



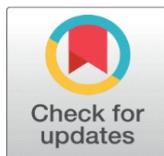
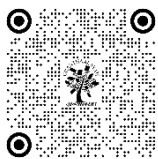


# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL IMPLICATION OF MUSEUM COLLECTION: REPRESENTATION OF REGIONS AND TRIBES IN THE NOSE RINGS OF AMRAPALI MUSEUM OF JAIPUR, INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

Nose rings have through the ages been worn not just in India but all over the world. The reasons for wearing nose rings are varied which often takes ritualistic meanings. Some aboriginal tribes used bone or boar tusks to appear fiercer to their enemies. In tribal societies nose rings can assume amulet function to prevent evil spirits from entering the body. Nose is one of the most visible parts of the face. Nose ornaments greatly enhance and brighten the individual appearance. Therefore, a lot of attention and traditional significance has been attached to their designs. In India, the tradition of nose rings can be a rich source of cultural history of communities. The present study analyzes a few regional traditions pertaining to the practice of wearing nose rings. Nose rings have been selected to represent east, west, north, south, and central regions of India. The nose rings have been documented to highlight their historical and cultural significance and not just their decorative function. The focus of the study is to showcase unique illustrations through carefully selected nose ornaments worn in eight different states of India from the collection of the Amrapali Museum.

**Keywords:** Nose-Rings, Nath, Indian Jewellery, Ritual Ornaments, Museum Collection, Amrapali Museum

## 1. INTRODUCTION

India has a very rich heritage and Indian jewellery has a distinguished and distinct place in the world. There is a lot to learn and understand about our traditions, heritage, values, practices, and ways of living of our ancestors. Many treasures are neither available nor accessible to us in the normal course but can be witnessed and experienced through the museums. Museums in the past were understood as 'cabinet of curiosities' but there has been an increasingly wide

recognition of their educational and cultural value. The present study uses diverse samples of nose rings from various regions to display the cultural diversity of India.

In India, the tradition of nose rings can be a rich source of cultural history of communities. The present study analyzes a few regional traditions pertaining to the practice of wearing nose rings. Nose rings have been selected to represent east, west, north, south, and central regions of India. The nose rings have been documented to highlight their historical and cultural significance and not just their decorative function. The focus of the study is to showcase unique illustrations through carefully selected nose ornaments worn in eight different states of India from the collection of the Amrapali Museum. For this purpose, twenty exhibits of nose rings at the Amrapali Museum have been documented and analyzed. Amrapali Museum is a unique museum that houses a large collection of jewellery and jewelled objects.

## 2. MUSEUM AS VEHICLES OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

Museums are not mere collections of inanimate objects; it is the stories of these objects that preserve significant historical and cultural information. [Ambrose and Paine \(1993\), p. 3](#) write that “In the face of immense and often painful cultural change in many countries, museums can provide a valuable sense of connection with the past and present and serve as a springboard for future.” Museums have immense potential to be a vehicle of culture. For a long time, museums showed an elitist approach in their collections. The jewellery of India had been connected to royalty. But recently the approach towards museum is undergoing a change. “There is a growing critical awareness of the ‘political’ nature of museums, and their role in maintaining cultural values of elite or privileged groups in society.” [Ambrose and Paine \(1993\), p. 16](#) New Museology is an approach that demands awareness of the social and political roles of the museums. It has led to a more inclusive approach in museum collections. This is illustrated well by the collection at Amrapali Museum, Jaipur, which has drawn heavily from the everyday life of the people of India. It especially, showcases art, design, and craftsmanship of Indian tribes. People from different backgrounds and cultures get to witness as well as learn about tribal jewellery from different parts of India and hence getting a better understanding of different cultures. Museums like these are repositories of culture that both conserve and disseminate knowledge. The paper is an attempt to enhance the academic scholarship on interrelationship of museum, heritage, and society.

