

# The Incredible Cultural Heritage of Rajasthan

## Abstract

Rajasthan, a land of tremendous architecture, music, dance, dresses, arts and crafts, and paintings has artistic and cultural traditions which reflect the ancient Indian way of life. There is a rich and varied folk culture from villages which is often depicted symbolic after state. Cultural heritage of Rajasthan is rich and carefully nurtured and sustained over centuries by waves of settlers ranging from Harappan civilization, Aryans, Bhils, Jats, Gujjars, Muslims and Rajput Aristocracy. The state is known for its arts and crafts , sculpture, paintings, meenakari work, colourful dresses, beautiful fairs and festivals, spectacular folk dance and music, ivory jewellery, marvellous architecture etc.

**Keywords:** Tourist destination, Pad, Meenakari work, Architecture, Craft, Miniature Paintings, Ivory, Lac and Glass.

## Introduction

Rajasthan, a land of Rajas and Maharajas, elephants and camels, places and forts, dance and music is not only a jewel among the tourism hotspots of Indians but is also one of the most popular tourist destinations of several thousands of foreigners every year. Rajasthan has a glorious history. It is known for many brave kings, their deeds, and their interest in art and architecture.

Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict or human nature sustain and bent to the earth, yet rising buoyant from the pressure and making calamity a whetstone to courage. Its name means "*the land of Rajas.*" It was also called Rajputana (the country of the Rajputs). The grandeur and the vibrant mosaic of colours that Rajasthan has to offer to every tourist are simply astonishing and fascinating to the core. The lavish lifestyles of the erstwhile princes and kingdoms of Rajasthan have provided patronage to the exotic arts, crafts, fairs, festivals, dance, and music of Rajasthan. The people of Rajasthan, till date, have preserved their culture and followed their traditions as a mark of respect to those who have been instrumental in making the state flourishing land today.

The history of Rajasthan goes back 5000 years. It is among the richest states in the country as far as the arts and culture is concerned. It being situated in the northwest part of India is a land of majestic Aravali Hills, crowned with sand dunes of Jaisalmer and Bikaner, scenic and serene beauty and a land of royal creatures. The very rich cultural heritage and most hospitable people make journey to Rajasthan the most enjoyable experience of life. The customs and traditions, fairs and festivals, handicrafts, art and music reflect the very broad spectrum of the Rajasthani culture where much of the Rajasthan thought, philosophy and culture is being reflected all over the state.



**Prashant Dwivedi**

Assistant Professor,  
Deptt. of English,  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Govt. Girls  
P.G. College,  
Fatehpur



**Arts and Crafts**

Rajasthan is among the richest states in the country so far as the field of arts and crafts is concerned. Life style of the people of Rajasthan sharpens the creative senses, artistic skills and inspired them to create the most opulent and richest of treasures. Stone, clay, leather, wood, ivory, lac glass, brass, silver, gold and textiles were given the most brilliant forms.

History of Rajasthan reveals that the kings and their nobles were patrons of arts and crafts. They encouraged their craftsmen in activities ranging from wood and marvel carving to weaving, pottery and painting.

Rajasthani Pad is a lively folk art of state. Folk tales drawn and painted on clothes is very popular in the backward areas of Rajasthan even today. These long descriptive pictures are called Pad. This art form is jointly performed by Joshis and people of some other castes. And Bhopa (a caste in Rajasthan) circulated in the form of singing and dancing. The Pad means Parat in Rajasthani language. Sahpura, Bhilwarah, Raipur and Chittaurgarh are the main centers of this art form. However, according to Bhopas Sahpura was the chief centre of Pad in the beginning. This art form is a beautiful example of Mewar picture style.



**Meenakari**

Raja Man Singh of Amer brought this intricate craft to Jaipur by inviting five skilled enamel workers from Lahore. The skilled artisans and craftsmen taught the artisans and in Jaipur the fine art of enamel painting. The art prospered over the years and is today renowned the world over. Jaipur meenakari is famed for its delicacy and its use of colours. Pratapgarh and Nathdwara are two other centres which produce fine quality enamel work. The delicate designs and use of splendid colours in Meenakari work are its peculiarities which have been bettered over time.



