CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For the culture of any civilized country, the status of women is the index. Women are the backbone of a settled family of civilizations, be it in any part of the world. The concept of 'Ardhanarīśvara' fully depicts the status of a woman in a family of any society. In a male dominated society, it is the woman that controls the movements of the male members and holds the strings behind the curtain, as in the play of dolls in folk art. True, she remains in the background, but, it is also true that she dominates the foreground. Physiologically and psychologically too man is a slave of passions, of habits; but the woman is the balm that provides comfort, if not cure for the deficiency of male in any society. For that matter it is her physique, her beauty, her abundant patience, her energy to suffer cheerfully, carry burdens but lightly, that make her dominant in the society. History has no doubt seen Heliens, Cleopatras, Rudramadevis and much nearer, Lakshmibais, who have resurrected men
and society from chaos and destruction. Rightly, Manu has said *yatana nāryastu pūjayante, ramante tatra dēvatāh.*

In our country, woman has played such a part as elsewhere. It may be of a low key, but more powerful, colourful and impressive. In the earliest periods of our history, she has been honoured, as seen above from the quotation of Manu. She is held in a high position, though unnoticed. Yet, deeply felt, unlike in other worldcultures, we find women in India playing a focal part, right from the earliest historical periods, as an artist, as a scholar, as a ruler, and as a tapasvini. The dancing girl of the Indus sculpture has remained as the sole representative of the womenfolk of that culture. Men have been caricatured on the seals, but the women are depicted as they looked like then. And with what a grandeur, what style, what decorations, has she remained in the mind of man for centuries as an accomplished lady, while men in their hundreds have been cleanly forgotten. For, it is a culture, the refinement of a culture, that remains immortal much more than the wars or the results of the wars fought by them.
They depict deaths not palatable, but she depicts life in action. She, among the multitudes, has remained to educate posterity about the culture of the period to which she belonged. A man in her place could have been depicted with physical strength, perhaps crude ability and manliness of muscles which normally abhor an onlooker. Feninity has grace, has rhythm and peace, that sustains it rather than brute strength.

Come to the Vedic period, we have here the intelligentsia, the cream of the society. The sages of the period imagined the past, surveyed the present and browsed over the future. Gods amidst them, led them to better living, cleansing them of their imperfections. They led them to the future and made them philosophers. The Vedic literature is nothing but musings of the seers, of what they saw, of what they enjoyed, in the spiritual minds, leaving the mundane to the ordinary. Not that the mundane was unnecessary, but that it was inevitable. They wanted food enough to sustain themselves not more; they wanted clothing enough to cover themselves from the vagaries of nature, not more. But they did not bother their own physique.
otherwise. Women of the period, though not all of them, at least in a considerable number, also took to learning. They also were seers. We have a number of examples in Gārgi, Maitrāyi and so on. But, although they too had enough food to sustain their bodies and where in natural circumstances, only that much to cover their bodies with, but, they were, unlike the men, careful about their physique. They kept themselves attractive, beautiful and adorned, be it with wild flowers alone for, through an unkempt body, they could not attract the sages. They had a family life, they needed progeny and so even the most serious philosopher, tuned towards God, could be brought down to earth as in the case of Ṛishyaśriṅga.

So far as the Vedic polity is concerned, we find that it was essentially a rural polity, the kingdoms or republics, Jana, being restricted to only a few villages forming into a group. Rājan (King) was the head of the political institution, assisted by a handful of officers like the Ṛūṣhita, the mantri and perhaps a treasurer. There was no council of ministers as such in the sense in which we understand the term in the later centuries. This would show that there was not much
of a diplomatic need.

But, as centuries rolled by, we see quite a good number of kingdoms coming into existence in India, specially in the north. We know, later on, that kingdoms and republics quarrelled among themselves, the bigger, more powerful devouring the small and weaker. That is how Magadha and some other small kingdoms rose to prominence. It is the diplomacy of marriage that brought some of these pretty kingdoms into an amalgamation. Here the princesses played a major role in politics. Perhaps, for the first time, the woman assumed importance. Kautilya converts this into a diplomatic policy to be adopted by kings. Women thus get prominence. Interestingly, women also were used as spies. This would mean that, for bewitchment, the women folk were to be trained also in fine arts, music and dance. This is only a theoretical concept. There is neither literature, nor art and sculptures to support this surmise.

