CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

We have in the above pages given a bird's eye view of the dress and jewellery of women of Andhra Pradesh from the earliest period to 1400 A.D. We have given a detailed critical account of the sources that we have made use of in the presentation of the thesis. We have shown how the contemporary epigraphical sources do not throw light on this aspect of social life. As already stated above, epigraphs are mere documents of events that occurred like donations made by kings, feudatory chiefs, village chiefs, individuals etc., of battles fought, where heroes dedicated their lives, of the death of religious pontiffs, specially Jaina women who committed sati, heroes who sacrificed their lives in the protection of property and women in the village, all of which could be described as memorial records. There are only a few, which eulogise men or women, more so women, with regard to their personalities, their attire and their decorations. They do not come under the purview of such records.
Interestingly, the Tamil records, specially of the Chōlas, contain eulogies, but, they too do not concern themselves with these aspects. On the other hand, they register the events, specially of the conquests made by the kings, in chronological order, so much so the eulogies are not of the same quality, but go on increasing, depending upon the achievements made by the kings. They do refer to the kings, but in most cases we are restricted to grants made by those kings. After all, this has been the subject matter, even in Telugu and Kannada records. Even there, the kings, noble ladies, heroes figure, but only with reference to the grants that they have made or to the battles that they have fought or won, donations made to the temples or the construction of temples. But, these mere statements, though helpful to a student of political history, would not be of much use to the students of cultural history. What little information is available to us, has been made use of to the extent to which we could, with reference to the subject with which we are concerned.
Different is the tale with regard to literary sources. They speak much more than the epigraphs. But, one would feel that they speak more than what is needed. They exaggerate as is prone to the poets, but their exaggerations are also limited so far as this aspect is concerned, although they let loose imagination in an effort to please their patrons and in such cases they do refer to the beauties of the queens, of the ladies, the way they wear their jewels and attire themselves. But even these references are few and far between. We have shown how these literary sources, so far as the subject matter is concerned, have been made use of by us in depicting the different types of jewels with which they embellished themselves. We have seen, for example, that the references to sarees, be they made of silk or of raw (?) materials from China, all of them come under a broad category like ambaramulu. The poets are not concerned in explaining how this cloth is worn by them, but speak only of the use. From these, we come to know the different varieties of cloth that were used in those days which throw
light on the affluence of the society in using such cloth. Here too, from the references, it becomes clear, that these were worn by the women of the upper strata of the society. What of the common folk? That they wore cloth is obvious, but being housewives engaged in the daily chores, they could not have worn costlier cloth daily and always. They must have satisfied themselves with the cotton cloth that was available.

One would imagine that they too might have made use of more eye-catching dress when they went out in company to attend marriages, festivities, and periodical festivals associated with temples and so on. After all, they too being women, had such desires and to the extent to which they could afford, they should have used such cloth. Poets may not speak, but, common sense would indicate.

The more visible evidences and reliable sources, for such a study, are the sculptures of the period. As is seen in the above pages, much emphasis is laid on this type of source material with the help of which an account is given of the dress and jewellery of
women of Andhra Pradesh, during the period of our study. A few rambling thoughts occur at this juncture. Some of them we have raised as issues in the relevant chapters, but it would be perhaps worthwhile bringing together and adding some more material to such questions for which answers are sought.

The first question to be considered is the stratification of the society, based on the study which we have made. Could we make a classification of the upper and lower classes of society, even in general terms, based on the evidence that we have got? To this the answer would be 'yes', although it may not be in capital letters. Can the chowri-bearers and ChāmaradhārinIs etc., be said to belong to the lower class of the society depending upon the dress they wore? To some extent the answer here also would be 'yes' because, the dress worn by them was not as rich with laces, strings of beads and gems, stitched into them as could be found in the case of the attire of the nobility, or the queens. We could certainly fix their place in society based upon the duties performed by
them as depicted in the sculptures, even if we cannot do so on the basis of mere dress. We have had occasion to refer to such in the sequel above.

The sculptures that we have examined definitely indicate that they wore stitched clothes. May be that the word tailoring is an art in the modern sense in which we use that term. But definitely the garments were stitched. Otherwise, how could they wear, the *stanottariyas* which are not simple pieces of cloth but stitched wear. An *uttariya* might be a cloth unstitched. Even then, the edges have to be stitched so that the end threads are held in position. They could not have worn the underwears in the form of half trousers or trousers as upper garments without their being stitched in position. Needless to say that there were experts who stitched cloth into garments. It goes without saying, therefore, that they were also conversant with cutting cloth in several designs, as we see them on the sculptures.

Here and there, however, we have traces left
behind, in sculptures of ordinary folk, wearing quite ordinary dress. Take the case of the washer woman discussed above. She wears a saree. Since she is a professionalist, she has to wear it in tune with the profession that she had followed. Invariably, if the saree below the knee is let down up to the ankle, it gets wet and soaked and would be an impediment to her work. So we find her pulling up the saree ends above the knee, tucking it up in the waist band. It accommodates her duties. How natural and how folkish it is, is only to be seen to be believed. This may be a rare instance of commonality; but it is an actual, naturalistic depiction, amazing, yet, logically befitting.

