

JEWELRY CULTURE IN UTTARAKHAND: CURRENT-DECADE TRENDS IN GARHWAL AND KUMAON

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ABSTRACT: Uttarakhand, popularly known as Devbhoomi, is renowned not only for its sacred temples, spiritual heritage, and rich cultural traditions, but also for its distinctive jewelry culture that reflects the identity of the Garhwal and Kumaon regions. Over the current decade, traditional ornaments such as nath, pauji, galobandh, bichuwa, karnphool, and chandrahar have continued to hold cultural significance while simultaneously evolving in design, material, and usage. This study explores the contemporary trends in the jewelry practices of Uttarakhand, highlighting how local artisans, cultural festivals, tourism, and modern fashion influences have contributed to the preservation and transformation of these age-old adornments. The research also examines how increasing global recognition driven by tourism and digital platforms has elevated the visibility of Uttarakhand's jewelry traditions. Overall, the study provides insights into the blend of tradition and modernity that characterizes the jewelry culture of Garhwal and Kumaon in the present decade.

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Introduction: The Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, comprising the culturally rich regions of Garhwal and Kumaon, is celebrated for its vibrant traditions, spiritual legacy, and distinctive artistic expressions. Among its most treasured cultural elements is the traditional jewelry that reflects the identity, social belonging, and aesthetic heritage of the Pahari communities. Crafted primarily in gold and silver with occasional use of brass to enhance durability, these ornaments have been preserved through generations by skilled local artisans who continue to maintain their originality and traditional craftsmanship. Jewelry in Uttarakhand is not merely an adornment; it is an integral part of ceremonies, festivals, daily attire, and social customs. Women in both Garhwal and Kumaon are known for their preference for bold, oversized ornaments that symbolize elegance as well as cultural pride. Certain ornaments hold deep emotional and social value, such as the iconic large nose ring inherited by brides from their maternal families, a precious symbol of status, blessing, and tradition. The region offers a diverse range of jewelry items, each with a unique design, purpose, and cultural significance. The Bulaq, once an essential nose ornament in Garhwal, Kumaon, and Jaunsar, is now a rare but iconic piece known for its detailed craftsmanship. The widely admired Nathuli, a heavy pearl-studded nose ring, represents regional identity, marital symbolism, and

family prestige. The Tehri Nath, characterized by its large size and exquisite kundan work, remains one of the most cherished bridal ornaments of Garhwal. Neck ornaments such as the Chandrahaar, with its elegant golden bead chains, and the Sikka Mala, crafted using old coins, reflect a blend of tradition and regional aesthetics. The Hansuli, a minimalistic silver collar, is popular not only in Uttarakhand but across the Himalayan belt, while the Galabandh choker showcases elaborate gold and gemstone artistry, especially in Kumaon. Hand and foot ornaments also hold cultural relevance. The Pahunchi, a golden beaded bracelet filled with lac, is a preferred ornament among Garhwali women, and the Paiji (anklets) continue to be a ubiquitous part of traditional attire. The Bicchi/Bichhua (toe rings) and Kamarbandh (waist belt) further enhance the traditional look, each carrying a symbolic meaning associated with grace and femininity. Earrings such as Kanfool and Murkhelai, designed with floral motifs and dangling beads, add elegance to the traditional Pahari appearance. The jewelry of Uttarakhand represents a vibrant fusion of artistic skill, cultural symbolism, and historical continuity. Even in the current decade, these ornaments remain significant, adapted in modern forms yet deeply rooted in heritage. This introduction provides a foundation to explore how these traditional jewelry practices have evolved in Garhwal and Kumaon, reflecting

both continuity and change in contemporary times [1,2,3].

