

CHAPTER - IV

DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

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Wearing of costumes and decking the body with ornaments have remained during passions of human beings in all ages since men developed the taste for costumes and ornaments. The people of Orissa were very fond of befitting costumes and ornaments during the period under review. The sculptures shed light a variety of costumes and ornaments put on by men and women.

The man wear a lower garment (antariya) and an upper garment (uttariya). The dhoti constituted the lower garment. The ordinary style of wearing a dhoti does not differ from the mode of the present time³⁰⁶. We come across reference to the dhoti in Mahābhārata of Sārālā Dās³⁰⁷. Its much folded ends are tucked in front whereas the folds hang down to the knees³⁰⁸. Sometimes only the left end of the dhoti is tucked up behind, and the right end is allowed to hang in graceful folds in front. The dhoti hardly reaches below the knee and the

306. R.L.Mitra, Antiquities of Orissa, Vol.I, PL.XXII, fig. 86, Pl.XXIII, fig.87.

307. Sarala Mahabharata, Sabhaparva, p.35.

308. See Photograph No.10.

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cases where it reached upto the ankle may be regarded as exceptional. To secure it a scarf is tied on the loins, the loop and ends of which fall on the left hip³⁰⁹. Sometimes a narrow strip of cloth hangs in front, with its two ends attached to the scarf. Very often a gridle is tied around the west to secure the dhoti and a long strip of cloth slings from the gridle in between the legs.

The chadar constituted the upper garments. The mode of wearing it also appears to be the same as at present day. It is generally worn across the chest, covering the left shoulder with its ends falling on the west. Thus the right half of the chest and also the right shoulder are left bare. Sometimes the chadar is folded in the middle by gathering the two ends together and then worn, the loop and the ends falling back over the shoulders.

309. B. Das, the Bhauma-karas and their times plate Male Dress.

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The Mukteśvara temple at Bhubaneṣwar has the figure of a Brāhmana, who wears a sacred thread, which passes through his left shoulders to the right side of this waist³¹⁰. The Sari temple at Bhubaneswar has also such a figure. The Konārka temple has the figure of a dwarf and the Parasurāmasvara temple has the figure of an acrobat, both of whom wear a short dhoti (ardhoruka) much above the knee. The soldiers also in the temple of Bhubaneswar wear a loose baggy trouser tied at the ankles with loosely fitting long tunic.

The women also wear a lower garment (antariya) and an upper garment (uttariya). The sadi constituted the lower garment. The reference to the sadi occurs in the Mahābhārata of Sāralā Dās³¹¹. A portion of the sādi is wrapped round the waist and the folds in it are gathered, passed between the legs and tucked in behind³¹². This arrangement offers a very efficient

310. R.L.Mitra, Antiquities of Orissa, Vol. XXVI, fig. 111.

311. Sarala Mahabharata, Adiparva, p.133
Sobhaparva, p.241.

312. B. Das, The Bhauma-Karas and their times plate
female dress.

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protection to the loins. Sometimes one end of it falls vertically behind the left leg in graceful folds. The sādī generally reached the ankle³¹³. It is secured by a gridle around the waist with its loop and ends falling on the left hip. A narrow strip of cloth hangs in the front with its two ends attached to the gridle thus making a broad loop. The griddle is exactly akin to that of the male figure. Sometimes women dressed in a close fitting tunic reaching upto the ankle. This was undoubtedly the dress of the dancing grils.

A rolled scarf (Stānottariya) is worn by woman and both its end are thrown on the back³¹⁴. Sometimes they wear a bodice (Kañchuka) with strings on both sides tied in the back. The dancing girls were in addition a long scarf, which was loosely thrown over the shoulder behind the head and passed under the arms so that its ends fluttered during a dance. Both the lower and upper garments of the female figures are very often embroidered³¹⁵.

313. See Photograph No.32.

314. See Photographs nos.11 and 12.

315. See photograph no.13.

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Sometimes, the women put on a sādī that stretches above the knee with a piece of cloth round the loins³¹⁶. There is no upper garment and the upper portion of the body is left completely bare. It would not be unreasonable to imagine that the breasts were covered with thin diaphanous cloth scarcely visible to the naked eye. Sometimes the free end of the sādī is passed over the chest, transversely leaving the breasts uncovered.