## 3. HISTORY AND CULTURE OF NOSE RINGS

Very little information exists about nose rings in India, particularly about their origin and age. The general northern Indian term for a Nose ring is *nath*, with many regional variants. If we look at the history of nose rings, an interesting facet comes to light about the origins. “Some of the earliest records of nose piercing rituals come not from India, but from the Middle East and indigenous cultures of South and Central America, Central Asia and Australia.” [Ganguly \(2015\)](#). The cultural practices related to nose rings are connected to political and historical processes of medieval India also. “Some speculate that the tradition travelled to India with the arrival of the Mughals from Central Asia in the 16th century.” [Ganguly \(2015\)](#). There is another view that illuminates the origin of nose rings in ancient India. “Ayurvedic texts published between the 1st and 8th century BCE that suggest it has been around for much longer.” [Ganguly \(2015\)](#). This is illustrated by the *Sushruta Samhita* an

ancient text on medicine. It elaborates the use of nose piercing point being connected to female reproductive organs and is helpful in disorders of the reproductive system. Nose rings are known to have been in use at the Mughal court, based on several references to them in contemporary European writings and in miniature paintings. Perhaps at first Hindus considered them to be a Muslim ornament. With their eventual acceptance, however, their use spread over the entire Indian subcontinent. It became common especially among rural people and superstitious evolved connected with the custom of nose ring use. [Bhavnani \(1974\)](#).

There are regional variations in the cultural meanings associated with nose rings and their designs. The nose is visually too a very significant part of the body, wearing a nose ornament is therefore always of high importance for an individual or a community. In some regions people emphasize that the nose is one of the spirit-entries of the body and thus must be specially protected. The left nostril is believed to relate to emotional, sexual, and romantic propositions and childbearing. It is also considered as a breath regularizing item. According to popular beliefs, wearing a gold or silver nose ornament helps remove the poisonous carbon dioxide exhaled during the sexual union. If a woman is widowed, she is culturally expected to discard her nose ring, making it a symbol deeply connected to marital union. Girls are asked to get their nose pierced at a young age as it is a ritual requirement in traditional marriage ceremonies. There is also a mythological connection through the legend of Goddess Parvati. Young girls in North India pray to her to seek a good groom. Thus, many social ceremonies in India are connected to this ornament, which is not just a jewellery piece but a cultural practice.

#### **4. AMRAPALI MUSEUM: COLLECTION OF INDIA'S BEJEWELLED HISTORY**

The Amrapali Museum was started on 20th January, 2018 by the founders of Amrapali Jewels Pvt. Ltd. According to founders, Rajiv Arora and Rajesh Ajmera, their journey of the collection had started in early eighties. They started collecting old jewellery pieces and objects for which they travelled all across India. Presently, this museum has a collection of more than 4000 jewellery pieces and jewelled objects.

There are two floors in the museum. On the ground there is a large silver jewellery collection for every part of the body from different parts of India, especially tribal areas. There is also a separate section for gold jewellery. The basement display includes personal accessories, religious objects and a there is a section dedicated to heirloom textiles to show the use of gold and silver on textiles. Keeping in mind the founder's vision of sparking awareness, interest, and providing opportunities for scholarship, the Reserve Collections are in the visual store at the basement effectively making everything available for visitors to see.

#### **5. LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is a substantial amount of research on Silver and Gold Jewellery of India. [Bala Krishnan and Kumar \(1999\)](#) explained the glorious legacy of Indian Jewellery with an ethnographic approach, providing many stories with information told by ancient travelers to India. The book celebrates the human desire to adorn. It also mentioned that amongst the many jewels with which the Indian woman adorns herself, the nose ornament is perhaps the most seductive. [Gelder \(2018\)](#) explained the significance of ritual adornment and the popular design motifs of traditional Indian jewellery in great detail. The book excels in its detailed descriptions including

*naths* from Punjab along with the grand array of images. [Ganguly \(2015\)](#) summarizes the use of folk jewellery in India, starting with the wedding jewellery of brides in the states of Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, followed by the various types of ornaments worn on head to toe by Indian women. Specific ornaments including nose ornaments of few main jewellery using states are described individually and in detail. [Ganguly \(2015\)](#) shows the great variety and beauty of the Indian nose ornaments in a form of picture documentation which has been collected over the years. It also provides the history of Nose rings from all around the world including India and documents nose rings of different parts of India and showcases some of the most outstanding examples of Nose rings from all over the country. [Barnard \(2008\)](#) draws on over 100 elegant and rare pieces from the collection of The Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The author illuminates the social context and symbolic meanings as well as the diverse techniques employed by craftsmen and how the museum's own collection itself was brought together by travellers and scholars over the years. [Untracht \(1997\)](#) combines an extravagant display and documentation of hundreds of pieces of Indian Jewellery with an illuminating discussion of how religious, social, economic, and political structure of the country have influenced jewellery design in India. It encompasses every area of the country from sophisticated urban territories to isolated ethnic communities. [Pandey \(2003\)](#) focuses on the living legacy of the traditional silver jewellery of Rajasthan combining extensive research with striking photographs to present a glimpse into the history of the silver jewellery that has always been an integral part of the state of Rajasthan.

