



Lovers of jewellery– The Great Mughals

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the researcher has attempted to present the attraction and affection of the Mughal emperors towards Jewellery as to how the Mughal emperors provided their patronage to the skilled artisans in the royal Karkhnas. The Mughal Emperors, royal ladies to common man were fond of Jewellery. The process of making Mughal ornaments involved an exceptional knowledge of trained goldsmiths employed in the royal karkhana. Skilled craftsmen in every field of jewellery designing to making the Mughal emperors were patronized. In addition, the Mughal emperors' special attachment to precious stones, the techniques of Mughal ornaments, and the influences depicted on the jewellery have been explained. The beautiful designs, and fine workmanship created by the skilled artisan of the Mughal Empire add to the attractiveness of these rare pieces of jewelry in Indian society even today.

KEY WORDS –Karkhana, Giggha., Gemstones, kundan, craftsman.s

Research Methodology –

The paper has been prepared after studying many books on Mughal jewellery, journals, manuscripts and translation of emperors' biographies.



Introduction

The history of jewellery in India is not new; from the earliest civilization to the present day, it has proved that humans always appreciate beauty, and using ornaments embellishes the human form. Jewellery has been a passion for women of all ages and times. For example, the Indus valley civilization's The Dancing Girl wearing a necklace and bangles is a unique example of jewellery. Since ancient times jewellery has been worn not only to attract the attention of others but also as a distinctive mark of status, position and dignity. In this relation, Mughal emperors contributed immensely to the development of ornaments.

Emperor Zahiruddin Mohammad Babur established The Mughal Empire. But he did not get enough time to expand the empire as he died suddenly. After that his son AbulFateh Mohammad Humayun was crowned in 1540. He was defeated by ShershahSuri; he took shelter in the court of Shah Tahmasp of Iran. In 1545 with the help of Shah Tahmasp, he defeated ShershahSuri and became emperor of Hindustan. When he returned from Iran, he requested Shah Tahmasp to give him two artists as a gift. It was an unprecedented request, which Shah Thamp had to accept reluctantly. Shah Tamasp gave him MirSayyid Ali and KhwajaAbdusamad as *gift. According to Ba YazeedBayat - Humayun issued orders to Mir Sayyid Ali and KhawajaAbdussamad; upon receiving them, both of them (who were in Kandahar at that time) left for Kabul to attend Humayun's court*¹

These two artists established a karkhana in Kabul, but it was a sad coincidence that Humayun passed away after the karkhana was established, and the progress of art stopped for some time. After Humayun, his son Akbar was crowned, and he was ordered to start the karkhana's work. *According to Ain-e-Akbari, he established a factory near the palace to promote fine art. Where ornaments was prepared, and the emperor used to inspect the artists at any time."* 2

*'The Mughal emperors encouraged Indian and Persian artists to develop new jewellery-making ideas that were trained under patrons' discerning eyes. These artists created new designs with the help of Indian and Persian styles, and the fusion of these designs led to the emergence of a unique style known as Mughal jewellery'*³

Initially, the Mughal emperors were less interested in jewellery items. During the reign of Akbar, the male royal family members developed interest in jewellery. New karkhanas were established and goldsmiths experimented with different designs and styles under royal patronage. Thus, the jewellery became more valuable. Mughal paintings show that Akbar's reign gave a new life to art which also featured a variety of foreign influences. The ornaments of that time were symbols of power and wealth. To promote the jewellery in karkhanas Mughal emperors patronized high-order goldsmiths. According to *Ain-e-Akbari-- Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar, the twelve treasurers the royal gems, gold, and jewellery item were earmarked for the management. A treasurer was appointed solely for the manufacture of the ornaments and was appointed to assist them.*⁴

Many historians told that Mughal emperors and royal women of the Mughal court had special attention towards jewellery. Jewellery was not worn only for its value but also for specific religious reasons, too. Members of the royal family wore heavy gold ornaments, especially



women. According to Islamic religious beliefs, wearing gold is prohibited for men. For the Mughal emperors, precious stones and jewels were not only a means of ornamentation but also formed the currency of power. From Akbar to Shahjahan, all the emperors had a special attachment to jewellery, which included diamonds and precious stones in addition to gold and silver, which were used for special occasions and giving tribute. Paying tribute shows loyalty to the Mughal emperor. They used to exchange valuable gifts with each other as an offering.