Apart from this, look at the varieties of the dress they wore, uttarīyas, stanottariyas, sarees, drawers, trousers and the laṅgūtis. We have already referred to the thin drapery depicted by the sculptor. He gave more prominence to jewellery rather than to dress. He did not intend covering the dress with jewels, as normally the case, but exhibit jewellery in preference
to dress. From this point of view, the criterion itself is different. The onlooker can understand and appreciate jewellery better than dress. Therefore, be it in Andhra Pradesh or any other part of the country, dress has had a secondary place as compared to jewellery. This brings us to the art of tailoring, whether they knew tailoring at all. The epigraphs quite obviously do not refer to it. In literature, there is a rare case of mention of a tailor, who is keen on taking measurements for stitching a blouse. This is found in Vinukonda Vallabharāya's book, *Krīdābhīrāmamu*, in which the author says that a tailor took the measurement of the bust of a prostitute to stitch a blouse.

So far as the jewellery is concerned, we are, both qualitatively and quantitatively speaking of the abundance and richness. Right from the Sātavāhana period down to the Kākatiya, women have bedecked themselves with jewellery studded with beads or gems or, pearls or, diamonds. One general factor, that makes one conscious as a consequence of these, is the richness of these precious stones, being available in Andhra Pradesh.
Gold might have been imported either from the Hatti mines, abutting Andhra Pradesh or Kolar Gold Mines a bit more distant, in the Kolar district of Karnataka. If we can surmise that the Indus people imported them possibly from these distant areas, why not Sātavāhanas who were much nearer and had closer contacts with these contemporary people of Karnataka? Bellary district itself is a part of Sātavāhana-rāṣṭra as is evident from the Hirehadagalli plates of Śivaskandavarma. Traces of Roman contacts are available in the region near the Kolar gold fields at Jālahalli, facts which cannot diminish the surmise that gold might have been imported from these regions. Diamonds were of course one of the geological products of Andhra. Beads and gems too! It is but natural that they used it in abundance.

The Ikshvāku sculptures are also to be commented upon in the same way with reference to the availability of these precious stones and diamonds. Surprisingly, the sculptures, attributed to the Eastern Chālukyan period are devoid of much jewellery. Of course,
the very attribution of these to the Eastern Chālukyas has been questioned by scholars. Yet, to whomsoever the authorship is credited, the question still remains, why these sculptures are simple and unornamented? It is difficult, in one sense, to explain this phenomenon. A surmise may, however, be made, although, the surmise itself is sure to be subjected to several criticisms.

The sculptures we have examined in the chapter above, pertaining to the Eastern Chālukyas, are by themselves puny and they could not have been burdened with profuse ornaments.

When we come to the Kākatīya period there is a learning towards plenty. We know that the Kākatīyas were the feudatories of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa and for all practical purposes, and in all fields of life, we see them following the steps of their masters, be it administration, or fine arts, or art and architecture. It is too well known to be discussed here about the impact of Chālukyan architecture and sculpture on those of the Kākatīyas. But then, the media of sculpture being what it is, the Kākatīya sculptors could
not chisel the sculptures in their natural sizes. Hence, we see them larger in scale than those of the Hoysala sculptures contemporaneous with them. The Hoysala sculptors were goldsmiths par excellence for, they had much little space to carve out decorations and so they used the art of a goldsmith rather than the art of a stone sculptor. Hence, the ornaments found worn by the women of the Hoysala period, as depicted in their sculptures, were delicate.

In contrast, we find the Kākatīya sculptures almost the same type of ornaments, but large in size, because the sculptures themselves are large. Naturally, delicacy gave place to exuberance. We find the neck ornaments or the waist ornaments rather wide, in 4 or 5 strings, fastened together to a coiled gold base. So much so, they would occupy greater parts of the body. Once again, the gems, beads, diamonds loom large. But, perhaps in terms of designs, Kākatīyas seem to overtake the Hoysalas. Look at those large garland type dresses or jewellery, which loom large before the onlooker and catch his eyes without
much strain. They seem to dazzle you.

Once again, we come to the question that we have been raising from the beginning, whether this was applicable to the women at large or they were restricted to the royalty or household. The attendant ladies on duty were after all belonging to a lower strata of society. Could they afford to possess such ornaments? It may be guessed, that, as in the dramatic companies, or even in the cine world, all of them belong to the royalty and these attendants wore them perhaps invariably, when they were on duty. So far as the general common folk were concerned, keeping in view the economic affluence either of the Sātavāhana or of the Kākatīya period, in all likelihood even the common, so-called middle class, society, women could afford to wear such ornaments. The literary sources as already discussed above seem to indicate that even the more than the ordinary women folk were acquainted with such ornaments and, if not always, at least on occasions, like festivals or other social functions, they brought out the ornaments from their treasuries and decorated
themselves. The household chores was an impediment to keep oneself always decorated. In fact, chores or no chores, it is rather difficult to imagine that even the royal ladies wore them always. They too must have used it on occasions although for them such occasions were more frequent.

In this thesis we have made an effort to give an account of the dress and jewellery of the women folk of Andhra Pradesh. We have examined the several delicate issues that arise in such a study and we have tried our best to explain the unexplained and the doubtful.