The present study shows the exclusive selection of nose ornaments of different regions of India from the vast collection of the Amrapali Museum Jaipur that have never been documented before. The study is very specific and presents the typical nose ornaments which are vanishing quite fast from the common use over the years under social, economic, and ideological changes. The documentation preserves the Indian heritage for the benefit of the future generations.

## 6. NOSE RINGS IN INDIAN REGIONAL CULTURAL TRADITIONS AND MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

The nose ring in India represents a tradition that dates back centuries and has remained significant to the present day. In general, nose piercing has a role in beautification, but it also has a context to indicate social status. Nose ornaments are of three basic types: the stud (*laung/phul*), the nose ring (*nath*) and the septum (*bulak*). According to Hindu philosophy, Nose piercing has a great religious significance as well. It is a way of honouring Goddess Parvati. In Muslim culture the nose ring is considered very auspicious and an essential marriage ornament to be worn by all Muslim brides.

According to local cultural customs and economics they have many regional name variations between North and South India and can range from a modest decoration to huge and intricate ornament, which requires a chain with an end hook attached to the hair to support the weight. In some regions like Himachal, women are required to hold up the large and heavy nose ring while eating and are reminded ritually. In the North, the nose ring is generally worn in the left nostril, which indicates the woman is married and her husband is alive. In eastern Uttar Pradesh, nose ornament is not required to be removed if the woman is widowed. In the South, the nose ring is comparatively smaller, and it is usually pierced in the right nostril. Wearing a nose ring acquired a variety of interesting connotations in different communities of different states of India, apart from its indication of marital status;

therefore, eight states from each part (North, West, East and South) of India are selected to study the amazing range of styles and sizes of nose ornaments and understand their cultural and historical significance.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** States of India Selected for the Study.

**Source** Created by authors.

Amrapali museum houses several types of Indian jewellery and plays a significant role in popularizing it across the globe. It has an extensive collection of rich history that has paved the way for the modern and contemporary aesthetic. The museum is dedicated to Indian silversmithing and goldsmithing. The museums are imperative as the ancient objects can be within the reach of all and everyone can have access to the cultural heritage of the existing or sometimes missing communities of India. The study is situated within the context of cultural significance of Nose ornaments in India, but it also explores the importance of Museum collections that can be seen by the visitors, students, researchers from around the world wishing to share a moment of cultural enrichment and learn about the rich heritage of the country.

## 7. OBJECTIVES

- To identify the historical and cultural aspects of museum collection.
- Analyzing regional traditions pertaining to the practice of wearing nose rings in India.
- Showcasing some of the unique illustrations of region wise nose rings collection of Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

## 8. METHODOLOGY

For qualitative analysis, twenty nose rings from different states of India were selected from the vast collection of the Amrapali Museum to understand the difference and similarities of their craftsmanship from different regions of India.



The selection of the nose rings from north and west specially Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan are more and are not proportionate because of more tribes and accessibility to them in those areas as compared to other regions. The qualitative analysis includes personal interviews with the founders of the Amrapali Museum, Rajiv Arora and Rajesh Ajmera about the history and significance of collection in the museum and Interview with renowned mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik, who wrote a book Adornment of Gods on the Museum collection recently. The authors have been closely associated with curation of collection of Amrapali museum and a close understanding of the pieces has evolved through continuous involvement with documenting collections at the museum.

## 9. SELECTION FOR THE STUDY

It is also not generally possible to allocate the different types of nose rings to specific Indian regions; they are more concerned to the level of the society and the financial means of a woman than to the area she is living in. A systematic catalogue of Indian nose rings must remain rather indeterminate because the types are not all specific to a certain area and many crossovers have happened. Nevertheless, the present study shows the region wise categorization of nose rings in India by careful selection of twenty nose ornaments from the vast collection of jewellery of the Amrapali Museum, Jaipur. From North, states of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab have been selected, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Sindh from the West. Though Sindh is now in Pakistan, but its borders touch Rajasthan and Gujarat and it was part of undivided pre-partition India. There is a lot of cultural similarity between these regions hence it has also been included. Sindh nose rings bear quite spectacular and elaborate designs. Madhya Pradesh from the Central, Odisha from the east and Karnataka from the South have been represented in the selected pieces. The selection of the regions has been made to highlight the nature of representation in the collection of the museum. It represents regions from all major parts of India. The entire collection has been adequately represented in the twenty pieces under study. The museum has a larger collection of nose rings from Himachal, Rajasthan and Gujarat compared to other regions. Therefore, nose rings that showcase distinct craftsmanship and artistic tradition have been included in the sample. The samples with almost similar characteristics have been excluded to make the cultural and historical analysis more rigorous and sharp.