According to Tuzuk e Jahangiri – Jahangir says “the jewellery worn by the women of the royal family; if I have no other means of light, then the shine of the diamonds and pearls worn by the women is enough to see the light.”⁵

Influences depicted on Mughal Jewellery:

The jewellery styles developed under the Mughals were a mixture of Islamic and Hindu artistic styles. As we know, the roots of the Mughal Empire were connected with Iran, and the Mughals conquered almost whole of India; therefore, their influence was not limited only to North India but also to Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Andhra Pradesh. The effect of Mughal Jewellery can also be seen in these regions and states of India.

The Mughal emperor often made alliances with Rajput rulers and married Rajput princesses. As a result, Mughal Jewellery was further influenced by the Rajput's. Thus a combination of Rajput exquisite craftsmanship and Mughal delicate artistry was started in jewellery making. Members of the royal family displayed their status by wearing heavy gold ornaments such as bejeweled turban, toe rings, necklaces, etc. AbulFazl, in Ain-i-Akbari, described a list of ornaments worn by the women of India. Some of these can be seen almost unchanged and are worn by Muslim women alike. The half-moon-shaped and floral combinations were very prominent in Mughal Jewellery design. The earrings were half-moon-shaped with a small stem covering the entire ear. At the bottom of the crescent was a hanging fish to which a string of pearls was attached. *Although earlier the use of stars and the crescent moon was in operation, it is known as the symbol of Islam because of its separation from the Islamic calendar and beliefs. According to Mughal astrologers, a remarkable effect on human life; is why This Navaratna became extremely popular among the Mughals and necklaces and bracelets without cut stones became typical jewellery specimens of that period. The Mughals made a combined display of Persian, Rajput, and foreign traditions in jewellery. In the period, It emerged as an influential and self-confident imperialist culture, which was distinctly Indian. Miniature paintings, portraits of Mughal princes and women, exhibited in different museums around the world, provide evidence of their lavish lives, which is confirmed by the reports of European ambassadors, merchants, and artists.*⁶

The technique of making Mughal jewellery:

François Bernier, a European traveler who lived in India between 1656 and 1668 during the time of Shahjahan and his eldest son DaraShikoh, wrote that in royal karkhana the skilled



*artisans and goldsmiths worked who had special knowledge of gems and jewellery. From the raw material to the polishing and the process till the finalization of the product, there were remarkable goldsmiths in the royal factory for different work. The Mughals employed such skilled artisans in the royal factory, who had special knowledge of gems and who used to come and store them after selecting them based on type. Mughal jewellery was carved beautifully and the intricacy in their designs and the fine quality set them apart from other jewellery.*⁷

The Mughals adopted Meenakari as their dynastic identity. The word Meenakari is derived from the Persian phrase mina or minu, which means "heaven". Meenakari was a time-consuming technique and introduced many floral patterns on Jewellery items. Similarly, the Mughals also popularized Kundan Jewellery items. The word Kundan means pure gold. Nafisa Ali mentioned that- *“An ornament was prepared in various stages before the final production. First, it is handed over to the 'artist for the desired design, which is then outlined by the engraver. Finally, the Jewellery goes to the Meenasaz (enameler), who adds different colors with a brush onto the engraved design. The ornament's exterior was decorated with etching, which serves a dual purpose of allowing the enamel to adhere firmly, as well as enhancing its beauty through the magic of light and shadow created by the translucent colors. The enameled object was placed on a plate of mica in the furnace to protect it from direct contact with fire. Enamel paints were applied to the metal surface and heated according to their hardness or strength to resist fire. The hardest paint is applied first so that it is firmly attached to the metal, while the soft colors get hotter due to continuous heating.”*⁸

*AbulFazl described Mughal nobility also hired skilled craftsmen on higher salary to ensure that they got beautifully designed, unique Jewellery not available to any other. There is also some evidence that many times craftsmen were reluctant to work in major cities because of exploration by the royalty and nobility.*⁹

In this continuation he also said that *The skillful artisan first makes a wire eight fingers in length and one finger in breadth from one Masha gold. Then the wire is coated with a mixture of cow dung and salt. Then it is wrapped with a coarse cloth and enclosed with clay. Then it is subjected to fire of cow dung, and then it is left to be cooled. This procedure is followed by three times to remove any impurity. Then it is washed and treated with lime juice and any other acid. Then it is cleaned around a cane and used when it is needed. Firstly, the ornament is painted plain and leaves the sockets for the setting of precious gemstones. These sockets are filled with lac and a little gold, and a jewel is pressed. Finally, the lac is covered with Kundan and polished with a fine needle.*¹⁰