**Remarking : Vol-2 \* Issue-2\*July-2015**

Rajasthan is rich in jewellery, each area having its own unique style. Men and women are known to wear exquisite pieces of jewellery very specific to the region. This typical Rajasthani jewellery has found patrons in all parts the country and also, abroad. Some of the traditional designs are rakhri, timaniyan, bala, bajuband, gajra, gokhru, jod etc. Tribal women wear heavy, simply crafted jewellery and seem to carry the weight without much discomfort almost all the time. Men too wear their share of ornaments in the form of chokers and earrings. These pieces of gold jewellery are finely embellished with beautiful and colourful stones and other precious jewels. Besides, Ivory (hantidant) jewellery found in Rajasthan is considered to be extremely auspicious by several people. Earlier there were only ivory bangles made by the craftsmen, however, today there are several other pieces like necklaces and earrings that are made from ivory. Ivory is also inlaid and shaped into intricate items of great beauty. Miniature paintings are also executed on ivory. Lac and glass jewellery- lac bangles are made of in bright colours and sometimes inlaid with glass.



**Sculpture**

We can see several beautiful sculptures of marble and sandstone on the temple walls and steps of huge wells. There are several carvings in stone of deities at several places of historical importance all over Rajasthan which attract a lot of tourist attention.





**Paintings**

Rajsthani paintings, like every other art of the region are exquisite and splendid. These paintings are known as Rajputi paintings due to different Rajput kingdoms of the state. Jaipuri, Marwari, Mewari, Bikaneri, Bundi, Kota, and miniature paintings etc. are different types of Rajputi paintings.



**Architecture**

Rajasthan has an exclusive architecture and is well-known for its architecture all over India. Rajasthan's architecture is chiefly based on Rajput school of architecture which was an assortment of the Mughal and the Hindu structural plan. Some styles of the architecture of Rajasthan include:

**Chhatris**

Chhatris are eminent, dome shaped porches used as a constituent in the architecture of Rajasthan. Many prominent chhatris exist in cities like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Haldighati, Bikaner etc.



**Jharokha**

Jharokha is a type of overhanging enclosed balcony which is commonly found in palaces, havelis and temples in Rajasthan. This balcony is normally a stone window.



**Haveli**

Between 1835 and 1930, the affluent Marwaris constructed huge mansions in the Shekhawati and Marwar regions. These buildings were called Havelies. They were influenced by the Mughal architecture.



**Stepwell**

A stepwell (or a bawdi) is a well or pond in which the water can be reached by climbing down a set of steps. The city of Bundi (near Kota) has as many as 60 stepwells.



**Music and Dance**

Not only does the Rajsthani art have a special place in the Indian traditional art, this exotic and vibrant land is also internationally renowned for its indigenous music and dance. Music is the heart and soul of the Rajsthani culture. It is because music is such an important aspect of the life of Rajsthani people that their concept of music defines their identity.

The most important role of the traditional folk music of the Langas and Manganiyars of Rajasthan is the unique identity that it offers to these musicians. Rajsthani folk music flourished during the reign of the Rajputs, and spread far and wide establishing their distinct identity. Myths and legends of the Rajput valour, gallantry, sacrifice and courage have come to us in the form of ballads sung by folk singers, or in the accounts of bards and court poets. Therefore, historically, music has played an important role in establishing the warrior like identity of Rajasthan. Maand is a form of vocal music which is based on classical ragas and is now celebrated as festivals in the region of Jodhpur.

Rajasthan has its distinctive folk dances to display. In fact every region of Rajasthan has its unique folk dance. Tribal women from the desert region have special dances that they perform on special occasions. The colourful costumes, studded and non-

ISSN No. : 2394-0344

studded ivory jewellery and the breathtaking intoxicating dance moves bring forth the beautiful culture of Rajasthan in their own different way. Some of the most common dance forms of Rajasthan are –  
**Ghommarr**

Performed usually by a group of women, the dance is named after the Hindi word Ghoomar (or pirouette). It is an elegant dance where women dance gently and gracefully in circles.