The Ornaments Of Uttarakhand

The ornaments of Uttarakhand are renowned for their uniqueness, cultural depth, and artistic beauty. The traditional goldsmiths of Garhwal and Kumaon have preserved centuries-old designs, continuing to craft jewelry that reflects the region's heritage. These ornaments are primarily made from gold and silver, often enhanced with brass or copper overlays to increase their durability and aesthetic appeal. In Uttarakhand, jewelry is deeply intertwined with personal adornment, cultural identity, and social customs, making it an inseparable part of the region's traditional attire. The historical connection between humans, beauty, and adornment traces back to ancient times. From the moment early humans began appreciating their surroundings, they also developed a desire to beautify themselves. The transition from natural ornamentation to crafted jewelry mirrors the evolution of human creativity and aesthetic consciousness. Cave paintings such as those found in the prehistoric regions of Europe provide early evidence of artistic expression, indicating how deeply the sense of beauty and craftsmanship was rooted in human life. The journey of jewelry as an artistic and cultural symbol becomes more pronounced with the rise of the Indus Valley Civilization. Here, artisans moved beyond stone and learned to work with metals, bake clay, and sculpt intricate figures. Many excavated figurines from this era are adorned with detailed ornaments, revealing that jewelry was not limited to human use but also represented an idealized form of beauty in art. The materials used, such as copper, bronze, gold, silver, shells, and ivory, reflect the technical advancement of that period. According to Vasudev Sharan Agarwal, archeological findings include rings made of gold, silver, copper, bronze, and shells; beautifully crafted bangles; and finely decorated bracelets. Women in less affluent households used terracotta ornaments, while ivory crafting (dental craft) also became common. Conch shells imported from regions like Iran and the Gulf of Mannar were used to create elegant jewelry. Gemstones such as sapphire, topaz, coral, and crystal became popular during the Shaishunaga and Nanda periods, indicating the progression of material experimentation and ornament-making skills. Evidence from the Shunga period demonstrates the growing artistic sophistication. In the carvings on gateways and pillars, trees, serpents, and deities are depicted adorned with elaborate jewelry. Descriptions of layered necklaces, pearl garlands, and intricately inlaid ornaments reveal the detailed craftsmanship of that era. Similar artistic richness is seen in the Sanchi

Gateways, where golden garlands and auspicious symbols were carved with extraordinary finesse. Excavations from Gandhara further highlight the diversity of materials used in ancient jewelry, including gold, bronze, ivory, glass, precious stones, and pottery. Glass-making flourished during this time, enabling the creation of colorful beads and decorative items. The Andhra-Satavahana era introduced innovative designs such as the Seemanta Makarika, a headdress featuring twin crocodile motifs with pearl clusters later became prominent in the Gupta period. Symbols such as Singhmukh, Kirtimukh, and Nahrmukh began appearing in jewelry, showcasing the spiritual, religious, and artistic themes of the period. Across the medieval and pre-medieval ages, artisans continued experimenting with a wide range of materials: bronze, silver, copper, glass, stone, clay, ivory, and bone. These evolving practices demonstrate the exceptional skill and creativity of craftsmen who, through innovation and artistic intuition, laid the foundation for the traditional ornaments seen in Uttarakhand today. Thus, the jewelry of Uttarakhand stands not only as an aesthetic accomplishment but also as a historical testimony to human creativity, cultural development, and artistic excellence. The ornaments crafted in Garhwal and Kumaon today are a continuation of this long and rich tradition [4,5,6,7].

Objectives

- **Document and analyze** the current jewelry trends in Garhwal and Kumaon, focusing on design, materials, and usage.
- **Compare traditional jewelry** forms with contemporary adaptations to understand cultural continuity and transformation.
- **Identify influences** of modern fashion, tourism, and commercialization on local jewelry practices.
- **Highlight the socio-cultural roles** of jewelry in Uttarakhand, including its significance in festivals, weddings, and rituals.

Material-Based Classification of Ornaments

Panajoniy-Ornaments made from animal-derived materials such as conch shell, pearls, ivory (elephant tooth), and horn.

Mulajoniy-Ornaments crafted from natural plant sources, including wood, leaves, fruits, and flowers.

Dhatuyonigat-Metal ornaments fashioned from gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, and other metals.

