

**ENSEMBLES OF SATAVAHANA (200 – 250 C.E)****U. Mala**

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**ABSTRACT**

An ancient Indian costume could focus on key elements like intricate patterns, vibrant colours and symbolic motifs. The design could be characterized by flowing fabrics with a mix of rich textures, such as silks or velvets, in deep reds, gold and blues. Often reflecting the grandeur of royal attire. accessories like ornate jewellery, including necklaces, earrings and headpieces would be represented as abstract forms of shimmering lines and shapes. The silhouette might evoke a sense of grace and elegance, with traditional draping techniques like the sari or dhoti being suggested through curving, sweeping lines. The overall feel would blend heritage, spirituality, and artistry, combining geometric patterns with organic flow to symbolize the beauty and cultural richness of ancient India.

**KEYWORDS:**

Satavahana, Saka, Costumes, Hair Styles, Andhra, Jewellery.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Satavahana dynasty, which ruled large parts of Central and Southern India from around 230 to 220 B.C.E, the ancient Indian costume during the Satavahana period was a blend of indigenous styles and influences from various cultures, including those of the Mauriyas, Kushanas and Greek-Bactrian regions, due to the dynasty's interactions with trade routes and foreign kingdoms. For both men and women, clothing was often made from fine fabrics like cotton, linen and wool with the weakly using silk. The attire generally involved draped garments that allowed ease of movement, reflecting the regional climate and lifestyle. Men typically wore simple linencloths or langotis with long tunics or chitons fastened at the waist, sometimes complemented by a shawl or scarf-like piece. Women wore draped garments with the sari or a variation of it possibly being worn, although it evolved over time. The garments were often decorated with intricate embroidery or patterns that reflected the social status of the wearer. In terms of accessories both men and women adorned themselves with jewellery made of gold, silver and precious stones. The Satavahana kings were often depicted wearing ornate crowns, armlets and earrings signalling their royal status. The clothing and accessories from this period were not only a form of personal adornment but also a reflection of the socio-political and cultural dynamics of the time.

The Satavahana or Andhra empire was the next great empire after the Mauryan, and was established in the Deccan just as the Mauryan empire was came to an end. It endured for 460 years in unbroken continuity and ran parallel, for a while, to the Kushan empire with which it struggled for almost a century. On the whole, it was a peaceful and economically prosperous period and trade and industry increased tremendously, especially with Rome.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. the Satavahanas were ousted by the Ikshvakus, who were themselves from the Deccan.

## **EARLY SATAVAHANA PERIOD (200-100 B.C.E)**

### **Costume**

The people of the Deccan were a hybrid race, a mixture of the aboriginally Dravidians and foreign invaders. In the first century B.C.E. their costumes too were an interesting mixture of foreign and indigenous garments. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.E. find tunics, Kancuka in the strips or beehives design worn by a king in hunting dress has no discernible opening at the neck, so it is probably at the back. Necklines too differed in that some were V- shaped and others were round in shape. With the tunic a thick Kayabandh was wound once or twice around the waist. An elaborate turban Ushnisa, intertwined with the long black hair of the aborigine wearers was also worn. In addition to these, hunters wore two- bar type sandals with a strap for buckling, which is still seen in the Deccan. As influences from the north and from foreign invaders percolated, the Dravidians aboriginal village women too changed their costume using short Antariyas, large Uttariyas with elaborate broad borders covering the head and back, Tikkas on the forehead and a series of conch or ivory bangles on the arms except for the skrit, they looked very much like the Lambadis who are a gypsy tribe of the Deccan today.

In the royal court dress of the Mauryan-Sunga people the female attendants wore transparent long Antariyas with loose Kayabandhs tied in a knot at the centre having beautiful ornamental tips. Their many-stringed girdles or Mekhala were made of beads. Shoulder-length hair held by fillets or top knots tied at the centre of the head seems to denote that these attendants were foreigners, although nothing in the garments worn seems foreign. The king and most of his countries wore the indigenous Antariya, short and informal at home, with the longer style worn in a variety of ways on ceremonial occasions. With this the decorative Kayabandh was tied in different styles and knots. The Kayabandh could be tied like a thick cord or be worn looped in a semi-circle at the front with conspicuous side tassels or be made

of thick twisted silk. The Ushnisa was always worn and a crown or tiara was used when necessary.

Soldiers wore short-sleeved tunics or jackets, with elaborate headgear consisting of either a turban with a top knot, chin band and ear flaps or two top knots with a turban. They were equipped with axes, bows and arrows or carried sickles. Palace however wore the Antariya with a heavy cloak draped over the left shoulder.