**Table 1**

Region of India	State (s)	Total Number of Nose Rings at Amrapali Collection	Number of Nose Rings Selected
North	Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab	17	7
West	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Sindh	17	7
Central	Madhya Pradesh	2	2
East	Odisha	5	1
South	Karnataka	7	3

## 10. NOSE RINGS FROM AMRAPALI MUSEUM COLLECTION

Twenty nose rings have been selected from the collection of the Amrapali Museum from the North, west, central, east, and south part of India.

- 1) Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab from the North India
- 2) Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Sindh from the West India
- 3) Madhya Pradesh from the Central India
- 4) Odisha from the East India
- 5) Karnataka from the South India

## 10.1. NORTH INDIA

### 10.1.1. LADAKH NOSE RING

#### 1) Lahaul-Spiti, Nose Ring

Figure 2



**Figure 2** Silver Nose Ring from Lahul Spiti  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 2 depicts a nose ring with seven silver beads of different designs, two coral beads and end-discs strung on a silver wire. An elongated flat piece with delicate granulation and filigree work adds charm to this nose ring, worn by upper class women in Lahul and Spiti area. An extra silver chain or a leather strap, fastened to the hair, gives support to this rather heavy nose ornament. Making silver beads is an exquisite craftsmanship of the silversmiths of the Lahul Spiti region of Himachal.

Its Himachal Pradesh variant has coloured glass pieces instead of the natural red coral beads. The usual practice entailed nose rings to be worn in left nostril by married women. Once a woman was widowed, her nose rings were discarded. Coral beads were procured from nearby Ladakh region, Ladakh region is known for turquoise and coral beads, used abundantly in local jewellery.

#### 2) Ladakh

Figure 3



**Figure 3** Silver Nose Ring from Ladakh  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 3 displays a solid silver nose ring made of two cylindrical forms having granulation work with tiny spikes protruding on both the sides, flanking a round natural coral. It was considered auspicious. In debased versions coral was replaced by red beads of wood or glass. Locally produced wooden or glass beads were used by the nomadic and not so prosperous tribal communities.

### 3) Himachal Pradesh

Figure 4



**Figure 4** Silver Nose Ring from Himalaya Region  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 4 shows Nose ring (*Nath*) with textured silver beads and blue and red glass inlaid in silver frames. The most spectacular and amazing *nath* have a diameter of 12 cm and more and weigh more than 20 g. The weight was usually relieved by a support chain which is hooked to the hair above the ear. These types were worn by the Gaddi and other Pahari from Chamba to Lahaul and Spiti.

### 4) Himachal Pradesh

Figure 5



**Figure 5** Gold Bulak or Kundu from Himachal Pradesh  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 5 presents one typical *bulak* design of Himachal Pradesh with a large crescent, made of finest granulations and decorated by enamel. It is topped by a pointed triangle in the middle which can be interpreted as a tree of life. This form of



nose ring hangs below a hole pierced through the septum of the nose and can range from being a modest ring to a large ornament, which might cover the mouth and need to be lifted when eating. Sometimes a *bulak* is called a *nathni*, denoting a smaller size.

## 5) Himachal Pradesh

Figure 6



**Figure 6** Gold Bulak from Himachal Pradesh  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 6 shows a very refined and elegant development of the crescent form bulak from Rampur and Kinnaur area of Himachal Pradesh. Long dangling arrangements of gold leaflets are attached, resulting in a long, delicate, and fragile but beautiful design. The pattern of the leaf is a recurring feature in most of the jewellery items in Himachal.