Vasudev Sharan Agarwal (Indian Art, p. 39) describes an ivory hairpin carved with the figure of a long-horned mountain goat as an example of the

creativity and naturalistic approach of early artisans. References from the Vedic period mention garlands made of flowers worn around the head, while Kalidasa's literature includes descriptions of floral ornaments. In the works of Bāṇa, a head ornament called Chumamani, also known as Chudamaniyakarika or Chatula Mani, is noted. Similarly, the term Muktamaya refers to a head ornament made of pearls. Ancient texts continue to reveal rich traditions of jewelry craftsmanship. Harivyaś Devacharya's Mahavani mentions a gem-studded forehead ornament called Ratnatitika, and Jayasi refers to ornaments like Motimanik. Excavations from Mohenjo-Daro have yielded pointed gold earrings, demonstrating early advancements in metal jewelry. In Kadambari, earrings made of emeralds with gold leaves that moved gently are mentioned. Ivory ornaments such as Dantpatra were also in vogue. Harshacharita describes an ornament called Trikantak, featuring an emerald set between two pearls. In Manasollas, ornaments like Mukul, studded with diamonds and other precious stones, are recorded. Jyotirishwar mentions an elaborate ear ornament comprising four diamond-studded clove-shaped designs with an emerald set between two large pearls. According to K.K. Ganguly ("The Harappa Hoard of Jewellery," Indian Culture, Vol. 6, No. 4), excavations at Harappa provide evidence of numerous diamond pieces and gold beads. These findings indicate that artisans strung beads of gold, silver, stones, and colored materials into multi-strand necklaces. Examples include 240 gold beads woven into four strings with a heart-shaped pendant of blue faience. Descriptions of jewelry in ancient texts often relate not only to the body part adorned but also to the material used in crafting them. In Bharat Muni's Natyashastra, names like Muktavali, Ratnamalika, Ratnavali Sutra, Manijaal, Suvarnasutra, Asimalika, Mani Somanak, Vayumuttha, and Pushpasutra appear, each indicating specific materials and types. Dr. Ramji Upadhyaya notes that ancient India had abundant pearl resources, resulting in numerous varieties of pearl necklaces. Necklaces with 1008, 504, 100, 64, 54, 32, or 10 strings each had distinct names. When pearls were combined with gemstones, the ornament was called Yashti; Yashti Ratnavali was used when gemstones were mounted in gold, and variants with golden pearls or alternating gemstone-pearl arrangements also existed. Manasollas mentions Varnasar, a blue ruby necklace made with thick pearls adjusted to the neck size. Other forms include Chandhai, a five-strand necklace, and Jawadh, a gold-bead necklace worn close to the neck. Dr. Gurumaita describes Suta, a silver or gold collar necklace worn tightly around the neck. Vidyapati's

Padavali references pearl, gemstone, and sapphire necklaces. In Ain-e-Akbari, a neck ornament called Guluband is mentioned, consisting of flowers shaped in gold and strung with silk thread. Texts like Varnak Samuchaya list names such as Nagodar, Motisari, and Muktika. Historical evidence from Jain literature describes bangles made from tin, lead, gold, silver, copper, iron, and ivory. References from the Ramayana and Mahabharata eras indicate the use of conch-shell bangles and ornaments studded with pearls and gemstones. Gujarati and Hindi literary sources mention glass bangles, which are popular even today. In Rajasthan, lac bangles were traditionally worn, later becoming a fashion symbol. Manasollas also records various ornaments made from gold, gemstones, indigo, ruby, diamond, and fine gold threads. Items made from conch, shells, and crystal appear in numerous texts. Rural India also shows a vast diversity in ornament materials, some similar to ancient traditions and others uniquely local. Among the Shoka tribe of Uttarakhand, clay ornaments, considered a legacy of the Vedic era, were commonly worn and continue to be used today. Agarwal's observation about clay bangles being worn by women of economically weaker households aligns with this tradition. Silver ornaments are widely prevalent among Shoka women, along with jewelry fashioned from gold, turquoise, coral, and oyster shell, reflecting a deep emotional and cultural connection between women and their adornments. In Kumaon and Garhwal, jewelry has historically been crafted using gold and silver, often decorated with kundan and nāg inlay. Pearls are also frequently used. Unlike Rajasthan, Uttarakhand does not produce lac bangles, though lac is used to fill hollow beads in ornaments such as pahunchi. Glass pieces set in rings and colorful stone beads are common among women of the general class. Necklaces with chareu beads are especially popular in mangalsutra. Crystal, glass, copper, and bronze are also widely used. The Buksa tribe, similar to the Shoka, traditionally wore ornaments made from bone, stone, clay, pearl shells, coins, brass, and copper materials, often preserved in historical accounts. Today, with increased mobility, mass education, and the influence of modern fashion, jewelry trends across India have become more uniform. Although traditional ornaments remain culturally significant, contemporary designs, artificial jewelry, and modern aesthetics have become increasingly popular. Yet, the enduring appeal of ornaments both as adornment and as expressions of identity continues just as strongly today as it did in the Indus Valley Civilization.