The exposition of the breasts in the sculptures need not reflect immodesty on the part of women of those times as the manifestation of modesty is of most fluctuating character. What is considered quite permissible on one occasion can after sometime be regarded as indecent. In fact, nudity does not appear to have been indecent in ancient and early medieval India. Nudity in sculptures may be due to the artistic contentions of the age as construed by A.S.Altekar. He says, "The real explanation of women appearing without

316. See Photograph No.14.

their bust being properly covered in the sculptures and paintings of India, seems to be the artistic convention of the age. Breasts are the most significant symbol of motherhood and the artist probably feels that they may be shown uncovered in the works of art, though they may be normally concealed in the actual life under a bodice or a portion of the sari"³¹⁷. This convention, he thinks "facilitated the task of fully exhibiting the beauty of the female form without suggesting any indecency and also gave the artist an opportunity to reveal different ornaments worn in the chest"³¹⁸.

The scanty information, that can be called out from the available material, shows that in the matter of dress hardly any disparity existed between the higher and lower class, either in the articles of dress or in the mode of wearing them. If any difference between the attire of these two sections of the society really existed it must have been in the material. Evidently, it is impossible to note such differences from the sculptures. It is quite likely that the higher class used finer fabrics while the lower class remained contented with the simpler variety. The rich people

317. A.S.Altekar, The position of women in Hindu Civilisation, P.344.
318. A.S.Altekar, The position of women in Hindu civilisation, P-345

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used silk cloth, which was sometimes imported from China³¹⁹. We know from the Mānasollāsa that Chinamśuka, i.e. silk garments manufactured in China, was an item of import of India from China³²⁰. Since Orissa had commercial and cultural relations with China³²¹, this Chinese silk might have made its way to the royal palaces of Orissa. Of the presents made to the Pandavas by the Kalingas, mentions is made of silk garments known as Dūkula and Kausika³²². The poor people used cotton cloth, which finds mention in the Baloda³²³ and Ragim³²⁴ plates of Tivaradeva. Sticking of various types of dresses were in vogue in the period under survey since the reference to needle and thread occurs in the said records.

319. Purusottama Mahatmya, XXXIII, 27, XI, 36.
320. Manasollasa, III, 257, 394.
321. B. Das, The Bhauma-Karas and their times, p.187.
322. M.Chandra, Geographical and Economic studies in the Mahabharata.
323. EI, Vol.VII, p.102, 1, 16.
324. CII, Vol.III, p.29, 1. 15.

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Men and women of Orissa during the period under review seem to have vied with each other in the number of ornaments to be worn in the person. S. Sulaiman says that the Indians, both male and female, decorated themselves with different types of ornaments³²⁵. In the Khandagiri and Udayagiri caves at Bhubaneswar, both male and female figures are seen wearing bejewelled tiara, dangling ear rings, broad necklaces heavy bracelets and anklets³²⁶. Varieties of these ornaments, also found at Sisupalgarah, are made of terracotta, copper ivory, bone, lead etc.³²⁷. The Vaitāl, Rājarāni, Liṅgaraja, Mukteśwara and Chausat Yoginī temples at Bhubaneswar abound in representations of various ornaments such as Kuṇḍala, Ratnahāra, Keyūra, Mekhalā, Kaṅkana, Nūpurā, etc. worn by both men and women³²⁸.

We have a number of inscriptional evidences of kings putting on crowns made of precious metals and stones on their heads³²⁹. We have also epigraphic

325. H.M.Eliot and J.Dowson, History of India as told by its own historians, Vol.I, p.39.
326. N.K. Sahu, Utkal University, History of Orissa Vol.1, p.361.
327. AI, No.5, p.89.
328. OHRJ, Vol.II, No.2, p.25, Vol.IV, No.1-2, p.37.
329. OSCRA, p.140.

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evidences of kings³³⁰ and queens³³¹ putting on necklaces studded with gems and diamonds. The Patna plates of Mahaśivagupta Yayatī make a mention of the heaps of pearls that adorned the bosom of the damsels³³², evidently in the shape of a necklace. In the Gaṅga period, we come across inscriptional references to necklaces, composed of three strings and studded with three pearls³³³, composed of five strings and made of pearls with a pendant³³⁴, composed of one string and made of pearls³³⁵. In the said period we find mentions of necklaces consisting of small beads of gold strung together³³⁶, consisting of different types of gems strung together³³⁷ in the inscriptional records.

Necklaces are broadly of two varieties - short and long³³⁸. We have plenty of illustrations of this

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330. OSCRA, p.140.
331. OSCRA, p.140.
332. JASB, Vol.1, p.11, 1, 19.
333. SII, Vol.VI, No.983.
334. Ibid.
335. Ibid. Vol.V, Nos.1189, 1227.
336. Ibid, Vol.IV, No.975.
337. Ibid, Vol.VI, No.842.
338. See Photograph no.15.