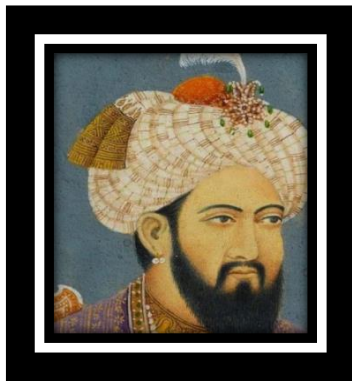
Types of Mughal Jewellery

Mughals wore Jewellery on every part of the body, head to toe. However, each of these ornaments differed in their design and size. Overall, the use of precious stones and intricate carvings was the quality of Mughal jewellery. In Mughal jewellery, precious stones had been used, like Dimond, Emerald, Manikya, Kundan, and Polki (un-cut Dimond). Precious gems such



as agate, jade, pearls, tourmaline, topaz, and many other qualities of pearls were used to make Mughal jewellery. The precious stones were carefully cut and shaped to fit the pure gold. There is no doubt that the contribution of the Mughals to jewellery design and jewellery-making techniques is immense. The colors, combinations, engravings, and intricate designs of Mughal jewellery were not found in any other style of jewellery which is still loved and desired by every Indian woman.

Turban: Turban is a symbol of Honour. In the Mughal period, the emperors gave special attention to the turban. This practice was also adopted by the members of the royal family and the courtiers. In the Mughal period, every person used to wear the turban in accordance with his status. Emperors used beautiful ornaments in turbans, while the courtiers used other turbans, and the ordinary person used simple turbans or Mundasa. For example, Emperor Akbar used the Iranian style of turban, in front of which bird Feathers were used. Sometimes, gems were also used—precisely the same as those seen in the contemporary Safavid painting. A stylistic change can be seen in Jahangir's period jewelry. Jahangir started to use jiggha (a chain of pearls). *"Sir Thomas Roe (1581-1644), who was an envoy of England in the Mughal court of Jahangir, gives details about the emperor's appearance on his birthday celebration: 'His [Jahangir's] turban was plumed with heron's feather; on one side was a ruby as big as walnut; on the other side was a large diamond; in the center was a large emerald, shaped like a heart. His sash was of three double strings of pearls. He wore armlets set with diamond as on his elbows; he had three rows of diamonds on his wrists; he had rings on nearly every finger.'"*¹¹ Mughal jewellers used heavy bases for jewelry. Sometimes gold-plated silver and other metal bases were also used. His son Shahjahan wore a European style of turban, whose design was related to the Dutch jeweller Arnold Lulls. Besides, Shahjahan was greatly influenced by the turban and jewelry worn by James I., which is depicted in Mughal paintings



Babur



Humayun



Akbar



Jahangir



Shahjahan



Aurangzeb

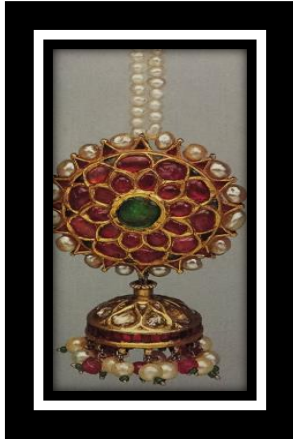
William Hawkins, ambassador of the East India Company, who came to India in 1608 to negotiate with Jahangir to set up a karkhana in India, was amazed to see such a turban with precious stones in gold brooches Jaded and had a feather attached to it which was called Sirpech. They were costly and numbered about two thousand¹² it means that the Mughal emperors were fond of tying different types of turbans and setting precious stones in them, which is confirmed by the facts of European travelers.

Jahangir also mentions in Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri that a celebration was held on Sunday, 30th November; on this day I gifted my son a brilliant ruby weighing 184 carats, 9 takas, and five rubies, worth 25 thousand rupees, and two precious pearls. This gem was given to my mother by my grandmother Arsh e Ashyani which adorned my father's turban for four years and was fortunately put on my turban. Seeing the value of it was presented to my son.¹³

Shahjahan was a gem lover. His turban was adorned with rubies, pearls, and emeralds. While Aurangzeb being a forthright emperor, preferred his turban with simple ornaments. His turban was usually adorned with a single or double string of pearls as well as costly gems such as rubies and emeralds. Sarpanch, Kalgi, Jigha, and Sehra were mainly used in marriage ceremonies and other special occasions.