Types Of Jewelry

Jewelry has always been an exceptional medium of human adornment. Since ancient times, people have

shown a natural inclination toward decorating and beautifying their bodies an impulse that can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilization, where various cosmetics and ornaments were in use. This innate desire for beauty gradually evolved into a rich tradition of personal adornment, becoming a significant subject of art, literature, and cultural history.

Traditionally, ornaments were broadly classified into two main categories:

1. **Sambhar** – Ornaments worn externally or placed upon the body.
2. **Bandh (Bandhaniya)** – Ornaments tied securely onto the body.

In *Bharata Muni's Natyashastra*, jewelry has been further categorized into four distinct types:

1. **Aavedhya** – Ornaments worn through a piercing, such as earrings or ear studs.
2. **Bandhaniya** – Ornaments tied around a body part, such as armbands (bajuband), hair ornaments, or forehead decorations.
3. **Prakeshya** – Ornaments slipped onto a limb, like bangles or bracelets.
4. **Aarodhyam** – Ornaments that hang or are suspended from a body part, such as necklaces, garlands, or long chains.

Throughout various historical periods, scholars and writers have documented ornaments in different ways.

For example, **Jayasi's Padmavat** mentions twelve types of jewelry, while **Rupa Goswami's Ujval Neelmani**, *Sursagar*, and even the **Ain-i-Akbari** record as many as 36 different types. However, the most practical and widely accepted method of classification is based on **body parts**, as it includes all kinds of ornaments used for bodily adornment. It is also significant to note that the tradition of ornamentation has never been limited to women; historical evidence shows men too adorned themselves with jewelry.

Based on body parts, the main categories of jewelry are as follows:

1. **Head ornaments**
2. **Ear ornaments**
3. **Nose ornaments**
4. **Neck ornaments**
5. **Waist ornaments**
6. **Arm and wrist ornaments**
7. **Foot ornaments**

This classification provides a comprehensive understanding of the vast and diverse traditions of jewelry that have developed from prehistoric times to the modern era.

Head Ornaments

Head, hair, and forehead ornaments form an important category of traditional jewelry. Archaeological findings reveal that the practice of adorning the head and hair dates back to ancient times. A statue excavated from the Harappa mound shows intricately embroidered bands fastened with a *paat* (front band) worn across the forehead. Many sculptures also depict buns secured with such *paats*. A white stone figurine even shows a carefully carved braid at the back, confirming the early importance of hair styling and head ornamentation. Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa have yielded *patraks*, ribbon-like bands used for tying hair. These *patraks* or *paats* have fine holes at both ends for fastening. Due to the tradition of tying hair in a bun, various types of hairpins (*kante*) have also been recovered from these sites. Numerous clay female figurines are adorned with head ornaments. A significant example is the copper statue of a dancer from the Indus Valley Civilization; her arms are covered with *katakavalli* or *bangdi*, referred to as *khadayah* in the Rigveda. She is also adorned with a necklace, an armband, and anklets, evidenced by holes drilled around the ankles of some stone statues. Another statue from Mohenjo-Daro depicts a fan-shaped head covering, secured by a *paat*. These findings demonstrate that head ornamentation and hairstyling evolved simultaneously in ancient societies.

Vedic and Classical References

In the Vedic period, hair and head adornments were well developed. The Rigveda mentions two important ornaments for women:

- **Kurir** – a type of crown or upright ornament, which scholars compare to the peacock-feather-like headdress seen in Harappan culture.
- **Opash** – likely a headband similar to today's *bindi* band, used to wrap around the head.