## 6) Punjab

Figure 7



**Figure 7** Nath from Punjab  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 7 shows a gold nose ring in the form of an elegantly curved fish carrying a peacock made in *kundan*-set with cabochon rubies and moonstones with white and turquoise glass beads suspended below. The upper part has stylized bird design. The small pendant flower in the center is set with cabochon rubies and moonstones. The elaborate chain is fixed to the hair to give support to the weight of the *nath*. This specific design of fish carrying a peacock is worn by women of the Sikh community in Punjab.

## 7) Punjab

Figure 8



Figure 8 Nath from Punjab

Source Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 8 portrays a hoop nose ring with pin clasp. Curve made in shape of a fish body and dragon face embellished with blue and pink glass beads. Upper body of the animal is decorated with a foliate pattern and embellished with faceted glasses. Lower body has a carved out line of leaves with rubies inlaid. Fastening pin has two birds on either side with a star moon hanging and white, red beads. A chain for hair fastening is made with 5 floral units with leaves hangings attached to thin chains ending to a hook.

Traditional nose rings in both silver and gold are still worn in Himachal Pradesh for festivities and marriages. Customs and designs can be seen and are still very much alive in the remote valleys of the high mountains. Silversmiths of Himachal Pradesh are known for crafting ornaments which have a very delicate and intricate appearance. But mostly all types of nose rings are worn in this state, i.e., *nath*, *bulak*, *phul*. For example, Women from Chamba region wear big *nath*. *Bulak* are worn in the Kinnaur area. *Phulare* worn by all Pahari women in both silver and gold often at both nostrils.

A big sized hoop *nath* called as *Shikharpuri nath* with different motifs is a part of the Punjabi culture, which is worn by the bride and other women of the house during a wedding ceremony. It is also said that when the girl child was crossing her childhood her nose was pierced with *tilli* (simple wire of gold). After that a small *kaka* (nose pin) was put in the nose. During marriage the beautiful nose ring was given to her by her in-laws.

## 10.2. WEST INDIA

### 1) Rajasthan

Figure 9



**Figure 9** Nath from South Rajasthan  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

**Figure 9** illustrates a gilded nose ring (*nath*). A number of glass pieces, gold gilt cylinders with granulation work, glass beads, pearls, and an elongated unit with hanging pearls make this nose ring precious and highly valued. Being of extraordinary craftsmanship and having real pearls, it was probably worn by upper class Hindu women on festive occasions.

### 2) Rajasthan

Figure 10



**Figure 10** Nath from Rajasthan  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

**Figure 10** depicts *nath* made with a leaf-shaped frame having green glass inlaid and circular frame with red glass inlaid. Both frames have granulation work throughout. It has silver and glass beads set together below the clasp. From Ajmer to Nagaur a small nath is worn with simple, but distinctive shapes and sizes.

### 3) Rajasthan

Figure 11



**Figure 11** Nath from Rajasthan  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 11 portrays a gilded *nath* with a triangle inside the ring that are worn in the area of Chittorgarh by different tribes like *Rabari*, *Banjara*, *Doli* (trumpet player) and snake charmers. The inner triangular pattern symbolizes a pan-leaf. These types of nose rings are locally called as *kishanir-nath* as they are worn by farmers.

### 4) Rajasthan

Figure 12



**Figure 12** Bulak from Rajasthan  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 12 depicts a gold nose ring in the form of a crescent mount on a gold hoop formed by braided gold wires. It has a *jali* with trefoil turquoise inlaid in centre. A crescent is formed by joining equal sized thin wires in three concentric lines. Hoop is formed by faceted beads and coiled wires. These are worn typically only by the Bishnoi community and are locally called as *bhowria*. The spreading lines of rays which can be seen in the nose ring resemble more a rising sun than a half-moon. The Bishnoi are farmers, and they grow wheat, millet, maize, and sesame. In their communities' nose piercing is done at the age of five.

## 5) Gujarat

Figure 13



**Figure 13** Nose Ring from Gujarat  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 13 shows a nose ring with a hoop having a green bead in the center, perforated drum like structure and gilded spheres on either side of the stone. This is worn by women of *Dhaneta Jat*, not a very well-known tribe of Gujarat. *Dhaneta Jat* are one of the largest Jat communities in Kutch, who are mostly Muslims and share similar customs as other inhabitants of Kutch. They concentrate mostly in northwestern part of Kutch. The faceted beads are workmanship of Gujarat and Rajasthan region. They are handcrafted in many colours, usually, in locally sourced material. Sometimes some such beads were fashioned in silver as well.