### **Headgear and Hairstyles**

The aboriginal jungle women wore rolls and headbands with peacock feathers attached. Village women and commoners wore their hair in a simple knot at the nape covered by a large Uttariya which, at times, had elaborate broad borders. Court attendants and women of the richer classes wore their hair more fashionably, either in a top knot on the right side with a loop of flowers suspended or in a plait. A Fillet, simple or gold embroidered could be worn to hold it in place.

Most often, the long hair of men was worn intertwined with lengths of cloth to form an Ushnisa in a variety of ways. Frequently it had a knot the original top knot of the aboriginals covered with the cloth of the turban. This knot could be at centre front or protrude over the forehead in a 'conch-shell' shape or the tuft of hair could be visible on top of the turban.

### **Jewellery**

Jewellery in this period had a massive primitive character in strong contrast to that worn in the later Satavahana period. When indigenous garments are shown on men, whether at court or in villages all wear some form of jewellery. But when the foreign dress, the Kancuka or tunic, is worn by hunders, attendants and soldiers, very little or no jewellery is seen. Most often it consists of just earrings of the wheel pattern type.

Indigenous jewellery however, consisted of Lambanam, earrings, and a pair of Kangan and B<sup>1</sup>aju band for the males. Women did not wear the Baju band but wore a large number of bangles made of conch or ivory, disc-type earrings, the Lambanam, and Tikka on the forehead. Women attendants at court wore, in addition, the Mekhala.

## **LATE SATAVAHANA (100 -A.D.250 C.E.)**

### **Costume**

Clothing was generally sparse and made of thin cotton. The three articles of clothing, the Antariya, Uttariya, and Kayabandh were widely used, but interesting mixtures of foreign and indigenous garments were fairly prevalent. The Uttariya for both men and women was usually white and of cotton or silk. It was however, at times, of beautiful colours and embroidered. Men could wear it across the back and over both shoulders or merely thrown over the chest and they seldom wore it as a head covering. The Antariya was still worn by both sexes in the Kachcha fashion which meant that one end was passed between the legs and tucked in behind, but this way of draping had its own fanciful fashions. For men it was normally to the knees or even shorter. Generally, the Antariya appears to have been made of almost transparent cloth and was worn very tight and clinging in the case of women. It is almost invisible in the early Andhra sculpture with only double incised lines to show the drape. The Nivi Bandha or preliminary knot to tie the Antariya at the waist is often alluded to in the literature of ancient India.

The Kayabandh tied in a bow- shaped knot was worn by both sexes to give further support to the Antariya at the waist. This item was worn in a variety of ways. The Kayabandh in the form of a simple sash was called the Vethaka. The women also wore the Pattika which was made of flat ribbon shaped pieces of cloth, usually silk. A heavy looking thick jewelled roll with hanging tassels Kakshyabandha was worn by men. The Kalabuka was a girdle made of many strips plaited together and the Muraja had drum headed knots at the ends instead of tassels.

It is in the distinctive ways of wearing these three simple garments the Antariya, Uttariya and Kayabandh and in the headgear and jewellery that trace the evolution of the costumes and the fashion of the times in areas of India where they were in use. The true Yajnopavita or sacred thread is found on the sculptures of this period. Before this, it existed more in the form of the Uttariya worn draped over the left shoulder and under the right arm in the Upavita fashion from which the term Yajnopavita seems to have been derived. The Yajnopavita consisted of three cotton threads each of nine twisted strands but of hemp for the Kshatriya and of wool for the Vaisya. At a later stage this sacred thread continued to be used in a limited way by other castes but was retained most strongly by the Brahmins.

A stitched shirt like foreign garment called the Kancuka was frequently used by attendants, grooms, guards and so on in the king's court, and an indigenous long tunic was worn by eunuchs and other attendants in the women's apartments in the palace. Women too wore the short Kancuka with an indigenous Antariya, or when calf-length it was worn with Kayabandh and Uttariya, and in many other ways.

### **Headgear and Hairstyles**

The Ushnisa of the Turban was generally wrapped around three or four times after first covering the top knot of hair with one end. It was normally white but could also be of dyed cloth and simple turbans were held in position by ornamental gold strips or Pattabandha. Gold turbans were worn on special occasions. Kirita or crowns were also in use, of which one type was a short cylindrical cap studded with gems and ornamented with designs. The Maulibandha was an elaborate turban wound with the hair which itself was decorated with strings of pearls or flower wreaths. The turban normally covered the hair which was arranged in a large top knot at centre front and could have a jewelled clasp or Maulimani at the centre to hold in place the folds of the turban. This top knot could also be pear shaped or elliptical to give it variety. Without the turban, the hair could be worn in one or two top knots or one loop and one top knot. Short hair parted in the middle and reaching the neck was fairly prevalent, especially among the common people.