Other ornaments include **Kumb/Kumba**, a head ornament common during the Panini period. Floral garlands worn on the head were known as **Strag**, and the decorative mark on the hair parting was called **Lalatika**. *Bharata Muni's Natyashastra* also mentions several head ornaments such as **Chudamani**, **Shirshajal**, **Muktajal**, **Venikajj**, **Shikhapaash**, **Shikhajaal**, **Shikhipatra**, etc. Sculptures from the Mathura and Kushan periods also display similar ornamentation. In *Kapisha*, a woman's bun tied with a silk cloth is a noted example.

Floral Ornaments

Floral decorations were widely used for hair adornment. Flowers were braided into the hair or worn as garlands. In South India, floral ornaments remain exceedingly popular. Kalidasa's works

provide poetic descriptions of women beautifying their hair with flowers, for instance, Shakuntala's adornment with *Shirish* blossoms. Ornaments such as **Choodamani**, **Simant Chumbi**, **Choodamani Karika**, and **Chatulamani** (as per Vasudev Sharan Agarwal) are associated with forehead or hair-part decoration. The crescent-shaped forehead ornament, **Shashikala**, was worn by women. Among head ornaments, the **teeka** hanging at the center of the forehead is one of the most enduring. In Rajasthan, the **Bor/Bodla**, a dome-shaped forehead ornament, is widely worn. Similar ornaments appear in Mathura and Kushan sculptures, Ajanta paintings, and descriptions by scholars.

Varieties Across Literature and Regions

Texts such as *Manasollasa*, *Prithviraj Raso*, and *Varnaratnakar* mention many types of head ornaments: **Hans Tilak**, **Dandak**, **Choodamandan**, **Path**, **Chudibhushan**, **Ambeal**, **Banwar Mukut**, **Mauli**, **Chunaamani**, **Ujjwal Neelamani**, **Gofna**, **Chaku**, **Trisanthiu**, **Sauthau**, **Rakhdi**, **Sheeshphool**, etc. In Islamic and Christian traditions, similar ornaments include: **Shirsha Phool**, **Moti-Manik**, **Shees-Sifulani**, **Chandrika**, **Mukta Mala**, **Kamaluyukta Chhatra**, **Bandiya**, **Mendi-Bandi**, **Lar**, **Alkawali**, **Chandrama**, **Choti**, etc. Regional variations across India's states and tribes also contribute numerous local names to this category.

Ear Ornaments

Ear ornaments form another essential category of jewelry. Their use dates back to ancient times, and early examples show that both men and women adorned their ears. A clay female figurine from Mohenjo-Daro shows a tassel near the ear, attached to the leaf-like head ornament. She also wears earrings. Gold, cone-shaped *kulfi*-like earrings have been discovered at both Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, featuring a loop for fastening, indicating widespread use. Archaeologists have also found leaves used as earrings, remaining on the bodies even after death, a practice still observed in many cultures. Nose ornaments, however, are absent from ancient findings; nose pins and *nath* became common only after the arrival of Muslim influence in India.

Historical and Classical References

A statue from the Shring period depicts a figure wearing *kundal* (earrings). The image of Goddess Sri Lakshmi from Kosam shows her adorned with elegant ear ornaments. A dancer figurine displays asymmetrical earrings, round in the right ear and drum-shaped in the left showing early experimentation with design. Gold-studded earrings found in the Shaka-Kushan excavations demonstrate advanced craftsmanship.

During the Vedic period:

- **Karnashobhana** – worn by men.
- **Suchakram** – worn by women.

According to the *Granth Sutras*, an ornament that fully covers the ear is *Karnaveshtak*. In the Panini era, ear ornaments were known as **Karnika**, while Buddhist texts mention **Karnotpal** and **Manikundal**. Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* lists ornaments such as **Patrakarni**, **Karnamudra**, **Karnotkilak**, **Karnapur**, etc. Other classical names include: **Karendu**, **Shrinkala**, **Dwirajik**, **Vajragarbha**, **Mukutakantak**, **Lalitik Patre**, and **Pashya**, among others. Throughout history, **Kundal** has remained one of the most universal ear ornaments, worn by both genders.

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Nose Ornaments

Nose ornaments include all jewelry worn on or around the nose. Unlike head or ear ornaments, references to nose jewelry are not found in very ancient Indian literature or art. Bharat Muni's *Natyashastra* also does not mention them. Sculptures, wall paintings, and miniatures up to the 8th-9th century show no evidence of their use.

