brass, bone, ivory, silver and gold in their jewellery too. In addition, colourful beads, blue feathers of birds, green wings of beetles are used to make ornaments.

5.14.4 Khasi, Jaintia & Garo



The people of Khasi, Jaintia and Garo tribes have typical sense of jewellery art. Thick red coral bead necklaces of the Khasis and Jaintias and thin fluted stems of glass, strung by fine thread, of the Garo tribe are interesting jewellery items.

5.14.5 Bhutia

The Bhutia tribe of Sikkim has also been known for making beautiful jewellery. The people of this tribe usually make use of gold, silver, coral, turquoise and zee stone.

6. Conclusion

Indian jewelry is possibly not prehistoric, but has come down from an immemorial tradition. Unique jewellery is valued and has its fans not only in India but all over the world. Indians have been using jewellery for adornment since centuries and ornaments are designed for most parts of the body. This means that Indian women need more jewellery than Western women do. The importance of jewellery in the country is evident from the fact that jewellery is used on many auspicious occasions and forms part of gifts. From the practice of generations, these gifts are still continuing without any abruption. However, Indian women today do not have enough time to wear all their jewellery. Full length ornaments are used only in different ceremonies or weddings. Indian jewellery is very different from western jewellery. We see that every piece made by Indian jewellers is a truly unique work of art associated with creativity, because an Indian jeweller creates each piece of jewellery in the form of a small piece of art.

The rise of the Mughal rule made the world of Indian jewellery more visible. The ancient designs of India are very popular and have been enriched with new technologies over time and there is no doubt that this art of Indian jewellery industry will continue to grow and will continue to be famous all over the world.



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