# Effect of Social Change Process on Traditional Costumes and Textiles: A Study in Uttarakhand

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## Abstract

Traditional costumes and textiles adversely affected by tweaking of various factors of social change process and disappeared into the antiquity. Therefore, to save the rich and vibrant costumes and textiles of the Uttarakhand state to pass into stupor without a trace with the ever changing time, present study was designed to document the different elements of traditional as well as contemporary costumes and textiles of *Kumaon* and *Garhwal* regions and to find out similarities and dissimilarities among different elements of costumes and textiles of both regions. The effect of various factors of social change process on traditional costumes and textiles was also studied.

**Keywords:** Traditional Costumes and Textiles, Social Change, Uttrakhand.

**Introduction**

Indian costumes have taken their own shape and form, according to climate, social and even political changes that make the vast span of the Indian territory and also vicissitudes of its long history.Indian dressing styles are marked by many variations, both religious and regional with a wide choice of textiles and costumes. The costume appears to have received thoughtful scientific and aesthetic considerations as well as there are social rules that govern the manner of putting on clothes especially on the part of women. Just as each region has its own language, food and lifestyles, so also it has its owntraditional mode of dressing. It is the costume of a community, which differentiates its people from others.One can observe a specific differentiation in physical structure, mental and spiritual mind set of people of the Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand state is divided into two divisions namely *Kumaon* and *Garhwal*, accordingly the people are known as the *Garhwalis* and the *Kumaoni*.The graceful Uttarakhand, adjacent to the neighbouring states of *Uttar Pradesh* and *Himachal Pradesh*, is the dwelling of the ethnic communities. Side by side, many *Punjabis*, *Bengalis*, *Bhotias* and even *Nepalis*, and *Tibetians* from neighbouring *Tibet*, have been settled in the state. Intermingling due to social changes and improvement in communication and transportation facilities has managed to give India a pan-Indian look. People from all subcultures are slowly giving way to a more uniform form of dressing.

Variations over time in the relationship among individuals, groups, organizations, cultures, and societies are known as social change. Social change itself is a highly diverse phenomenon. Some times change is rapid and dramatic, while at other times it is slow and gradual that it is difficult to detect. However change is occurring all the time. We have all been affected in our personal lives by these changes and will continue to be. Anybody can observe effect of even the first breeze of social change by keenly observing costumes and textiles of that particular region. Since, the way a person dressed up and uses textile materials, made an impression of various aspects of his personality, principles, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and passion etc. reflects his total outlook. Thus one can embrace an idea about the extent of change in the society by observing costumes and textiles of people of that community. Changes in traditional costumes and textiles are often disturbing but sometimes enticing also. The change requires re-adjustments, but most people dread it as much as they want it. Without any important reason, or without some outside force to provide impulse, many people will not let change to come inside their territory. Much of the today's contemporary costumes and textiles of the Uttarakhand state reflects this effect of social change, however ephemeral but retains some of the influence of culture and customs also.Therefore, in the present section of

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the study efforts had been taken to assess the various factors of the social change process and their impact on traditional, religious and ceremonial wrap *pichhoura* of the *Kumaoni* females.

## Objectives of the Study

1. To collect and document the information regarding traditional and contemporary costumes and textiles of Uttarakhand
2. To find out similarities and dissimilarities among the different elements of costumes and textiles of *Kumaon* and *Garhwal* divisions of Uttarakhand
3. To study the impact of different factors of social change process on costumes and textiles of Uttarakhand
4. To prepare the database of collected information for future reference

## Review of Literature

Dar (1969) stated that costume is a marked characteristic of any culture. It is an outward and symbolic representation of the ideas and reflection of any person's social habits and outlooks. Costumes are one of the means of achieving social and economic mobility in a social system. The traditions, customs, beliefs, values and social set up of any group is clearly manifested and exhibited in the form of costume they have. According to Clothing (2010), the world of clothing is changing, as new cultural influences meet technological innovations. Researchers in scientific laboratories have been developing prototypes for fabrics that can serve functional purposes well beyond their traditional roles. According to Essel (2009), the first step is to understand why our society changes. One would imagine greater personal freedoms and happiness would be the prime motivators. Naqvi (1999) conducted a similar study on the changing trends in the costumes of Syed community of Muslims in Gloganj, Aminabad and Hazaratganj areas of Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh.