According to Dr. P. K. Gode, nose ornaments began to appear around the 11th century. Some early references include:

- Naasavanshavinirmukta-Muktaphalam in Vilhana's 11th-century text
- Naasā-anguri in Lakshmandeshikā
- Naasāgra-muktaphalak in Vaidyanatha's 13th-century work
- Naaki Moti in Leelacharita
- Mentions in Vallabhdev's Subhashitaavali

No nose ornaments appear in ancient sculptures from Bodhgaya, Sanchi, Mathura, Ajanta, Ellora, Bhubaneswar, or Udayagiri. Scholars believe Indians adopted the "nath" (nose ring) under Muslim influence, as early examples appear in Puri and Rajputana architecture. Historians like Prof. Mohammad Habib and Dr. Chopra support this view. Foreign travelers such as Tavernier and Edward Moore also mention the ornament coming from Arabia or Persia. In the Mughal period, texts like *Ain-e-Akbari* mention several nose ornaments, including **Besar**, **Phuli**, **Laung**, and **Nath**. Hindi literature also refers to **Nath**, **Nathuni**, **Jhulni**, **Nakamoti**, **Laung**, **Latkan**, etc. Miniatures from the **Pahari**, **Rajasthani**, and **Mughal** schools often depict women wearing the **nath**. The famous Kishangarh painting "Bani Thani" is one example. In **Nathdwara** paintings, **Radha** is shown wearing a nose ring. In the **Himalayan** regions, women traditionally wear very

large nose rings supported by a string of pearls or beads tied to the hair. Tribal women also consider the nath their primary ornament. The Shoka tribe is one example where nose rings are part of traditional attire.

Neck Ornaments

Neck ornaments include jewelry worn around the neck or on the chest. Neck decoration is one of the oldest forms of adornment, seen from the Indus Valley Civilization onward. Beautiful necklaces, garlands, and chains have been made throughout Indian history, inspiring even modern designs. Excavations from Harappa revealed gold and bead necklaces, showing an early tradition of elaborate jewelry-making. Common names such as mala, kantha, and necklace existed in all periods, though their forms and materials varied. In the Vedic era, items like mala, nishka, and hiranyaurvashi were used. Later literature mentions many other varieties of kantha-sutra, vilambhaar, ratnavali, malya, etc. Indus Valley idols show women wearing multiple necklaces, including long mahahaar pieces reaching the waist. During the Mauryan and Shunga periods, heavy necklaces like the griveyak, vanmala, and amulet garlands were popular. Gandhara and Mathura sculptures also show intricate neck jewelry. Kalidasa's works describe many types, such as taarhaar, haarshekhar, muktakalap, lambhaar, and others. Medieval texts like Manasollas, Varnaratnakar, and Ain-e-Akbari list numerous varieties such as guluband, hans, hamel, navlakha haar, motiyahaar, rashan haar, etc.

Across regions and communities, neck ornaments have developed countless distinct forms, worn by both men and women.

Hand Ornaments

Hand ornaments include jewelry worn on the arms, wrists, palms, and fingers. The famous bronze "Dancing Girl" statue from the Indus Valley, wearing bangles, shows that this tradition is extremely ancient. Common hand ornaments include bangles, bracelets, armllets (bhujband), kada, kangan, etc., worn by both men and women. Ancient literature and sculpture from the Vedic period to the Maurya, Shunga, and Gupta eras provide abundant evidence of their popularity. Bharat's Natyashastra mentions wrist ornaments like valaya, barjur, and svechhitikya. T. N. Mukherjee classifies arm ornaments as keyur, angad, and panchak, while valaya, choor, and kankan were worn on the wrist. Rings (mudraika) also hold ritual and cultural significance, especially in engagement ceremonies.

Hand ornaments remain an integral part of Indian adornment across regions.

