CHAPTER VI

COSTUMES

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Introduction

Costume is one of the cardinal necessities for a human lining. It is indeed a marked characteristic of any culture. Fashions and costumes are very interesting to observe and in fact they are the facets of the human self expression. The tastes and tendencies of an age are distinct by marked by the type of clothes a period fancies. From this point of view the illustration of costumes in the Hoysala sculptures are alluring and varying.

6.1 Royal Queens

The Hoysala sculptures divulge scanty dress for royal ladies and discloses no dissimilarity when compared to the costumes of the ladies of the lower class. The disparity in statue does not seem to have affected the style of costume and practically we find the same dress used by the queens and the ladies of the lower class. However, as in the case of kings, the queens and other royal princesses of the Hoysala sculptures reveal sparse dress. Thus, the queen, Yasodhara¹ depicted in the sculpture revealing ‘Yashoda and krishna’ offers very scanty dress. She wears only an antariya whose thick border is clearly visible **Pl.No.1.** But for this lower garment she is bare bodies. Another example of a queen’s dress is available in the panel portraying king Narasimha and his queen². She is showing wearing only a lower garment as usual.
One of the important aspects of the social life during this time was dress of the people. The variety in the manufacture and use of clothes which suited the occasion, season, age and sex shows a high sense of sophistication.

Garments were made from cotton, silk and wool. Various factors govern the nature and mode of costumes. The first is the climate of a country, the products of its industry and the natural resources available second is the psychological and social significance. The third is the philosophic view which symbolizes the mood of the wearer the fourth is the anatomic features based on the natural cut or lines of the body. The fifth and the last is the economic fact or which is no less significant for the growth and development of dress and ornaments³.

A number of insps of this period refer to the costumes and costume weavers etc. An insp from somantahapura states the use of silk cloth called as Puttiyapatta, use of sarees and cotton cloth. It also speaks of the maintenance of washer man to clean clothes etc⁴. An epigraph from Raghavendrapura⁵, records the use of loose garments of yellow silk cloth. Another inscription from Nagamangala⁶ refers to the use of a stage’s dress. Another insp from this somanathapura⁷ mentions that clothes were used for tere-sire, clothes for decoration, silk clothes of straps were used as palta-nulukas. Another insp from Alisandra⁸ mentions the use of stitched clothes.
An insp from Beluru records the use clean clothes, use of silk for umbrellas, cloth for curtains and tax on looms etc\(^9\).

Another inscription from mudahalli refers to the washerman for cleaning clothes. It is of particular interest to note that an epigraph of the place pattagarakulabhusana, Baragiriya, Somagaundana\(^10\).

A Belur record of 1139 A.D. interestingly enough speaks of the corporation of tailors of the five cities. Panca-pattana-kula sahitarappa cippigagottaligalu\(^11\). It further states, however that tailors of Dorasamudra were producers of ornamental dresses and skilled in the art of embellishing with many pieces of cloth. An insp from Doddaballapura\(^12\) refers to the preparation of woolen blankets (Kambali) made out of goat or sheep wool.

References are often found to the process of embroidering and designing the cloth. Clothes with the figures of elephants, lions, deer, swams, creepers, are referred to clothes with floral and geometrical designs such as flower buds.

### 6.2 The Royal and Divine Females

The garments of the females at Belur, Halebid and Somanathapur temples reveal more than they hide. The purpose of wearing garments seem to be to attract the lover. The customary female dress usually consisted of two and
sometimes three pieces. The ladies wore a brest band. (Kanchuka). This was made up of the finest washed silk cloth, so fine that the garment is known only after a touch. A larger number of women of high rank are seen clad only in the lower garment. A convention seems to have been established in the Hoysala art to keep the breast bare. Probably this is due to the desire of the artist to emphasise the beauty of the female form. Another reason might be the desire of the artist to draw attention to the ornaments worn at the neck, the chest and the shoulder. These practices might have resulted in the emergence of a convention in art to exhibit the charm of the female figure.

The Hoysala artists are reluctant to allow the female to cover even the region between her navel and the ankles. The thighs are handled most caressingly, so also the portion below the knee. The beauty of the buttocks, the thighs and the legs is revealed by covering this entire region with a diaphanous or thin silk garment. The smooth innocence of the things, superbly contrasts with the rich golden mekhalas (waist band) inlaid with pearls, diamonds and sapphires. Every limb of the female body expresses some charm.

The sculptures in the Hoysala temples delineate the female garments of queen princess, goddess, semigoddess and
celestial groupings. The garments they wore are almost identical with regard to texture, type etc.

Examples may be mentioned from the Lakshminarasimha temple at Nuggihalli\textsuperscript{13}, Channakesava temple at Mosale\textsuperscript{14}, Lakshminarasimha temple Haranahalli\textsuperscript{15}, the Amritesvara temple Amritapura\textsuperscript{16}, the chennakeshava temple at Belur\textsuperscript{17}, the Mallikarjuna temple at Basral\textsuperscript{18}, Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid\textsuperscript{19}, etc.