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ornament worn by both men and women. The short necklaces are tightly tied to the neck and are designed with rectangular circular or petalled beads of metal or valuable mineral stones. They are set close to each other and a line of border holds them on either side.

The long ones often run upto the chest and are suitably decorated with the both flat bands of plain metal or strings set with jewels. They are often attached with a locket or a pendant at the centre. In some varieties two circular heads flank a rectangular locket in the middle from which series of strings are hanging over the chest. In some other varieties a tabular bead at the centre is flanked by two flowers. In some forms two beaded bands forming a necklace is attached with a tringular shaped locket. In some other forms a flat bond of strings is set with a series of petal like beads in its outer band and a locket in the middle.

The high degree of skill attained by jewellers is amply testified by the intricate designs manifested in the necklaces in the sculptures of Muktesvara temple at Bhubaneswar. An Apsarā with mirror wears a type - shaped necklace and a flying Gandharva wears ancklace whose rectangular blocks are long.

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We may not be out of place to mention here that the love of garlands "the fragrance of which intoxicates the bees" is evident from the Sirpur stone inscription of Sivagupta³³⁹.

The ear ornaments worn by both the sexes are represented both in studs and round rings and are either closely attached to the lower parts of the ear or hanging from it by a hook³⁴⁰. The simpler designs are circular or square studs with or without hole at the centre. Sometimes the ear ornaments are of the shape of the disc or of a crescent. The ornaments of the ear usually simulate flowers, coiled trees, leaves and similar natural objects. The sculptures of Vaitāla temple at Bhubaneswar reveal the beautiful designs of ear ornaments. An Apasarā wears a heavy ear ornament where a bud appears below the ear, and below the bud a sunflower like ear ring hangs. Another Apasarā has an ear ornament where a flower is entwined³⁴¹.

339. S.N.Rajaguru, inscription of Orissa, Vol.IV, p.94.
340. See Photograph No.15 and 16.
341. B.Das, The Bhauma-Karas and their times, Ornaments ear.

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the central lockets are in multipetalled form and strings are fitted with bells or knots, whereas, the strands are heavy and beautiful in their designs. We also notice beautiful gridles with ornamented bands and double chords in Sun temple at Konārka³⁴⁴. The gridles in the Vaitāla temple are not ornamental in design as those in the Liᅅgaraja temple³⁴⁵. We find mention about gridless in a large number of epigraphic records of Orissa ³⁴⁶.

The female figures in Vaitāla, Liᅅgarāja, Rājarani, Mukteśvara and Konārka temples put on beautiful anklets. The bronze image of a woman discovered from Banapur belonging to the tenth century A.D. is noticed fastening her anklet³⁴⁷. A women is seen fastening her ankelt in the Sun temple at Konārka whereas, a woman in

344. See photograph No.19.
345. See Photograph Nos.20 and 21.
346. JBORS, Vol.II, P.5211. 9-12, EI, Vol.VI, P.144, 11.14-15.
347. SII, Vol.V, No.1005.

the Rājarāni temple and another in the Liṅgarāj temple are seen taking out their anklets³⁴⁸. The inscriptional evidence points out that foot ornaments were favorite among women³⁴⁹.

It is however, quite remarkable that the sculptures of ancient and medieval of Orissa do not depict any ornament for the nose. G.H.Ojha³⁵⁰ and C.V.Vaidya feel that the Indians copied nose ornaments from the Muslim invaders. Since Orissa was immune from the invasions of the Muslims till the thirteenth century A.D., the nose ornaments was not in use by the women of Orissa during the period under survey. That is why we come across nose studs in the Gajapati period³⁵¹.

The royal and aristocratic families as well as those in ordinary circumstances all used to decorate

348. See Photograph No.22.

349. See Photograph Nos.23 and 24.

350. IHQ, Vol.XXI, P.221, B.Mishra, Orissa under the Bhauma-Karas, P.66, S.N.Rajguru, Inscriptions of Orissa, Vol.IX, p.201.

351. P. Mukharjee, History of Gajapati kings of Orissa, p.149.

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their persons with different types of ornaments according
to the means at their disposal. Gold, silver and
precious stones were the chief materials for the
ornaments of the rich persons, whereas copper and
ordinary beads were used by the people of the poor
section of the society. Thus the manufacture of
jewellery was most flourishing in Orissa during the period
of our survey.
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