



**DRESS AND JEWELLERY OF WOMEN OF ANDHRA PRADESH AS GLEANED FROM  
GATHASAPTASATI AND SCULPTURE**

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**ABSTRACT :**

*From times immemorial women have been the torch bearers of culture. Infact, the - position and status of women in any given society generally depicts the strata of that given society. While men are more interested in striking to the political and caste hierarchy, women are more keen in preserving their social hierarchy depending upon the economic status and also the families to which they belong. This they generally keep up through exhibition, through their dress and jewellery, which often times determine their socio-economic status in society.*

**KEYWORDS :** *dress and jewellery , socio-economic status.*

**INTRODUCTION :**

For understanding the position of women in society, the major source would generally be literature and sculpture. There is very little epigraphical evidence about Andhra women. On the otherhand sculpture is more helpful since they form the visual proofs in the depiction of women folk. One can easily distinguished between women of upper hierarchy and their attendants through the profuse jewellery worn by the former as against the minimal decoration of the latter.

In this paper dealing with the dress and jewellery of Andhra women. I strict myself to the Satavahana and Ikshvaku periods. Literature and sculpture are taken to determine the status of women. We have only one literary work of the at the early period Gathasaptasati of Hala, of the Satavahana dynasty. It is a collected work whirl, (I, .tl . almost all sections of society though not in detail. In this work we find brawl!. I poet it: description of the ornaments and dress of the women of that period. Some of the and the circumstance under which these ornaments are depicted may be noted.

The use of bangles is mentioned in one of the verses of Gathasaptasati of Hula in which the poet is seen taunting an young lady who had broken her bangles which were the symbols of non-widowhood.' In another verse a lady jokes at her friend as she became so lean that her bangles became loose because of separation from her husband who went abroad on trad. <sup>2</sup>

In one of the verses the poet says that the wives of the merchants once wore gold studs and due to loss of wealth they were later forced to wear the ear-ornaments made of palm stalks.<sup>3</sup>

Another verse refers to ear ornaments studded with sapphire and the use of collyrium.<sup>4</sup>

In one verse the poet says that one of the wives of a hunter proudly decorated herself with peacock feathers, whereas her co-wives used pearls.<sup>5</sup> Another poet describes golden girdles around the waists of ladies.<sup>6</sup>

The Saptasati gives the impression that women sparsely dressed. In one of the verses the poet mentions that a royal lady covered her upper part of the body with a blue robe.<sup>7</sup> In another verse he says that bodices were also used.<sup>8</sup> Silks and coloured cloths were preferred.<sup>9</sup> Brides used to attire themselves in red silk garments.<sup>10</sup> A poet refers to plough-man's daughter-in-law who was dressed in sunflower" (coloured cloth). There are references to needles 's but not to the art of tailoring.

There are no literary works of the Ikshvaku period. For the dress and ornaments 'if the age we have to depend upon the bas-reliefs from Nagarjunakonda. We do not find any difference in the dress of royal ladies and their female attendants; both of them dressed sparsely. A perfect example of the dress of queens can be found in an unidentified sculpture wherein one is completely nude except for the decorated langoti; the other lady wears an antariya which is fastened with a waist-band round the waist; the bands on the waist are distinctly sculptured. In addition she wears a rolled scarf, stanottariya. Whose ends are senthrown on her back. These stanottariya, at times, had borders and interestingly an Amaravati sculpture also reveal a bordered stanottariya, In Some cases waist-bands are laced over the lower garments with their knots and projecting loops on the sides. The same is also depicted in the case of a queen at Amaravati. In Nagarjunakonda reliefs the queens are generally represented sitting either with the kings on the throne or on a separate honoured chair, thus distinguishing themselves from the ordinary female attendants that sit round the king's throne. In only one panel the dress of a queen is shown in a different style. In the panel depicting Dithiti Kosala Jatika, the queen of Dighiti is shown clad in a sari, tied around her loins reaching down upto the knees. The upper portion of the body is completely bare.