Women wore their hair in several ways. One was in the form of a plait, Praveni at the back, decorated with jewelled strips and tassels as Bharat Natyam dancers do today. Another common style was the coil with five delicate plaits dangling from it, a favourite with all classes of women. In the Kesapasa style the hair was looped close to the head in an elongated knot at the back of the head or lower down at the nape. This could have a Veni, a small fillet of flowers, around it or a short garland of flowers dangling from it. If the hair was made in a simple knot it was known as Kabaribandha. The Dhammilia was elaborate dressing of the hair with flowers, pearls and jewels that often completely covered the hair like a close cap or turban. This style was greatly admired in the Satavahana kingdom. Women no longer wore the turban of earlier periods. Special ornaments were designed to be worn in the hair. The Chudamani was lotus-shaped, its petals composed of pearls and precious stones. It was worn normally in the centre of the knotted hair. The Makarika was shaped like a fish-crocodile and worn at the front parting of the hair, very like the gold ornament worn by the Uriya women in

the northern Circars. There were also small crown like fillets through which the hair was drawn and then plaited or hung loose.

### **Jewellery**

Strands of pearls were the main motif in all forms of jewellery particularly in the late period of the Satavahana Empire. Both men and women wore earrings, bracelets, armlets and necklaces as in previous periods, particularly the indigenous people. The more common design in earrings was the Kundala shaped like coil, which could be simple or decorative. The Talapatra originated from a small strip of palm leaf rolled and inserted into the lobe. This shape was later made from ivory or gold and could be gem studded. A full-blown lotus design the Kanaka-Kamala set in rubies is still popular in south India, and a couple of generations ago the Karnika or Jimiki continued to be in use. This was in the shape of a lotus seed-pod fixed upside down like a tassel. Necklaces or Hara were mainly strung with pearls, sometimes consisting of only a single string called Ekavali. A necklace of gems and gold beads was called Yashti, the central bead being often larger than the others. Several of these necklaces could be worn together. Sometimes three or five slab like gems, Phalaka, were inserted at regular intervals. These held together the several strings of which a necklace was composed and the whole was called a Phalakahara.

A simple perfumed cotton- thread necklace was known to have been in use and tiger claws were strung around the necks of children probably to ward off the evil eye. The Yasnopavita or a sacred thread made of pearls called the Muktayajnopavita, were prevalent. Kantha, the shorter form of necklace, continued to be in use and was often of gold set with rubies and emeralds. Also, the gold coin necklace Nishka strung on silk thread or plaited gold cord was worn in almost the same design as the modern Putalya of Maharashtra and the Malai of Tamil Nadu. These gold coins were sometimes replaced by mango-shaped pieces of gold or gold set with gems, like the contemporary Mangamalai of South India. Men and women wore bracelets Valaya of solid gold set with precious stones. The more delicate ones were made of filigree and elegant rope-shape done of fine gold wire were worn generally by women. They also used bangles of ivory and rhinoceros horn. Slab-like gems when set into bracelets, like the Phalakahara necklace, were called Phalakavalaya.

Armlets or Keyura for both sexes were close-fitting and could be engraved or set with jewels, or be in the shape of a snake; also, they could be straight-edged or have an angular top edge. Jewelled girdles of one or many strings, Mekhala, were worn only by women. These

were made in several varieties from the tinkling Kanci with bells to the Rasana style made of a linked chain or strung with pearls, beads or precious stones. These girdles, besides being very attractive, held up the lower garment or Antariya. In addition, cloth girdles or Kayabandh like those of the men described earlier in this study were also used for the same purpose.

Anklets, worn again only by women, had an astonishing variety. The Manjira was hollow and light, coiling several times around the ankles loosely and tinkling when in motion as it had gems inserted in the hollow. This type is still worn in Marwar. The Nupura was plain while the Kinkini had small bells suspended. A heavier looking one was the Tulakoti whose two ends were enlarged at their meeting points. This form is still worn in Andhra. Tinkling anklets of any kind were not worn by the wife in the absence of her husband. The finger ring or Anguliyaka is visible on some of the Satavahana sculptures but only after C.E. 150. The Hemavaikaksha was an ornament worn by women seen more frequently in the Kushan period. It consisted of two long wreaths of flowers or pearls crossed at the breasts.

