

# Traditional, fashion and new perspective on fashion tourism

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**Abstract.** Have you ever heard about Iranian needlework? The needlework of Iran has always been the sign of love, patience and activation. This art that ornaments the surface of fabric with colourful yarns, uses needle is considered as one of the widest branches of handicrafts. Nowadays there are at least 42 branches of needleworks in Iran and among these, the Zoroastrian embroidery is the oldest one. We try to make a new perspective on this art by quickening this beautiful art and designing it on modern fabrics and also combining it with fashion tourism.

Iran has a touristic potential in culture, because of its rich, mysterious history and every year thousands of tourists come to Iran to know more about human history and as Yazd is the main region of Zoroastrians' occupation that every year attracts many tourists and also is famous for its textiles so we start our study in this city.

The conclusion of the study emphasized the fact that there is room for the fashion industry to open the new contribution to tourism in Yazd State. However, this depends on the development of a separate framework for fashion tourism in Iran.

**Keywords:** Needlework, Iran, Yazd, Zoroastrian, embroidery, fabric, yarn, handicraft,

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is the business activity connected with providing accommodation, services and entertainment for people who are visiting a place for pleasure or business. Tourism is a sector that inputs several industries and fashion is one of them as fashion week is popular among designers and trendy fashion lovers and even the media who travel from far and wide to attend. Fashion is a phenomenon that cuts across every area of life from generation to generation.

Fashion tourism has been defined for specific bazaar based on special product that also implies 3 types of tourism: creative tourism- cultural tourism- shopping tourism. In all around the world especially in big cities it has been tried to create new attractions by using cultural elements in order to make the tourism industry better. So, based on the fact that clothes are regarded as cultural sign for society, it can be used as cultural attraction to introduce a region or a country. We know that Iran is well-known and good at designing and producing the clothes, regarding its extension, various tribes, nomads, based on the fact that each has its own costumes and traditions. That is, each city has its specific cloth and traditional texture. Taking all these facts into account, it can be concluded Iran has several cultures, tribes and nomads which lead to different kinds of wearing styles and clothes.

As you know, Arians were the most famous and important race, moving from India to Europe. However, our Arian ancestors at Iran plateau, has made a wonderful history. Zoroastrianism is the oldest religion in the world that came to the world from Iran. Zoroastrians based on their culture and costumes that is in fact the Arian culture are one of the Iranian cultural attractions especially Yazd that attract large number of tourists from around the world. So, we embark on making Embroidered Zoroastrian alive again.

In this article, we try to take this original and unique art out of history and involve it in its new life called fashion tourism. The employment effects are also significant and another aim of this research is to identify the importance of Fashion in tourism and how Yazd government can benefit from its vast potentials.



## 2. Tourism

The importance of tourism cannot be over emphasized. Tourism is primarily viewed as people visiting a particular place for various reasons, whether it is for business or leisure tourism cuts across various aspects of life. Thus, tourism may be seen as the process, activity and outcomes arising from the relationship and the interaction among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities and the environments involved in the attraction and hosting of visitors. Tourism today is a global phenomenon that cuts across various sector of an economy and also seen as an industry that promotes political and economic changes.

For some time now there has been an evolution of the “new tourist” who requires and is willing to pay for more than the regular package of sun, sea and sand, the typical tourism packages. Destinations worldwide are beginning to diversify in repackaging their tourism product by introducing niche market and alternative forms of tourism and fashion tourism started.

### 2.1 Fashion tourism

Fashion is one of the most influential phenomenon in western civilization, it is almost second nature to us, an understanding of fashion contributes to the understanding of ourselves and our personal style based on our cultural background, beliefs and environment; our personal style is our identity.

In the early fifteenth century, fashion was considered so important in France that Charles the IIV was told to create a separate organization for fashion, even though not many people supported such organisations but, the fashion industry has been growing since then, in the eighteenth century, people became more aware of the importance of fashion and style as news agents, fashion magazines printed in bright coloured glossy paper, newspapers. (Lars & Svendsen, 2005, 7.)

The major fashion shows in London, Paris, Milan and New York were broadcasted on national and international TV as fashion was clearly seen to be important enough to get such lavished attention the fashion phenomenon today has become a cultural factor of primary importance to people of different class culture and background as there is something for everybody. (Lars, & Svendsen, 2005, 10.)