### Bhavai

One of the state's most spectacular performances, it consists of veiled women dancers balancing up to seven or nine brass pitchers as they dance nimbly, pirouetting, and then swaying with the soles of their feet perched on top of a glass, or on the edge of a sword. There is a sense of cutting edge suspense to the performance. The Gair, Chari, Kachchi Ghodi, Kathputli, Drum Dance, Fire Dance, Terah Taali and Maand are some other famous dance forms.



### Fair and Festivals

The rich culture and heritage of the state stem from its glorious past full of stories of valour and heroism. The different regions of Rajasthan have contributed to the overall culture of the state. The fairs and festivals of the state are based on the weather conditions of the state. Most of the festivals celebrated in Rajasthan like Janmasthanmi, Dusshera, and Diwali among others are similar to those celebrated across the country. However, there are some festivals that are

Remarking : Vol-2 \* Issue-2\*July-2015

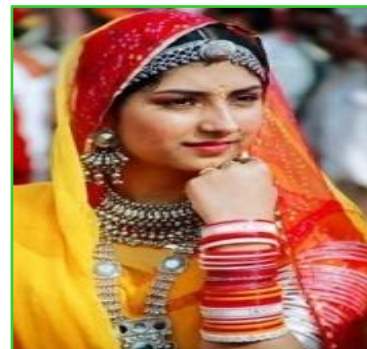
unique to the state of Rajasthan like Gangaur and Teej. Beautiful fairs like the Pushkar and Gogaji fair are very well known across the nation.



### Dresses in Rajasthan

Clothing of Rajasthan is really outstanding and lively, showing the spirit of the inhabitants, their religion and culture. Both men and women put on colourful and beautifully designed costumes to show the great ambience 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 Rajasthanis.

The women dress either in Saris or Ghaghara Cholis. Coloured stoned, tinsels and silken threads are used to create beautiful floral patterns and traditional motifs and enhance the rich look of the sari. However, in the rural nooks of the state women still wear Ghaghara for daily use and Lehegas for more formal occasions. These are matched with blouses such as Kanchli or Kunchuki or Choli depending on the blouse length. Ghaghara and Lehengas are also embroidered and decorated much in the same style as saris are. The Odhani is an integral part of Rajasthani women's attire and deserves special mention. Though usually teamed up with the Ghaghara Choli or Lehenga, it is also worn over a sari on special ceremonious occasions.





Pagri, Pyjama, Angarkha, Dhoti, Patka and Kamarbandh is integral clothing of men in Rajasthan. Pagri is the most important part of men`s costume in Rajasthan. The way turban is worn comprises a unique significance to Rajasthani men as it is a symbol of the region and caste from where the individual belongs. A normal Pagri is commonly eight inches wide and eighty two feet long.



**Let Us Sum Up**

Against the backdrop of dusty land and sun-soaked skies, Rajasthan is filled with opulent colours. The exotic and vividly colourful state of Rajasthan is synonymous with majestic forts, stately palaces, lakes, sand dunes, camels and people dressed in brightly coloured costumes. Rajasthan is an enigmatic state where tradition and history blend with contemporary lifestyle. Rajasthan is truly one such stop to experience all the hues of a healthy culture.

**References**

1. Vishal Agnihotry: A Complete Book on Tourism and Travel Management,
2. Colonel Tod: Rajasthan Ka Itihas, Part I, II, Sahityagar-2008.
3. Footprint Rajasthan Handbook, -Store URL: [http; // orangebooks.askmebazaar.com](http://orangebooks.askmebazaar.com)
4. Prof. V.K. Vashisha, Dr. Namita Vyas, Dr. Preeti Sharma, Cultural Heritage of Rajasthan, deppt. Of History and Indian Culture Banasthali Vidyapith.
5. Sangita N. Bakotra, Rajasthan and Its Culture, Journal History Vol.1/Issue:3/June 2013.
6. [www.unlimitedrajasthan.com](http://www.unlimitedrajasthan.com)
7. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture\\_of\\_Rajasthan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/culture_of_Rajasthan).