Waist Ornaments

Waist ornaments decorate the waist and include mekhla, kinkini, kandora, waist chains, and other styles. These have been fashionable since the Indus Valley Civilization. Harappan finds include elaborate belt-like ornaments. Mauryan and Shunga sculptures often depict waist belts. Vedic texts mention nivibandh, varunpaash, rashna, etc. Later works refer to , etc. Radha and Krishna idols frequently show girdles or waist chains. Indian god and goddess sculptures highlight the significance of waist ornaments. Today, these are often worn more for fashion than tradition.

Foot Ornaments

Foot ornaments include jewelry worn on the toes and ankles. India has a very old tradition of beautifully designed foot jewelry, such as payal, bichhiya, anklets, jhanjhar, ghungroo, etc. Various regional names payjeb, jhanjhne, ghunghria, panjaniya, khadua, etc., show the widespread use of these ornaments. Foot jewelry is often associated with classical literature, music, and dance, such as in songs like "Pag Ghungroo Baandh Meera Nachi Re." Sculptures from the Shunga and Kushan periods show women wearing toe rings and anklets. In many Indian cultures, the toe ring (bichhiya) is a symbol of marriage. Across regions, styles, and names differ, and in modern times, these ornaments are widely used as fashion accessories. The only exception is tribes such as the Shoka tribe of Uttarakhand, whose traditional clothing covered the feet, so foot ornaments were not worn.

Significance

- **Cultural preservation:** Helps document Uttarakhand's rich jewelry heritage and regional variations for future generations.
- **Economic insight:** Provides understanding of the role of jewelry in local craft industries and livelihoods.
- **Tourism and promotion:** Highlights the unique jewelry culture as a cultural attraction for domestic and international tourists.
- **Fashion and identity:** Explores how jewelry continues to serve as a medium of identity, status, and aesthetic expression.
- **Academic contribution:** Supports anthropological, art historical, and cultural studies on Himalayan communities.

Findings

- **Persistence of traditional forms:** Traditional jewelry such as *Hansuli*, *Bichhiya*, *Chank*, *Patth*, and *Bangles* is still worn, particularly in rural areas and during cultural events.

- **Modern adaptations:** Contemporary designs often combine traditional motifs with modern materials like artificial stones, alloys, and glass beads.
- **Regional variation:** Garhwal jewelry emphasizes **silver and intricate beadwork**, while Kumaon jewelry favors **gold, lac, and floral motifs**.
- **Socio-economic impact:** Jewelry continues to reflect social status, wealth, and regional identity. Modern trends are also driven by tourism and online commerce.
- **Cultural symbolism:** Certain ornaments maintain ritual and spiritual importance, e.g., *Nath*, *Chud*, *Payal*, and *Hansuli*.

Future Work

- **Comprehensive Documentation:** Conduct detailed surveys across all districts of Garhwal and Kumaon to document lesser-known traditional ornaments and regional variations.
- **Material Analysis:** Study the shift in materials used over decades, including the environmental and economic impact of sourcing metals, beads, shells, and artificial materials.
- **Impact of Globalization:** Investigate how global fashion trends, e-commerce, and tourism are influencing traditional jewelry design and local craftsmanship.
- **Preservation Strategies:** Explore ways to preserve endangered traditional jewelry techniques and educate local artisans for sustainable cultural heritage.
- **Socio-Cultural Study:** Examine how jewelry reflects gender roles, social status, and identity among different communities and tribes in Uttarakhand.
- **Comparative Studies:** Compare Uttarakhand's jewelry culture with other

Himalayan states to understand regional similarities, differences, and cross-cultural influences.

Conclusion

The traditional jewelry of Uttarakhand is an integral part of its rich cultural identity. Admired not only within India but also globally, these ornaments reflect the region's deep-rooted heritage, spiritual significance, and artistic craftsmanship. Known as Devbhoomi, the Land of the Gods, Uttarakhand attracts visitors from around the world who come to experience its sacred temples, ancient traditions, and vibrant cultural practices. From renowned pilgrimage sites like Kainchi Dham to numerous historical temples across Garhwal and Kumaon, the region's cultural depth enhances the significance of its traditional jewelry. Together, these elements paint a vivid picture of a land where tradition, spirituality, and artistry coexist harmoniously. Uttarakhand stands as a true symbol of natural beauty and cultural richness, an invitation to explore a heavenly landscape that preserves age-old customs while welcoming the world with warmth and pride.

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