There is a fine representation of garments in the wall sculptures where the female goddesses are standing since there is no upper garment it reveals the charm of the female breast ref \textbf{Pl.No.2}. The lower garment is held in position by a girdle (mekhala). The garment she wears has a floral design and the garment is tied to the waist to allow one end of it to glide down delicately to the ankles.

In another Sculpture of Somanathapur ref \textbf{Pl.No.3} the lady is depicted where in the lower garment is tucked up in the waist girdle at the sides from where it hangs gracefully below. The upper garment is absent.

In Somanathpur panel of Brahma and the devas the female goddess wears only a lower garment and the upper one is absent. The dhothi reaches to the ankles and presents a
smooth surface. It shows a decorative trapping at the centre in front. It is worn round the waist and held in position by a waist-bond. The ends of the cloth are left hanging on the side of the waist. The pleats are tucked up near the navel and allowed to fall between the legs ref. Pl.No.4.

There is an interesting variety of the costumes of queens represented in the panels depicting king Dasaratha and his queens in the putrakaneshtyaga and Ravana abducting Sita. The only lower garment that was worn was short drawers. It was simply wound around Pl.No.3 & 4 Ramayana, to accentuate the graceful curves and secured by a waist band. A long flowing tuft which was held in the right hand is depicted. The tuft moves to the back down the ankles. This longish piece of cloth is usually allowed to rest on the back of the neck. In the putrakameshtiyaga panel, the queens depicted in front of the fire altar, exhibit an upper garment which is wrapped around their heads, the ends ref Pl.No.3&4 Ramayana being allowed to flutter in the air. The garments move to the back portion of the head a small portion of the shoulder and is then allowed to fall on the back of the shoulders.

6.3 Amorous Madanike

In this category the lady is depicted with a lower garment reaching down to the knees. It is a tight fitting plain cloth. It is of a transparent material and the beauty of amorous female is
shown with her bodily curves and reveals the charms of the female figure. Since the lower garment is tied below the navel, it reveals the full charm of the female waist. It is from the navel downwards, that the sides of the female body begin to swell into the region of the bullocks and the thighs. A long tuft of cloth is seen hanging from the back and she holds in her left hand, the end fluttering in the air ref. Pl.No.5.

6.4 Costume of the Female Palace Attendants

A good number of sculptures and panels depict many female palace attendants such as chamaradharinis (chauri-bearers), Chhatttradharinis (umbrella bearers) toilet attendants, nursing, attendants, etc. Examples of this type may be found in other Hoysala temples like the Chennakeshava temple at Belur\textsuperscript{20}, Lakshminarayana temple at Hosaholalu\textsuperscript{21}, the Isvara temple at Arasikere\textsuperscript{22}, the Amrithesvara temple at Amritapura\textsuperscript{23} etc.

The female Chauribearers are represented in many panels of this temple. These lady attendants wore the simplest form of female dress. They are clad in a lower garment. The sari is wound round the waist to cover the region from the navel to the ankles. The two ends of the garment are tucked in at the waist and let loose below to form a decorative pattern they fall into beautiful folds. No upper garment is noticed. The
garment they wore shows a thicker variety probably made of cotton ref. **Pl.No.6 & 7.**

The panel where in Dasaratha and his four sons are in durbar depicts a fine specimen of chhattradharani holding the umbrella. The lower garment goes around the waist and is tied at the centre near the navel. The garment comes a little below the knees. The garment is so worn as to reveal part of the left thigh and whole of the left leg. ref **Pl.No.11 Ramayana.**

There is a fine representation of the maid servants attending on Dasaratha’s wife and children, nursing, etc. A number of female attendants are depicted with beautiful garments. The lower garment that was resembles long drawers secured by a waist band the long tufts which are left hanging between the legs. The garment is depicted simply wound the thighs and then it runs downs to the knees. A long flowing tuft which is held in the hands is left free, hanging in the air, in these panels the artists defines all social conventions and reveals the hidden charms on the female body ref. **Pl.No.8.**

Thus the varieties of costumes used during the Hoysala period, have been revealed very elegantly in the sculptures and panels of this temple. They represent the costumes of both the rich and poor.
The sari-like lower garment seems to have found a congenial home during this period. The female costumes vary in pattern and texture. The sculptor has successfully visualized the various types of dresses that the male and female wore.

The female chauri-bearer depicted in the sculpture of Madanika in the navaranga of the chennakesava temple Belur is seen attending on Madanika. Her dress comprises of an antariya only. However, a scarf or dopatta can also be seen held in her right hand. Pl.No.6.

Sari is the most important item in the dress of women, coming from time immemorial. The women of the period under review wore sarees made of ordinary cloth, fine cloth and silk. The word sari has been referred to in various terms like Chira\textsuperscript{24}, Seera\textsuperscript{25}, Dugula\textsuperscript{26}, Cinada Talirvate\textsuperscript{27}, Banna in the epigraphical and the literary sources of the Hoysala period. Short sarees which are known as kirige\textsuperscript{28}.