So far as, South India is concerned, the early Sangam works refer to accomplished ladies who cast spells among kings and nobles besides the common folk. In Tamil literature, we have plenty of references to their dress and jewellery. Unfortunately, there is a
good deal of controversy about the dates of these literary works. Tradition speaks of the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas as rulers of Tamil Nadu before the Pallavas. The Mauryan epics, no doubt, refer to Cholas and Pandyas which were outside the Mauryan empire, but, the identifications of these are difficult and scholars have failed to identify. These are all based on traditional literature. Historically speaking, the Mauryas declined and lost their empire within fifty years after Asoka's rule. Some scholars have credited Simuka Satiavahana as the person responsible for giving the last blow to that empire. But one is not sure. Even if we assume that Simuka dealt the deathblow to the Kanva empire, Simuka did not have anything to do with the vanquished territories. He moved to the Deccan to found the Satiavahana kingdom.

By this time, India had grown into an urban civilization. We see that in the period there was a good deal of overseas trade and commerce. They developed contacts with the Romans on the one hand and the Persians and others towards the west, thanks to the Macedonian invasion of Alexander. Commercially therefore,
there had now sprung up several urban centres which brought affluence to the society. Cultures of the countries beyond India, now stamped their influence on Indian culture. There was also, likewise, a similar intake of Indian concepts by them. It was a mutual give and take policy.

The Sātavāhana period in the Deccan was a period of prosperity and plenty. It was a period of contacts of cultures, as in the case of the Mauryas. Even in the Sātavāhana region the concept of royalty had undergone a lot of change. Kautilya had defined an empire the chakravartikshētra. Perhaps barring the Mauryas, with regard to others, this was only a theoretical concept. But, whether the other kingdoms developed into empires or not, that they had grown to be fabulous cultures, is certain. The Sātavāhanas excavated cave temples, though not in Andhra. They patronised Buddhism at a later stage. The stūpas, if originally existed before their period, were now embellished. The merchant class in the society wielded its influence over royalty. The royalty itself had now assumed a halo of glory and power.
The diplomacy of matrimony had now gained prominence. Women now played a prominent role. For this purpose, they were given sufficient training in fine arts. Quite naturally, decorations and embellishments in dress and jewellery were given impetus. From the Satavahana period down to the end of the Kākatīya rule the present thesis deals with this aspect of life of women in Andhra Pradesh.

All this does not mean that the common women, be it in Andhra Pradesh or elsewhere, were devoid of dress and jewellery. In the present thesis, in the sequel, we have discussed the question of the dress of the common folk and their jewellery. The inborn desire of the woman in decorating herself with ornaments is a common phenomenon although the world. The only question is one of degree. Generally, all could not afford to attire themselves with costly clothes or decorate themselves with rich jewellery. Dress in the early stages was limited only to bare necessities. Not so with jewellery. If they could afford, they could use, if not gold and precious gems etc., at least ordinary materials like copper or perishing materials like flowers. The tribal
people in the forests also had the inherent desire for decoration. But, in the surroundings in which they found themselves, they could think only of the wild flowers of the forest which too were beautiful though unrecognised. In a hunter's case, the ivory of the elephant, when killed, becomes the medium of ornamentation for his lady in love or for the hunter women in general. This is the result of the basic desire which could be satisfied naturally or by effort. For this purpose, even bones could be used for ornamentation by piercing holes in them and tagging them on to ear lobes as ornaments. Even small black or red beads could serve the purpose to satisfy their desire. As civilization progressed and there was an economic development in society, people of other classes, other than royalty, also had become affluent enough to decorate themselves with costlier and aesthetically designed and chiselled ornaments. However, we do not have much evidence to show the dress and ornaments of the common folk.

The present thesis discusses the subject of dress and jewellery of women limiting its scope geographically to Andhra Pradesh and chronologically from the
earliest period down to the end of Kākatīya rule. Although here and there, at least so far as sculpture is concerned, we have tried to make passing references to the other politically and culturally related region viz., Karnataka. A comparative study, although it has abundant material, is yet, beyond our scope. We have also not taken into consideration the dynasties of the north, since, once again, that would be much too beyond the scope.

The subject of study is interesting, but for want of clinching evidences, we tread on slippery ground. The assumptions that we have made, the conclusions that we have arrived at, are all based on solid evidences; but, evidences which are few and about which much can be said on both sides. We have made all possible efforts, with our limitations, to make a perfect study as far as possible. We do not think that the conclusions arrived at are infallible. But, we earnestly believe that we have placed a step forward in such a study, making room for others to improve, to supplement. We humbly believe that we have contributed our might to such a study.
Below we have made a critical discussion of sources that we have made use of in the present study. Then follows a bird's-eye view of the political background where we have continued our narration from where we have stopped now. The next two chapters deal with the subject. In the last chapter we have arrived at certain conclusions based on this study.