Fashion Tourism is defined as the phenomenon where by people travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment to enjoy experience and possibly consume fashion. (Cabrera. 2013). The phenomenon of fashion tourism is often called different things, Fashion travel, Shopping tourism, and so on, regardless of what it is called, the idea of people going or travelling from one place to the other for the purpose of fashion viewing or purchase is constant,

Fashion tourism is another alternative form of tourism that attracts tourists from different part of the world, this trend is gradually becoming one of the more sought after niche in the tourism markets.

### 2.2 Iran tourism

Iran is a unique country in terms of its tourist attractions and abundant resources. The Most important characteristics of the country are its diverse natural and ecotourism attractions, religious, ethical and cultural diversity, its national and Islamic architectural style, diverse climatic conditions and above all its people's hospitality. Iran is not only a nation with reach historical and cultural sites but, it has unique environment and nature in which four season of the year could be observed. There are 17 kinds of climates in the world that 12 kinds of them can be seen in Iran. The numbers of registered historic buildings are 11000 and many historical works and buildings of Iran have been registered in the list of world cultural heritage. According to many foreign, Iran's archaeology, cultural heritage, traditions and diversity of nature are the main factors which attract foreigners to Iran. Iran also is the land of souvenir and authenticity. This is not a tourism slogan, this is the reality inferred from the experience of visitors who have been impressed by Iran's beauties and amazing attractions. Antiquity and richness of its culture and civilization in addition to different tribes with different and fascinating traditions and customs have made Iran as a treasury of tangible and intangible heritage.

Regarding with cultural richness and different nomads and tribes with different styles of clothes, we also have to take it in to account that in addition to historical and cultural potentials, it has capacity to become a new target as fashion tourism.

### 3. Zoroastrian embroidery

The Zoroastrian embroidery is a kind of embroidery that goes back to the times before Islam. This art has been done on different fabrics with colourful yarns.

Zoroastrian embroidery was very common in Yazd in the past, but these days it can be seen just among the old fabrics of grandmothers.

The Zoroastrian embroidery is a kind of embroidery that used to be used by Zoroastrian ladies dating back to pre-Islam period. This unique art is done just among the Zoroastrians. Unfortunately, it is going to be forgotten. According to Zoroastrian costumes, when the girl was born, the process of sewing her wedding clothes was started and during the years, her clothes were woven with their nice needle work. Furthermore, these decorations were woven on the margins of the pants, sleeves, skirt, groom's hat, bride scarves which Zoroastrians name them (Lachaki). This embroidered art involves signs and specific symbols that have its own philosophy. Zoroastrian embroidery with lots of delicate silk coloured threads was woven on delicate fabrics. The common colours are light and live ones such as red, white and green. Different designs used in Zoroastrian embroidery are plant design (life tree, clove, curved cedar) animal designs (peacock-rooster-hen-fish-hoopoe) geometrical design such as square, circle. These designs are woven on the clothes in a way that nobody can see the stitches.

It can be concluded easily from historical monuments such as Taq-e Bostan which dates back to Sassanid era that Zoroastrians were interested in delicate textures and their skill had an effect on other nation art from Europe to China and Japan. This art was sacred by even common people. It should be mentioned that girl's skill at needle working was considered as one part of their dowry. Zoroastrians woven these designs on the wedding bride dress to show their beliefs such as fertility, eternal life and...

#### 3.1. Colors:

One of the features of this sewing is the mixture and coordination of the colours which shows that Iranians were completely familiar with the colours not only in taking advantage of the appropriate colours but also in coordination of the colours for needle working.

*3.1.1. Green:* In Iranian culture, the colour of green is symbol of life-pride that is so sacred. The brides are dressed in green. The tablecloth that is set in front of the brides and grooms is green.

*3.1.2. White:* The white colour is symbol of purity-friendship and peace. Zoroastrians were dressed in white in all their ceremonies especially religious ones.

*3.1.3. Red:* Red in ancient Iran and for Zoroastrians was the symbol of fire, heat and vitality.