Generally, the sarees were lace bordered high class women wore sarees of finest quality. The cotton saffron saree was worn by the virasaiva woman saints. The common folk were satisfied with cotton cloth. For instance a full length saree has been depicted in the image of parvati, in Somesvara
temple at Kunigal in Tumkur dt. Transparent sarees exhibited petti coats (angavatta)\textsuperscript{29}. Pl.No.8 & 9.

6.5 Blouse

The bodice (Ravike) and jacket Kuppusa were worn by women along the sarees. They were tightly tied round the body and neck, making the mangalasutra clearly visible. Some women wore loose jacket\textsuperscript{30}. Many reference have been found in the epigraph like Ravike, Kuppusa, Kanchaka\textsuperscript{31}. Women generally wore bodice and jackets made of ordinary cloth and on special occasions they put on silk.

There is ample evidence to show that the work of tailoring is the stitching of cloth by the help of hand and needle and thread. In fact references are often found in the works of Harihara and others so many kinds of stitched clothes. Since coat, shirts, head dresses, blouse, etc. It had reached a stage of perfection in this period.

A majority of female figures in sculpture are devoid of blouse.

A special mention of women clothes on which custom dues were levied by the state is an indication of attention given by women for the elaborate designing of clothes as also their meticulous care in wearing them.
Different styles of wearing saris of different lengths have been preserved in sculptures. A sari running to three fourths way down the legs was tightly draped and the pleats in front waved grace full from the waist Pl.No.8.

Women with broad waists and things wore the sari loose, which covered the legs completely Pl.No.8. A sari, on draping was folded neatly, the vertical pleats Pl.No.9. would have admirably suited a bow legged lady.

The dancers, acrobats and entertainers developed a technique of wearing the sari like a pair of trousers Pl.No.10. Wearing the sari well below the navel, which is considered ‘mod’ was known medieval times Pl.No.11. The tight fitting fan-like pendulous pleats Pl.No.12. helped easy movement of limbs.

Saris with different design sare not uncommon in carved figures. Delicate floral designs Pl.No.13 presented an artistic appearance, those with broad designs drew attention Pl.No.13. Some carvings give an impression that pearls and beads were woven or studded on the sari Pl.No.14. some figures exhibit embossed Pl.No.15 printed and embroidered Pl.No.16. There used to variegated designs on saris, like those of creepers and flowers.
6.6 Dress

They wore their hair in long braids with golden Ketaka leaf interlaced with them, and with bows of strings woven with gold fastened at the ends of the plaits. They wore ornamental pendants on the forehead which rendered the tilaka mark on it unsteady over the hair no veil was worn. The long tail-ends of their garments kissed the ground. Their breasts were tightly confined in bodices, which covered half the length of their beautiful arms.

Mini-dresses, under garments and other sewn clothes were not uncommon among women. A pleated mini-skirt Pl.No.17 facilitated free movements to a dancer. Elaborately embroidered skirts were a special wear. Huntresses used to put on a tight short dress Pl.No.18. At time, the dancers’s challana or breeches were decorated with pleated cloth and pendants Pl.No.19 saries were tucked tight to appear like trousers to permit easy movement of limbs. Occasionally they secured the sari at the waist with belts Pl.No.20 many of these sartorial fashions have described a full circle now.

The musician’s dress depended upon the type of instruments he specialized in. the single string instrument player wore a narrow piece of cloth, becoming his humble profession.
6.7 Costumes of Flowers

Unlike the cotton and silk clothes the costumes prepared out of natural flowers and creepers were used as a traditional practice by the rich and the royalty on special occasions like Vanakeli, Jalakeli and Mallayudda. The use of flower garments were confined to a particular social group like the royalty, harem, prostitutes and other high officials. A reference has been made to the flower garment in Harischandra Kavya and Jagannatha Vijaya. As a matter of fact it was a social custom for the florists to offer the flower garments which resembles navambara to the wrestlers, at the time of wrestling. Though the wearing of flower garments looked very odd from the point of view of present day, they were just used to satisfy the carving for self adornment. However, the commons in general were not affected by this influence.

6.8 Costumes of Tribal Folk

Often we find terms like Bedars, Sabaras, Pulindas and Kiratas in the Hoysala epigraphs. A reference has been made to the garments of peacock feathers worn by Pulinda women in Harischandra Kavya. The use of skirts and pantees made out of feathers was well known to them. The Pulinda women folk covered their lower part of the body with peacock feathers skirt falling upto knees and that of the upper part dressed with natural tender leaves. Even men folk were not exception to this.
A drummer wore a pair of dvipadi with belt, which helped him belt, which helped him get additional support for the waist and his drum. A flute player had a broad belt or puttika which fastened his dress and kept it intact, even when he was lost in the world of music. Pl.No.21.
References

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35. R.V.H.K. Sthala V po 83