For the reconstruction of the history of India in general, and south India in particular, epigraphs form the contemporary sources. More so up to the period of 15-16th centuries. Inexplicably they are few and far between in north India. Even accepting that all the areas in the north have not been thoroughly surveyed, yet, it is an enigma which cannot be explained satisfactorily. Whereas the inscriptions of south India, as they are now today, are more than 50,000 approximately, the inscriptions of the north India do not exceed a few thousands. It cannot be explained away on the basis that many of the temples of north India were razed to the ground by the Muslim marauders. It is, of course, true that such an attack upon the temples of south India was rather quickly put an end to, thanks to the powers like that of Vijayanagara.
Epigraphs are, strictly speaking, writings on stones. But, they also include the inscriptions engraved on metals like copper, silver and golden plates, rarely though and even perishable materials like wood. In north India we have more copper-plate inscriptions than those on stone. On the other hand, in the south it is the stone that dominates. The reason seems to be obvious, that metal was rare in the south than in the north. In fact, copper mining industry was to some extent flourishing even in coastal Andhra Pradesh right up to the Krishna. This offers an explanation for the availability of a greater number of copper-plate inscriptions belonging to the Eastern Chalukyan dynasty and of the Kākatīyas. This, in fact, is also the reason why in the areas of modern Maharashtra over parts of which the Rāshtrakūtas were ruling, we find more number of copper-plates than stone inscriptions. Secondly, if the grants were made to private individuals rather than the institutions like the temples, obviously, the copper-plates being documents could be easily kept in the custody of those private individuals. Temples as institutions were not of that magnitude or that quality, in the Eastern Chalukyan or the Rāshtrakūta regions. Stone inscriptions were engraved specially as public
documents recording donations for institutions like the temples. Naturally, they were mostly engraved, either on the temple walls or on loose slabs setup in the precincts of the temples. Those in the form of herostones were naturally indeed setup in fields owned by or donated to those heroes as memorials. Documents in the strict sense of the term record transactions. They are matter-of-fact in nature recording only such of those bare elements of a transaction without exposing the mental reflections and involvements associated with such transactions. That way they are different from chronicles which contain mental reflections of authors, for, they are not merely recording the events but also express the personal impressions and opinions about those events. Hence, chronicles are classified generally under literary sources. Therein even the style, the presentation, the explanations and literary skills are considered. But, the characteristic features of the epigraphs are far different.

Normally epigraphs are royal orders issued by the kings or their deputies, by the subordinate chieftains, the village officials etc., and almost always in the
official capacity. They have a prescribed format. Unless the composer of such apigraph happens to be a poet or an individual endowed with poetic skill, we do not find literary flourishes in them. They are a class of literature by themselves where they are composed by the officials in the pay or service of royalty. They follow certain procedures, the first part of the epigraph contains the titles of the king or chief who happens to be the donor. A poet of greater skills would add, either in prose or verse, some more details eulogising the achievements, of the conquests, the battles participated, the several donations made by the donors. The operative part of the epigraph records the details about the circumstances and the nature of the gift or gifts made to the donee who is bound to perform such of those duties which entitled him for the donation and also record the blessings or the curses of the gods for the use or mis-use of the donations.

In the copper-plate grants which are almost always composed by poets, who may be sometimes poets of renown or authors of literary works, we find poetic flares
of the composers who rise to heights in the descriptions of their patrons who may be sometimes even queens. They may eulogise their character, beauty, achievements, embellishments etc... But so far as our subject matter is concerned, it is very rarely we find the personality of the royalty, let alone the common folk being eulogised. Such being the case, it is difficult to find epigraphical sources for the study of our subject. Still, we have examined a few inscriptions, in fact less than a dozen, which indirectly give us an idea of the dress and jewellery of the period, more of jewellery than dress. These inscriptions are examined in the next chapter fairly in detail.

Viewed thus, literary sources are somewhat more helpful for our study. As already noted above, the poets have to seek the patronage of their masters, be they kings or chieftains, for they give them the source for their livelihood. Since they are professional poets, it is but natural that a poet can eulogise the personal valour, beauty and embellishments of the hero or the heroine of his work, prominence of course being given to the patron. Although sometimes the subject
matter of these literary works is epic or pauranic in nature, yet, the poet cannot escape from the society in which he lives. Unwittingly, he depicts the society of his own times although he attributes it to the past. Hence, literary sources are helpful to depict the socio-economic conditions of the period to which the poet himself belongs. These are things which come within one's apprehension. Anybody can understand the description of a flood, a famine or richness in the yields due to good rains, the conditions of trade and commerce, imports, exports, way of life, food habits etc. All of them are, in one sense, materialistic and down-to-earth features. With regard to our study even here we find the limitations in the literary works. We do get references to the dress worn by the men and the women, and so far as the present thesis is concerned, women. But, yet they end up in general statements, when they say an X, Y or Z wore saree or some other type of dress depending upon the type of dress, namely the silk sarees or beaded necklaces, gold ornaments and the like, they reflect more upon the economics of the period than the grandeur, or the beauty of dress and jewellery.
These are only verbal evidences which one has to imagine. To understand beauty it should be visualised. To understand colours, they should be seen. To explain the ornaments they should be used and one has to see them used. Aesthetics can be better understood only when they are actually seen, not mentally visualised. Then alone beauty becomes joy for ever.