There is not much of a difference in the dresses of princesses and queens. But princess Devagabbha, in the panel illustrating the Ghata jataka is shown wearing a different attire. She wears a sari, covering her entire body and this is almost identical with the modern sari. There is a doubt whether it is not a stanottariya. In another panel, princess Sita (Dasaratha Jataka) wears a piece of cloth round her loins and above the knees but without a waist-band and an upper garment. The upper portion of the body is completely bare.

The dress of female chowri-bearers is similar to those of royal ladies. Of the two chowri-bearers represented on either side of queen Maya in the panel, one is standing to her right wearing a decorated langoti with a vastragranthi in front. In another panel illustrating "the

presentation of the child at the Sakya temple", the Chamaradharini who is to the left of queen Maya wears a waist-band apart from langoti. In no case an upper garment is worn.

The desire for ornaments is inherent in mankind. In the sculptures of Nagarjuna-Ic one can see that both men and women irrespective of their status in society were fond of ornaments. The ornaments used both by the aristocracy and the commoners are alike, but might have differed in the material with which they were made.

**Head ornaments :** The sculptures from Nagarjunakonda make us believe that the angle used the head dress both as an ornament as well as protection to the head i.e., a mastakabh. or mastakabhushana. Nagarjunakonda has two types : the agrapatta as an integral part of the head-dress and as a separate ornament. Being an integral part of the head-dress this ornament is generally of stripes of thin material either of cloth or metal. In case of females it is decorated with two rows of pearls, gems or beads and a pendant hanging from the centre on the forehead. Among females this usage is restricted only to royal women.

But agrapatta as a detached ornament was confined only to women. As a detached ornament it consisted of one or more strings of pearls, gems or beads. Apart from it there was another variety - a headband of lockets with pendant.

The panel "Sagata and Naga of the mango ferry" illustrates an agrapatta as a detached ornament consisting only of one row of small beads worn by a female attendant and another female playing on the harp.

**Fore-head ornament :** Nagarjunakonda sculptures are abundant in the representation of this type of ornaments. It is generally found in a disc-like or circular shape suspended from the parting of the hair by means of a chain, although this chain by itself is not seen in a majority of cases due to the use of head-dresses. .

**Cudamani :** The use of cudamani and makarika was very popular according to the Nagarjunakonda sculptures. It is worn on the parting of the hair at the back end. The best examples are found in the pratinis of the female attendants depicted in the panels. This ornament is also seen at Amaravati and Goli. At Goli this is worn by a worshipper.

**Karnasobhana :** Different varieties of ear-ornaments are profusely found in Nagarjunakonda sculptures. Circular metal rings were used by all classes of people as ear-ornaments. Female and male attendants like chama, dharinis and chamaradharas also used these ornaments. Some of the ladies used ball-like ornaments studded with gems. Another type is that which looks like an inverted pericarp of the lotus which may be compared to modern jumki.

**Neck-ornaments; Kantabh-usanas** : The neck ornaments represented in the reliefs are plenty and are found adorned by the people of all classes. They may be divided into two categories viz., the necklace (tiaras) and the necklets (kanthis). The necklaces are understood to be those which are worn loosely and freely around the neck, while the necklets can be distinguished as those which fit the neck very closely. The latter are mostly restricted to women.

In the panel "the nativity and seven steps" a lady is shown wearing a necklace consisting of three strings of beads or pearls. It is difficult to say whether the lady had a locket in the centre of her necklace. But what appears in the centre could be an oblong locket.

A string of cotton or plaited gold cord is often seen tied around the necks of the amorous ladies and female attendants like kltgdavahinis, pratikaris and chamaradharinis.

An amorous lady is shown wearing a long yagnofavita composed of pearls or ,nukta-yajnopavita. The Gathasaptasati mentions such types of sacred threads.

It is thus interesting to note that often times the artists copied the contemporary society and followed the literary works of the age. Further, a careful study of the sculptures and the literary works gives us a peep into the position of women in society.

#### REFERENCES

1. Gathasaptasati, Chapter V, Verse 37.
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3. Ibid., IV, v. 98.
4. Ibid., IV, v. 2.
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6. Ibid., III, v. 11.
7. Ibid , IV, v. 95.
8. Ibid., VII, v. 20.
9. Ibid., VI, 20.
10. Ibid, VI, 69.
11. Ibid., III, 41.
12. Ibid., VII, 20.