## Hypotheses of the Study

To get to know the overall perspective of the people of Uttarakhand towards their traditional costumes and textiles following hypotheses were formulated:

**H₀**

There is no significant difference between opinion of Kumaoni and Garhwali people to save their traditional costumes and textiles

**H₀**

There is no significant difference between opinion of rural and urban people to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

## Materials and Methods

## Selection of Locale and Respondents

Out of total 13 districts, four districts namely *Nainital, Almora, Dehradun, Tehri-Garhwal* were selected, by using purposive sampling method.Five urban and five rural areas were purposively selected from the political maps of each district based on their developmental state, proximity and remoteness from the road.Out of these five urban areas, six respondents from each place were selected, likewise from rural areas also six respondents from each area

were selected in the sample. Out of these six respondents, three were male and three were female respondents. Thus, from each district 30 respondents from urban areas and 30 respondents from rural areas were selected. Therefore, 60 respondents from each district were able to secure their place in the total sample size of 240 respondents from all four districts. In the total sample, male and female ratio was kept 50:50.Selection of respondents was done by using snow-ball sampling method also known as network, chain or reputational sampling.

## Research Design

A "Descriptive Research Design" was used for the present study that describes and interprets what are the conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are evident, or trends that are developing. It is primarily concerned with the present, although it often considers past events and influences as they relate to current conditions.

## Data Collection Tools and Methods

The data for study was collected with the help of both qualitative and quantitative methods.The structured interview schedule and opinionnaire was prepared for the collection of data.In the present study, content validity was estimated by the experts of the field and reliability was tested through the spilt half method (single administration method) using formula of *Pearson's* Product-Moment Correlation Co-efficient and *Spearman-Brownprophecy* correction formula. The final reliability value obtained was 0.83, which indicated that developed opinionnaire was highly reliable.

A part of the tool, included the Likert type, five-point opinionnaire scale (summated rating scale). This scale was employed to measure the attitude or belief of the respondents towards their traditional costumes and textiles and to assess the effect of various factors of social change process on costumes and textiles. The factors of social change included in the scale were mass-media, technological advancements, education, colonisation, increase in income, employment opportunities, migration from villages to urban areas, better transportation facilities, globalisation, westernisation, social reforms, laws and welfare programmes etc.The respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement and disagreement with a series of statements about the subject. Likert scaling technique assigns a scale value to each of the five responses. Respondent's response in five categories that were strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree indicated attitude of the respondents for each statement. Each response was given a particular scale value according to the favourable and unfavourable statement as shown below. Thus, through the addition of the obtained scale values of all statements the instrument yields a total score for each respondent. The statements according to their favourableness and unfavourableness to the subject are scored as follow:

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| Responses | Scale Values | |
|---|---|---|
| | Favourable Statements | Unfavourable Statements |
| Strongly agree | 5 | 1 |
| Agree | 4 | 2 |
| Undecided | 3 | 3 |
| Disagree | 2 | 4 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 | 5 |

The opinionnaire scale was consisted of 50 statements or items, the following score values would be revealing attitudes as follows:

| 50x5=250 | Most favourable response possible |
|---|---|
| 50x3=150 | A neutral attitude |
| 50x1=50 | Most unfavourable attitude |

The final score for the respondent on the scale is the sum of their ratings for all of the items (this is why it is sometimes called a "summated" scale) and thus measure the respondent's favourableness and unfavourableness towards the traditional costumes and textiles and the effect of various factors of social change process on them.

The interview, observation, key informant, focused group discussion methods were used along with the review ofvarious documents available in libraries, museums and nongovernmental organisations of *Uttarakhand* as well as personal archives of people for collecting information.

**Operationalisation of the Variables**

Various independent and dependent variables included in the study were geographical area, age, family type, family size, through mean and standard deviation method, sex, caste, place of residence (rural/ urban), marital status, socio-economic status (based on Kuppuswamy's socioeconomic status scale (2007), communication media used, organisational membership, social participation, season, factors of social change process, type of wardrobe, choice of costumes and textiles. The categories of variables were coded for statistical analysis of data through computer application.

**Statistical Analysis of Data**

Significance of correlation between various variables was tested by using t-test formula.Furthermore, to get clear idea about the effect of various social change factors on the traditional clothing and textiles various hypotheses were tested using the z -Test and Chi-square test.