#### 3.2. Signs and symbols:

According to an interview with an old specialist woman, signs and symbols which is seen in textiles, have been established on the fabric by printing using wooden stamps and then, decorative stitching was made on them. These signs and symbols varied in size from small to large according to type of the clothes. Iranian's culture, rituals and religion beliefs also have influenced on these patterns and figures, such as in Zoroastrian embroidery which each signs and symbols have a special meaning. For example Cypress tree which was as a symbol of stamina, eternity and pride (figure 1-A) or sunflower which was a symbol of kindness admiration and therefore represents servants. Sometimes sunflower was the sign of Life expectancy (figure 1-B). Some other instance of these signs and symbols are described below:

*3.2.1. Barsom-dan:* Barsom or Barsom was a bundle of cut rods of a sacred plant like pomegranate, Tamarix and Haoma (a divine plant in Zoroastrianism and in later Persian culture) which was used in Zoroastrian rituals and religious ceremonies. Barsom-dan or mah-rui was two metallic stands with a Crescent shape in the upper sides which was used as Barsom stand (figure 2). Barsom-dan was a symbol of Thanksgiving of vegetative blessings which was the human and animal's feeding source and the decker of nature.

3.2.2. *Peacock*: According to Aristotle, Peacock and Rooster was named as Persian birds and in some cases Persian ambassador have had given Peacock as a gift. Peacock has a relation to many mythical and symbolic concepts such as Adam and Eve, the Paradise entrance, The Sun, reign, Resurrection, esteem, Revitalization and beauty. In some myths, Peacock could know the Devil, so that Persians have Engrave Peacock in top of the entrance of their houses to prevent the Devil entering home (figure 1-C).

3.2.3. *Fish*: In ancient Iranian culture, fish is symbol of Anahita, the angel of water and fertility (figure 1-D).

3.2.4. *The Sun*: In Zoroastrianism, Sun was sing of kindness, friendship and love and it was always considered sacred.



**Figure 1.** A- Cypress tree, a symbol of stamina, eternity and pride. B- Sunflower, the sign of Life expectancy. C- Peacock, a Persian bird. D- Fish, symbol of Anahita, the angel of water and fertility [4].



**Figure 2.** Barsom-dan, a symbol of Thanksgiving of vegetative blessings [6].

#### 4. Starting to work

Regarding the difficulties and delicacy of embroidery, young people are not interested in it and it can be claimed that this art is going to be forgotten. Nowadays, these art can be seen just by a

grandmothers and those who are Zoroaster. Delicacy, difficulties and being time-consuming are the reasons that young people don't prefer to learn this valuable art.

Despite the amnesia of these historical art and according to close relation to Iranian's original culture and noble beliefs, we arise to find a way to update and Reintroduce these valuable arts to the global market and art society. In middle of 2016, we succeed to codification of a standard for Zoroastrian embroidery with 7318-81-032-1 standard no. by contribution of Technical and Vocational Training Organization, Iran. We merge the traditions and modernity to create awesome and unique patterns and designs which with combination of Modern Sewing and producing deluxe clothes, are take into consideration by many art enthusiasts, respectively. Recently training courses are in progress following of many requests for learning this art.

In order to start our research and since these kind of sewing needs special Delicate fabrics, we start to produce fabrics needed and then turning them into manteaux and woman's coats.

### 5. Research method

We chose semi-structured interview because it is the most important way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility balanced by structure and the quality of data obtained. (Gillham, 2005.70.) We inscribe specific questions to be discussed in an interview. The interview was conducted with tourists who try these kind of clothing and an audio recording device was used as data collection in order to listen later if necessary to the discussion. This type of interview is also good because there is eye contact and the researcher is able to also read the body language of the respondents (Dawson 2009, 28.)

The information provided by the interviewee who took part in this research will only be used to analyse the findings, recommendation and conclusion. The given information will be analysed based on their positive and negative responses of fashion tourism in Iran, the development strategies will also be discussed.

Most of people who have wear these clothes, showed extraordinary reactions to them, especially when they noticed the meaning of the designs and patterns using in their clothes.

### 6. Conclusion

According to the conversation conducted with Domestic and foreign tourists who try our clothes, it can be concluded that Iran's rich and historical culture could help various industries such as fashion industry

Iran has the opportunity to try its chance to enter the world of fashion and tourism industry, however it is needed to more investigation and development of its own Infrastructure.

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