## 6) Gujarat

Figure 14



**Figure 14** Nose Ring from Gujarat  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 14 portrays a hoop nose ring worn by *Meghwal* women in *Ludiya* most of them are weavers, near the border with Pakistan in Kutch District, Gujarat. A *Meghwal* women's status is indicated by the size of her nose ring. It has a rectangular segment in the center with spiral disks on either side. Lower edge has an amethyst with a granular disk, a faceted gold bead, and two *chakris* with green beads on either side of the stone. These nose rings with thick and hollow loops require a rather big

hole in the nostril. Gold nose ring has used a gold bead which uses the same local craftsmanship of faceted beads in other material.

### 7) Sindh

Figure 15



**Figure 15** Nose Ring from Sindh and Kutch regions of Thar Desert (India and Pakistan)  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 15 illustrates a silver nose ring made of a pipe with a stamped end disc; this hollow nose ring has two silver beads strung along with red and blue glass pieces. These types of nose rings are worn by women from Sindh and Kutch regions of Thar Desert. For women of various Islamic pastoral communities, it is a matter of special pride to wear a nose ring of sophisticated design and workmanship.

## 10.3. CENTRAL INDIA

### 1) Madhya Pradesh

Figure 16



**Figure 16** Nath from Madhya Pradesh  
**Source** Amrapali Museum, Jaipur



Figure 16 displays a gold *nath* with the typical wire decoration of the Madhya Pradesh region on either side of the gold hoop. The lower part of the hoop is decorated with irregular pearls, a green tourmaline bead and a gold rousette set with glass beads. Attached by gold wire to the hoop is a bunch of gold-wired irregular pearls, each with a gold finial around the drilled hole. With the Mughal invasion of India, Islam started to spread across the north of the subcontinent, influencing jewellery designs as well as architecture.

## 2) Madhya Pradesh

Figure 17



Figure 17 Nath from Madhya Pradesh

Source Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 17 depicts a hook clasp nose ring. It is made of a *jali* crescent below with multiple pearls hanging. Lower edge of the crescent has pearls hanging with a finial in each collet. Terminal is a six-petal flower with red and green glass inlaid. Below the fastening hoop is a bell shape hanging with pearls strung.

Large rings in Rajasthan are worn only at festival time and are locally called as *bali* and smaller one is called *naths* or *nathuri* given by parents and in-laws for the wedding. They are commonly worn by farmers and cattle breeders in gold like Gujarat and *Jat*, in Bhilwara, Udaipur and Ajmer area. The silver *naths* are worn by Adivasi only. Nose rings in both Gujarat and Rajasthan are similar as well distinct from each other in terms of designs. *Nath* are worn to ward off evil spirits and are also a symbol of marriage. *Laung* are worn also after marriage; *nath* are not taken off during the night. Girls' noses are pierced at the age of five when they get a small gold ring. Specific communities can also be identified by looking at their nose ring, e.g., the *Gurjar* milk maids, who are people with money, wear special types. The elaborate pearl nose rings of Rajasthan, worn by upper class Rajput are called '*motiwalla*'.

In Gujarat nose rings are usually huge in size, which are worn by farmers and cattle breeders. Some villagers near Kutch prefer nose studs and pins. The common characteristic is the use of gold; pearls and gems are secondary additions for getting some colour. Nose rings can be very simple yet appealing, without any special decoration. Typical examples from Gujarat are created from a slightly bent hammered plate of gold, worn in the left nostril, worn by *Rabari* girls and women or

from a tapering hollow gold sheet-tube, bent into a ring, by the farmers. They wear it either in the left nostril or in the septum.

Rajasthan borders Madhya Pradesh and has a long common Rajput history with it, so there are a lot of similarities in the designs of nose ornaments in both. But nose rings worn by Hindus are more elaborate in designs with pearls or gems, while Muslims favour buttons at the nostril which are often huge, of pure gold or inlaid with coloured glass. A woman can own nose rings of various sizes and wear them according to the occasion depending on the financial possibilities. The Marwari traders of Rajasthan do business everywhere in India and therefore brought with them new ideas and fashions as well as foreign ornaments. Hence Rajasthan is influenced by all parts of India and foreign countries in terms of craftsmanship. Weddings are another big reason for constant interchange as jewellery of one district is taken to another by brides; particularly amongst Rajput who are obliged to marry into a clan other than their own. Especially to all places where Rajput live, especially Malwa, Gujarat, UP and Oudh.