**Results and Discussion**

The general background profile characteristics of the respondents were also studied under the present research because these attributes affected the choice of costumes and textiles of the individual. It was found that most of the respondents belonged to general class and middle age category. Maximum number of respondents found to be married and had been living with medium sized extended families. Results also revealed that most of the respondents belonged to the upper middle socio-economic class and used number of communication media including T.V., radio, print media, phone or mobile. Most of the respondents were member of various governmental, Non-governmental, youth

organization and always participated in various activities of these organisations.

As it was evident from the results that though various traditional costumes and textiles disappeared but numerous new types and varieties of costumes and textiles were also added in the wardrobes of females and males of Uttarakhand. These changes occurred so rapidly as by looking back a decade or two, various modifications were revealed in the costumes and textiles used by the people. The interrelationship of various factors of social change process was responsible for these changes which were occurred in the costumes and textiles of Uttarakhand are as follows:

**Attitude of respondents towards their traditional costumes and textiles**

The attitude of the respondents towards their traditional costumes and textiles was measured with the help of Attitude Scale. The sum of score values of 50 statements of the scale revealed the attitude of the respondent. The score value 250, 150 and 50 would show the most favourable attitude, a neutral attitude and most unfavourable attitude respectively.

**Table-1**

**Percentage distribution of respondents according to their favourable and unfavourable attitudes towards their traditional costumes and textiles-**

| Sl.No. | Categories for Attitude | Percentage of Respondents (n=240) |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | 151-159 (Almost favourable) | 2.92 (7) |
| 2. | 150 (Neutral) | 0.42 (1) |
| 3. | 149-85 (Almost unfavourable) | 96.67 (232) |

**Note: Figures in parentheses are indicating frequency of the respondents**

The results shown in the Table 1 indicated that 96.67 percent respondents had almost unfavourable attitude for their traditional costumes and textiles, whereas 2.92 percent had favourable attitude towards their traditional costumes and textiles. Only 0.42 percent of the respondents were undecided towards their costumes and textiles which considered as neutral attitude.

Thus, result revealed that the most of the people of *Uttarakhand* had favourable attitude towards modern costumes and textiles which were transformed from the traditional costumes and textiles due to the interaction of the various factors of social change process. However attitude of the people does not reach to the most unfavourable attitude point as minimum sum of the scores was more than 50. Similarly, minimum sum of the scores for favourable attitude reached to 159 however for the most favourable attitude it should be reached to 250, as shown in the Table 1.

This indicates that though the people of *Uttarakhand* are using various types of modern costumes and textiles, but to some extent they are still interested in their traditional costumes and textiles also. The detailed results given in the Appendix-VI

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showed the attitude of the respondents towards their traditional costumes and textiles.

It was found from the responses of respondents that the modern costumes were more popular in the society and most of the respondents preferred to wear modern costumes daily or on special occasions more than the traditional costumes. Most of the respondents accepted that modern costumes enhanced their confidence while traditional costumes made them to feel like alien or backward in high class gatherings. They preferred to wear traditional costumes and textiles on special and religious occasions only. Most of the respondents approved that modern costumes and textiles had better craftsmanship, variety, designs and comfort than the traditional costumes and textiles.

**Impact of Various Social Change Factors on Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

The results shown in the Fig.1 revealed that according to the respondents, migration from the villages to the urban areas (100%), better transportation facilities (100%) and mass-media (99.58%) were the main factors which were responsible for the changes occurred in the traditional costumes and textiles of *Uttarakhand*. Furthermore according to the received responses, education (97.92%), westernisation (95.83%), increase in income (95.75%), colonisation (95.42%) and employment opportunities (92.08%) also affected the costumes and textiles of the state. The 82.5 percent and 82.08 percent of respondents were agreed that technological advancements and globalisation respectively were responsible for the changes that were happened to the costumes and textiles of the Uttarakhand. Only 50.83 percent of respondents considered social reforms, laws and other welfare programmes were responsible for the changes in the costumes and textiles.