Literature speaks about the dress in general but not the way of dressing. Both colour and texture can be known from it. For example, Gāthāsapatasatī of Hāla mentions that the women of that period used to cover their upper and lower parts of the body with robes. He also mentions the colour and texture of the cloth worn. In another verse he mentions that the brides of that period used red silk garments. In both the cases we cannot say the mode of dress. In the same way Nannaya in his work Mahābhārataṃ says that the women of that period used ambaramulu i.e., clothes. We are not sure whether they are stitched or unstitched clothes. But, on one occasion he refers to Draupadi as Ṛkavastra. Here we can surmise that she covered her body with one single cloth. Pālkurki Sōmanātha in his work Basava-purāṇamu mentions 57 types of sarees. He also says
that the weavers of that period sometimes took 12 years to weave a saree, which indicates the workmanship and delicacy of that saree. He also does not mention the style of wearing the dress. Gōna Buddāreddi, in his work Raṅganātharāmayanamu says that the royal brides wore blouses, long silk skirts and half sarees. He also mentions nārachīrālu (sarees made of fibre) and Sītā was asked to wear them while she was going to the forest along with her husband Rāma. Thus, literature provides the information about the texture and colour of the cloth. Imagination sometimes cannot be an aid to draw the full sketch of the dress based on the above details. Sculptures are the best visual aids to fulfill this task.

In case of jewellery, all literary works speak of different metals used to make them. Generally, ornaments are divided into 5 main categories. In the present thesis head, neck, wrist, arm and leg ornaments, sometimes different names and even type of ornaments are specified. But some of the names of the ornaments are not familiar to us. Hence, they cannot be identified. If we examine the sculptures, we see innumerable types of ornaments with different fashions
depicted on them with different styles. But, we cannot identify the metal used by the people of the period. We also see the design and can even name the ornament. Here visual aids are more eye-catching and helpful to explain the design, type and even the mode of decoration. The same problem arises with regard to precious stones, pearls and beads. Literature clearly says that the ornaments are made of different kinds of pearls or beads or precious stones including their colours. But, in the sculptures we cannot say with what type of pearls, or beads, or precious stones the ornaments are made or studded. Much less can we make out their colours.

We have in our thesis made use of several literary works that give details of dress and jewellery. But, with all those details they become unsatisfactory and incomplete unless they are used.

From this point of view sculptures become visual aids. We have devoted more space for the study of dress and jewellery as depicted in the sculptures for, through them we know how they were worn and adorned. Sculptures are mute but powerful evidences for our
study right from the early periods, when people, royal or commoners, wore scanty dress and adorned themselves with simple ornaments to satisfy their aesthetic ego. To beautify oneself is an inborn sentiment both among men and women although it is greater among women. For men dress and ornaments are limited to a necessity, or utility. Not so with women who, by nature, were fond of decorating themselves. Social status never comes in the way of satisfying such an inborn desire. The affluent use them profusely, but the common folk too satisfy their desires upto the limit to which they could stretch. It was not the quantity that mattered but the quality. A wild flower in the forest could as well enhance the beauty of a woman as a flower cul­tured in a garden would.

What is more important is to know how to decorate themselves with them tastefully. A single beaded neck­lace could certainly enhance the beauty of the wearer, if the necklace is given the twists and the twinges that would add to the natural beauty of the individual. Here, it is tasteful decoration that matters, not merely the object of decoration. The sculptures give us a
clue to such decorations. Thus, sculptures to a great extent help us depict the dress and jewellery and also, if one could take up such a study, the development of aesthetic sense in the period to which the sculpture belongs. Thus, we see that sculptures of the Śātavāhana period do present jewels almost similar to the jewels that are found in the sculptures of the Kākatīya period. From this point of view, it is not possible from the sculptures to pinpoint the metal with which the ornament is made. Even with regard to beads or precious stones we are in the same difficulty. But, here we take the help of literature. The same problem continues in the case of dress. In the early periods the women wore only kachchhas, nīvis, drawers etc., and we can also see the development in the way of dressing in the later periods. But, in sculpture we cannot say anything about the colour and texture of the cloth. For this literature comes to our help. The literary works of the period tell us the material or metal with which the dresses or ornaments were made. From this it would be possible for us to identify, though not with such aptness, the material or metal of the ornament used in the sculptures. Thus, literature supplements the details for the visual evidence of the sculptures.