## 10.4. EAST INDIA

### 1) Odisha

Figure 18



Figure 18 Septum Ring from Odisha

Source Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 18 shows a disk-shaped nose ring with a keyhole opening for inserting in the nostril. It has a screw clasp on top with pink stone inlaid on either side. It has concentric bands along the hole. Tiny leaves, swans facing each other form the decoration on the body. Outer edges of spikes are made with gold granules. Thin gold wire supports the spikes. This *bulak* is from Odisha and is worn in septum and sometimes combined with two knobs (nose studs on both sides of the nose) in the nostrils.

The habit of wearing nose rings is still fashionable in rural areas of Odisha. In these areas women adorn both nostrils with a round or long plug or they use little gold cones and hang a small nose ring from the septum. Septum rings are usually made of gold with a central red or white stone.

## 10.5. SOUTH INDIA

### 1) Karnataka

Figure 19



Figure 19 Nose Ring from Karnataka

Source Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 19 shows a Nose ring made in shape of a crescent *jali* formed by joining thin snaky texture forming tiny sections. Each section has a granule soldered in it. Each side of this *jali* has a gold *chakri* mount, one with red stone inlaid and other with green stone inlaid. Inner rim has a gold peacock sitting and facing behind. Outer rim has 16 collets attached each with a pearl suspended through thin gold wire with a gold band and granule on the other end. Karnataka experienced a long Muslim influence by the ruling Sultanates and its partial Muslim population. This clearly shows in elegant designs of delicately made nose rings, using pearls and gems for embellishment.

### 2) Karnataka

Figure 20



Figure 20 Nose Ring from Karnataka

Source Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 20 illustrates a nose ring with a flower in the center made with garnet inlaid and set in a circular frame. Three tri granules on either side and floral stamp,

two on top one at bottom. There is a diamond cut mount on top made with granules. Below is a round solid bead with two circular disks on its either side with a faceted drop/pendant.

### 3) Karnataka

Figure 21



Figure 21 Nose Ring from Karnataka

Source Amrapali Museum, Jaipur

Figure 21 depicts a nose ring with two garnets inlaid one after another extending to a lapis bead encased in frames of concentric rings. It has a hook fastening at the back. These typical nose rings are small ornaments which are fixed in the left nostril by a decorative, gently curved look. These are mostly worn in Coastal district in South Karnataka. All things considered nose rings are much smaller in the South than in the North. In Karnataka small studs or stickers are worn for daily use mostly in the shape of the lotus flower or swan and are made in Gold. Silver is not used in Nose rings as they are generally made in gold. They are worn on both the sides of the nose or in the right nostril. The bigger nose rings are only worn by rich newly married women often insisted by the mother-in-law for the prestige of the family. The use of gold also indicates prosperity.

## 11. CONCLUSION

The study of nose rings from Amrapali Museum indicate clearly that the word 'adornment' is not simply decoration and 'jewellery' is not mere ornamentation. The paper has analyzed selected nose rings of Amrapali museum by categorizing them in different regions of India. This focused survey has brought out the cultural and historical significance of the nose ornament. A visual survey coupled with anthropological details has been used to identify, regional, social, and community markers of each nose ring. The power of wearing nose ornaments and other jewellery in India is also connected to the properties ascribed to their materials. For instance, silver as cool and gold as warm and their ability to transmit them to the wearer when worn in contact with the skin. The study brings out the adds intrinsic cultural aspects to the ritual role of nose rings. It has attempted to identify associations of a particular nose ring with a particular community of a particular region.

Even though analysing every regional variant is beyond the scope of this study, the rich collection of representative pieces of the museum brings out the cultural

diversities and similarities through the designs and craftsmanship. No element of culture is an isolated component, but it serves as a building block of a composite artistic aggregate. The study of aesthetics of nose rings provides an index to social, economic, technological, and material aspects of people's lives across different regions of India. The study makes the techniques, design sensibilities, and cultural symbolism accessible and is also a manifestation of changing aesthetics and artistic innovations. The living traditions that have been passed on from one generation to another are reflected in the nose rings worn by people. Thus, the cultural context of museum objects like nose rings are as important as their aesthetic value. The present study not only elucidates cultural significance of nose ornaments of India, but it also establishes the importance of museum for historical and cultural knowledge production. It is hoped that the study might lead the way for novel ways of visualization and display of collections.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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None.

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