**Fig. 1: Percentage distribution of respondents for social change factors affecting costumes and textiles Perspective of people of Uttarakhand towards their traditional costumes and textiles**
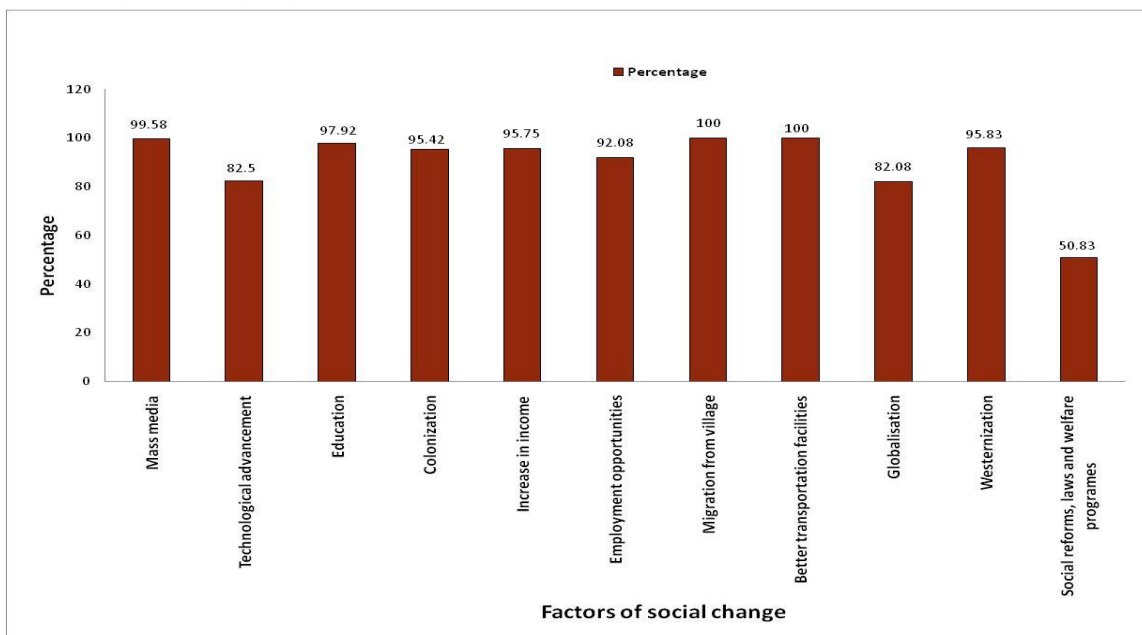


The overall perspective of the people of *Uttarakhand* towards their traditional costumes and textiles was studied. The opinion of the respondents was collected to find out whether they are interested in their traditional costumes and textiles, they want to save them and want to retain features of traditional costumes and textiles in their modern costumes and textiles or not.The data shown in Table 2 indicated that the responses of the *Kumaon* and *Garhwal* respondents regarding their opinion to save their traditional costumes and textiles. The z-test was applied to test the following hypothesis:

**H₀**

There is no significant difference between opinion of *Kumaoni* and *Garhwali* people to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

**H₁**

There is significant difference between opinion of *Kumaoni* and *Garhwali* people to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

**Table - 2**
**Frequency distribution of *Kumaoni* and *Garhwali* People Regarding their Opinion for Saving Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Respondents | Responses (n=240) | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Want to save | Yes | No |
| Kumaon | 92 | 28 |
| Garhwal | 99 | 21 |

The result of z-test is found to be non-significant as the value of $Z_{cal}$(1.12) is less than $Z_{tab}$ (1.96), thus we accept $H_0$. This implies that there is no significant difference between opinion of *Kumaonis*

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and *Garhwalis* to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

Table 3 showed response of the rural and urban people for whether they want to save their traditional costumes and textiles or not. The following hypothesis was tested by applying the z-test:

**H$_0$**

There is no significant difference between opinion of rural and urban people to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

**H$_1$**

There is significant difference between opinion of rural and urban people to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

**Table- 3**
**Frequency Distribution of Ruraland Urbanpeople Regarding their Opinion for Saving Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Respondents | Responses (n=240) | |
|---|---|---|
| Want to save | Yes | No |
| Rural | 96 | 24 |
| Urban | 95 | 25 |

The result of z-test is found to be non-significant as the value of $Z_{cal}$(0.16) is less than $Z_{tab}$ (1.96), thus we accept H$_0$. This implies that there is no significant difference between opinion of rural and urban people regarding saving of their traditional costumes and textiles thus it can be said that people of both the regions are in favour of saving their traditional costumes and textiles.

The data given in the Table 4indicated the opinion of female and male respondents, whether they wanted to retain features of traditional costumes and textiles in their modern costumes and textiles or not. The following hypothesis was tested by using z-test.