### **Military Costume**

Andhra soldiers wore an Antariya which was shortened by lifting it at the hemline and tucking it into the waist to facilitate marching and the style is still used in Tamil Nadu. A cloth Sash or Kayabandh was wound tightly many times around the waist for support and was sometimes crossed at the chest for protection. This developed in later times into the Channavira which was similar in function to the early Babylonian and Assyrian sword belts crossed at the chest with a metal buckle in the centre. In addition, the military personnel of this period occasionally wore earrings and simple jewellery.

Saka foreign soldiers were employed by some of the Andhra kings in the royal bodyguard. They wore a heavy tunic with ruched sleeves which reached to the knees or mid-thigh. With it was worn a form of Churidar or ruched trousers and their helmet or Sirastra had ear flaps. A wide sash was worn at the waist. Sometimes a short quilted tunic was worn with a heavy drape over the left shoulder along with a turban a mixture of the foreign and indigenous garments. Footwear was not incumbent for soldiers and was probably worn by foreign rather than indigenous troops.

The equipment of a trained fighter was mainly his sword, shield, bow, axe and spear sometimes the mace, club and javelin were used. Swords were either curved or straight and

could have a sharp edge on one or both sides. They were 30 inches long and beautifully crafted. Handles of ivory or horn and hilts of precious metals encrusted with jewels were carried by those in command and simpler ones of bamboo or wood were used by the common soldier. These swords in their sheaths, Kosha, of fine-tooled leather were normally fastened on the left side of the waist. Smaller and more ornamental swords and daggers were fastened by gold chains.

Shields, mainly rectangular in shape were purely functional and large enough to protect the body. The club or Gada could be short or long but was immensely heavy and was used for striking the enemy forcefully. The bow or Dhanush made of wood or horn was painted red and gaily decorated, but the bamboo bow was more common. The bow string was made of sinew or hemp. The heads of the arrows were of iron, bone, wood and were carved into animal and other shapes and had shafts of feathers affixed with sinews. Sometimes the arrow tips were dipped in poison. The Buddhist monks were now in a very powerful position and had more or less abjured their vow of poverty. Their clothes now retained a semblance of patchwork but were composed of rich pieces of cloth of the same colour, symmetrically arranged together in checks and most probably presented to the Buddhist order by rich donors, as referred to in the Jatakas.

Hindu ascetics continued to wear their bark strip garments Valkala with a deer skin over the left shoulder in the style known as Ajinayajnopavita. Their hair was tied in a heavy bundled top-knot of matted locks called the Jata-Bhara and sometimes the hair was worn in small plaits. The priests were Brahmins who wore white garments but added a red turban when officiating at ceremonial functions. Jain monks and nuns have retained their white robes to this day and all their beliefs and customs have remained unchanged because of their strong conservatism.

### **Textiles and Dyes**

From Mauryan times and even earlier, the manufacture of textiles in India had flourished and there are constant references to its variety in the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Jain works. Coarse and fine varieties of cotton were in great demand. Silk formed an important part of the rich person's wardrobe. A very cheap material made of Hemb was worn by the weavers and by labourers of all kinds. Wool was not needed much in the part of India ruled by the Satavahanas which had a warm climate, but it was used in the form of Chaddars or Blankets in winter. There was a variety of dyes available from Vedic times, indigo, yellow,

crimson, magenta, black and turmeric. Since washermen were also dyers, these colours were well-known to them and the knowledge of the dyeing processes was probably handed down to each successive generation. Varieties and mixtures of colours known to those countries with which the Satavahanas did a great deal of trade, like China, Persia and Rome must also have been incorporated to extend their range of coloured textiles.

Printed and woven designs on textiles were plentiful and embroidery in gold was also common among the richer classes. The Uttariya, in particular, was very often of silk and embroidered with flowers all over or had a pattern of birds along with flowers. Precious stones were often used in the borders of these Uttariyas or they were dyed blue or red, but a spotless white remained the favourite with men.

## CONCLUSION

Ancient Indian Costumes, evolving from draped fabrics to stitched garments, reflect a rich history and cultural heritage, with materials like cotton and silk playing a crucial role, and styles like the sari and dhoti emerging as iconic garments. During the Satavahana period, ( 2<sup>nd</sup> century to 3<sup>rd</sup> century C.E.), clothing consisted of garments like Antariya and Uttariya ( Upper and Lower garments), Kanchuka ( Tunic), Kayabhandh ( Waistbelt), and Ushnisha ( Turban). Textile manufacturing and trade flourished, with brides wearing borders with swans and colours used in stories for cultural interaction.

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