Ear ornaments

The historical text motioned that during 17th century earrings were used by men as a sign of thanks. Men used earrings or studs as a token of thanks. *According to Tuzuk e jahangri -- "On Thursday in the month of Rajab, he [Jahangir] pierced his ears and wore earrings, with one pearl, in each because he had vowed during his illness that on recovery, he would wear earrings to show his devotion physically for Khawaja Moin-ud-din Ajmairi as he felt that his life was because of his miracles. Moreover, when the courtiers, servants, who were in service, and other umrah and servants, who were appointed on the borders, saw him, they also started to wear earrings with ruby and pearls, which were given to them from the imperial jewellery house. His imitation of that furry went beyond themansabdarand umerh .¹⁴*



Karnphoo



Jhumka



Bali



Pipa lpatti



In addition, Mughal women wore ear ornaments of various shapes and sizes, according to AbulFazl -- in which Bali, MorBbanwarKarnaPhool, Jhumka, and Pipal Patti.

Bali, --is circular with pearls.

MorBbanwar-- peacock-shaped ear pendant.

KarnaPhool--- is the shape of a blooming motif of flowers and a symbol of happiness and prosperity.

Jhumka—the bell-shaped flower jhumka was also quite prevalent in the Mughal era.

Pipal Patti – (Pipal Leaf)is a crescent shape with a leaf pendant; eight or nine worn in each ear were prevalent.

Generally, ear ornaments almost touched the shoulders



Nath

As shown in the Mughal paintings, Mughal women wore different types of nose ornaments. As mentioned by AbulFazl, there are different types and names of nose ornaments like Besar, classes, and representations of nose ornaments like Besar, Nath, or long.

Neck Ornaments:

Mughal emperors were fond of expensive necklaces and chains of pearls, gemstones, and rare beads. Necklaces of pearls usually consisted of superficial layers of pearls with colorful pendants and heavy necklaces with sparkling gems. The jewellery made of these precious gemstones and rare beads gave the wearer a rich look and showed the high status of Mughal women. *According to Ain e akbari – “Men and women wore neck ornaments made of pearls and precious stones. The elaborately patterned pendants, necklaces, and lockets for chains are attractive. Men's neck ornaments include taken, amala necklace as well as mala. These names were designed together using graduated length. In addition, men wore necklaces of pearls and gemstones and even turbans.”*¹⁵

Ornaments worn by women include Guluband, hans, haar, and hansuli. Under AI, emeralds were engraved with the religious belief that these words, symbols, or symbols would enhance the power of the stones. The Mughal emperors were fond of costly necklaces and chains of pearls, gems, and rare pearls. Pearl necklaces usually included superficial layers of pearls with colorful pendants and heavy necklaces with gleaming gems. Jewellery made of these precious gems and rare pearls gave the wearer a rich look and showed their high status.



Mughal necklace made of gold and embellished with pearls and precious gemstone.

Among these ornaments women wore were neckbands, Hans, Necklaces, hansuli, etc. These ornaments often used rough gems that were cut by skilled lapidaries. The Mughal emperors used emeralds for religious purposes. They believed that these symbols or titles would boost the power of stones.

Hand and arm jewellery

Hand, as well as arm ornaments, was usually pearls worn by both men and women alike. For example, armllets and amulets were worn by a substantial population on their forearms and wrists. Strings and bracelets of gold and gems were to adorn the hands and arms. Strings of pearls or gemstones; some were more elaborate, while some were stylized with terns. Some of the components and hand ornaments of the Mughals include bazuband, the ring, Kangan, jawe, gajra, tad, kara, and hathful.



Lavishly decorated with enamel and stonework - 16th-century Mughal Empire

FINGER RINGS

Mughal emperors were fond of rings made of beautiful rubies, diamonds, emeralds, and other precious gemstones. Thumb rings were prevalent in Mughal fashion. These thumb rings were worn on the right thumb to assist drawing the strings of a bow. Mughals often used thumb rings of nephrite, carnelian, rock crystal, and emerald. Sometimes, thumb rings had an oval mirror in the center for seeing their reflection. Such thumb rings were known as arsi rings. *A French traveler, Jean de Thévenot, who visited India in 1666, witnessed that Emperor Jahangir wore even more gems and jewels than his father did. He also wore rings on every finger*.¹⁷



Dimond Ring



Jahangir's Ring



Shahjahan's Rings

Conclusion

The family members of the Mughal court and zamindars used to change the ornaments regularly, due to which the circulation of jewels and gems increased in the society as well as in market. In addition, Mughal emperor's patronized Iranian goldsmiths, purchased gems and pearls from European traders, and maintained friendly relations with the Rajput kings. Hence their combined influence came on Mughal jewelry. The craftsman of royal karkhana created a rare and new technique for making jewelry such as Meenakari and Kundan jewelry which is as popular today as it was during the Mughal period. It is perhaps the most important contribution of Mughal rulers to Indian art of jewellery.

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