**H$_0$**

There is no significant difference between opinion of Females and males to retain features of their traditional costumes and textiles.

**H$_1$**

There is significant difference between opinion of Females and males to retain features of their traditional costumes and textiles.

**Table -4**
**Frequency Distribution of Female and Male Respondents for their Opinion for Retaining the Features of Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Respondents | Responses (n=240) | |
|---|---|---|
| Want to retain feature | Yes | No |
| Female | 110 | 10 |
| Male | 118 | 2 |

Since the significant result of z-test was found with the value of $Z_{cal}$(2.39) more than $Z_{tab}$ (1.96), thus we reject H$_0$ and accept H$_1$. This implies that there is significant difference between opinion of female and male respondents to save their traditional costumes and textiles.

The chi-square test was used to know whether interest of people in traditional costumes and textiles depended upon their education or not.

**H$_0$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles does not depend on education.

**H$_1$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles depends on education.

**Table- 5**
**Frequency Distribution of Respondents of Various Education Categories to Show Their Interest in Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Category | Interest of respondents (n=240) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Professional or Honours | 4 | 9 |
| Post graduate or Graduate | 59 | 32 |
| Intermediate or Post high school diploma | 46 | 8 |
| High school certificate | 29 | 1 |
| Middle school certificate | 15 | 0 |
| Primary school or Literate | 20 | 0 |
| Illiterate | 14 | 3 |

The chi-square was calculated after merging the categories in which the expected frequency was found to be less than 5 as shown in the Table 5. It was found that calculated value of chi-square (32.07) was more than tabulated value of chi-square (7.815) at 3 df and 5% level of significance, thus we rejected H$_0$ and accepted H$_1$. This denotes that the interest of respondents in their traditional costumes and textiles depend upon their educational level.

The data shown in the Table 6 indicated responses of the respondents belonged to different income group to find out their interest in traditional costumes and textiles. The chi-square test was used and following hypothesis was tested:

**H$_0$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles does not depend on income.

**H$_1$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles depends on income.

**Table- 6**
**Frequency Distribution of Respondents of Different Income Groups for Their Interest in Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Category | Interest of respondents (n=240) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| =19575 and above | 22 | 8 |
| 9788-19574 | 47 | 27 |
| 7323-9787 | 35 | 13 |
| 4894-7322 | 19 | 3 |
| 2936-4893 | 44 | 1 |
| 980-2935 | 17 | 1 |
| Below and = 979 | 3 | 0 |

The chi-square was calculated after merging the categories in which the expected frequency was found to be less than 5. We rejected H$_0$ and accepted H$_1$ asit was found that calculated value of chi-square (15.48) was more than tabulated value of chi-square (7.815) at 3 df and 5% level of significance. This

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signifies that the income of the respondents affect their interest in traditional costumes and textiles.

Likewise, chi-square was used to test the effect of occupation on the interest of people in traditional costumes and textiles as follows:

**$H_0$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles does not depend on occupation.

**$H_1$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles depends on occupation.

**Table-7**
**Frequency Distribution of Respondents of Different Occupations for their Interest in Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Category | Interest of Respondents (n=240) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Professional | 5 | 9 |
| Semi professional | 29 | 19 |
| Clerical, shop owner farmer | 45 | 9 |
| Skilled worker | 35 | 8 |
| Semi skilled worker | 29 | 1 |
| Unskilled worker | 21 | 1 |
| Unemployed | 23 | 6 |

The chi-square test was calculated for the data given in Table 7 after merging the categories in which the expected frequency was found to be less than 5. The chi-square calculated value (27.43) was found to be more than its tabulated value (12.59) at 6 df and 5% level of significance therefore we rejected $H_0$ and accepted $H_1$. This means that interest of people in their traditional costumes and textiles is affected by their occupation.

The data shown in Table 8 indicated the different age groups and their interest in traditional costumes and textiles. The independence of age and interest in traditional costumes and textiles was tested by using the chi-square test as follows:

**$H_0$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles does not depend on the age.

**$H_1$**

Interest in traditional costumes and textiles depends on the age.

**Table - 8**
**Frequency Distribution of Respondents of Different Age Groups and Their Interest in Traditional Costumes and Textiles**

| Category | Interest of respondents (n=240) | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| Young (30 years and below) | 18 | 27 |
| Middle (31-55 years) | 126 | 23 |
| Old (56 years and above) | 42 | 4 |

The chi-square test was calculated after merging the categories in which the expected frequency was found to be less than 5. Here, we rejected $H_0$ and accepted $H_1$ because calculated value of chi-square (44.67) was found to be more than the tabulated value of chi-square (5.99) at 2 df and 5% level of significance. This denotes that age affects the interest of people in their traditional costumes and textiles.

**Most Reflecting Example of Impact of Social Change Process: *Pichhoura* the Traditional Wrap of Kumaon**

It is consider as the typical wrap of the *Kumaoni* women; one can easily distinguish them through the *pichhoura*. This was compulsory for the married women to wear *pichhoura* in all religious, auspicious and ceremonial occasions. Traditionally, *rangawali-pichhoura* was worn by the *Kumaoni* women. The *rangawali-pichhoura* was approximately 2.5 to 3 meters in the length and 1.75 meters in the width. Traditionally fine cotton fabric like muslin, dyed in yellow colour with the turmeric and then it was printed with the help of five paisa coin or cotton ball in magenta colour, using the specific motifs in the patterns. Mainly simple geometrical motifs were used like circular dots and lines in square, rectangular or diamond patterns for the printing of *pichhoura* traditionally. This type of *rangawali-pichhoura* was not colourfast. This *pichhoura* was draped over the head, in traditional style, which is shown in the Figure-1.

The *pichhoura* had undergone various modifications due to social change, in its features like fabric, designs, type of motifs and their arrangements. Traditional *pichhoura* was not colourfast but now block or screen printed colourfast *pichhoura* were available and preferred by the wearers. The yellow colour dyed cotton or blended cotton was used as base and on top of the printing with the red colour was done. Sometimes fabric with *chikankari* embroidery was also used as the base. The auspicious motifs *surya* (sun), *chandrama* (moon), *ghanta* (bell), *shankh* and *swastika* etc. (Figure-2) were must to be used at the centre of the *pichhoura*. The base of the *pichhoura* was covered with small dots and at the borders intricate floral border designs were printed. Golden or silver *gotakinari* was attached to all four sides of the *pichhoura*. The drastic change was observed in the draping style of the *Pichhoura*. As education, mass media, migration, transportation facilities, colonisation, urbanisation etc. social change factors give people the opportunity to look at the world in the boarder view, give the way to establish their own point of view, away from their traditional mind sets. They can decide what to wear and how to wear among the various options available to them. As shown in the Figure-3, women of *Kumaon* draped their traditional *Pichhoura* in various styles, over the shoulders. This shows that they want to use their traditional costumes but in modern way.

Present time could be considered as the golden era for the development of the costumes and textiles of Uttarakhand as due to globalisation, hand loom industry gain more attention from various Governmental, nongovernmental organisations or even from influential foreigners. The Weavers' Service Centre, *Chamoli* was set up in 1983 by the office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India to cater the needs of the handloom weavers in and around *Uttarakhand* state in their pre-loom, on-loom and post loom processes. The Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles is also providing traditional and contemporary textile designs with technical details free of cost through their website. These designs are available in design pool section in saris,

shawls, dress material and home furnishing category of the web-site. Various handlooms development schemes are also implemented by the Govt. of India in the Uttarakhand state. Apart from central Government's initiatives, the *UttarakhandKhadiAvamGramudhyog* Board also working for the diversification and value addition of the traditional costumes and textiles of the state. As various incentives available to the people of Uttarakhand, they enthusiastically started to grab opportunities to rejuvenate their traditional wool based handloom industry with the help of foreign money and numerous governmental and nongovernmental organisations. The wide varieties of the textile materials and machinery which were available in the other parts of the country, now available in the Uttarakhanddue to the better availability of transport facilities and communication mediums.



**Figure-1: Traditional ceremonial wrap of *Kumaoni* woman: *Rangwali pichhoura* and its draping style**



**Figure-2: Contemporary block / screen printed colourfast pichhoura having Traditional motifs**



**Figure-3: *Kumaoni* women wearing *sari* with*pichhoura* draped on shoulder**

**Sugesstions**

Similar type of study must be conducted in different regions of the nation on different communities of India, to atleast preserve their rich, unique tradition which either disappeared or in the process of distraction.

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