

The Indian Sari

by
Kamala S. Dongerkery



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*A Deccan Painting from the Tarif-i-Hussain Shahi, Ahmednagar 1565-69,
(Courtesy : Bharata Itihasa Samshodhak Mandal, Poona.)*

THE
INDIAN SARI

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Kamala S. Dongerkery

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FOREWORD

Shrimati Kamala Dongerkery's writings and books are already familiar to handicraft lovers and she needs no introduction. It is perhaps less known that she with her mother was largely responsible for saving the beautiful and distinctive Indian embroidery, known in the Karnatak regions as Kasuti, from extinction. Kasuti is not only alive today but has become a fashionable item in Bombay society, providing work for many struggling women.

Although India abounds in numerous types of costumes for women, the sari has assumed a special importance and significance. Worn in a dozen or more different styles, it typifies to us and the world our national dress. Handed down over many centuries, it continues to dominate the Indian scene and at times even influences foreign fashions where the sari is gaining admirers and imitators. To quote the author: "Now more than ever, therefore, when India is attempting to revive her beautiful handicrafts and rescue the artisan from his dire poverty, it is necessary to review the most important and valuable of all handicrafts, the art of weaving, and to take stock of the typical materials that the country produces and give an impetus to the special and traditional fabrics and their allied handicrafts. The palm goes to the Indian woman who has kept alive the traditional style of dress, appreciated the age-old patterns and evinced almost a sentimental fondness for certain characteristic oriental materials. For the trousseau, for religious ritual and worship, and on all auspicious occasions, the Indian woman attaches great value and sentiment to

certain fabrics and patterns, and the sari as a fashioner of personality and a mirror of social life in India plays a significant role.”

Kamala Dongerkery has delved into the how, why and wherefore of this unique garment, to unravel its evolution from the earliest inception to its modern form. In a simple but vividly descriptive way the story of the sari is so related that a lay public can enjoy it. This apart, her many side comments on the Indian costume and the sari in particular have a telling significance. For while conceding that modern conditions necessitate the launching of new modes, it need not necessarily mean wholesale copying as happens today especially with clothes for teen-agers and those of adolescent age. As the author says: “There is unlimited scope for new fashion, design and adaptation of old designs and styles to new and modern forms of dress. An adaptation of Indian designs and colours, incorporated in the fashions of teen-agers, would be in harmony with the general costume of the people and would perhaps transform India into an oriental fairyland.” Western clothes, whatever their beauty, comfort and utility do not blend into the picturesque Indian setting. In fact the present should challenge our creative genius to meet it with ingenuity and ability instead of succumbing to weak and cheap imitations. To quote Kamala Dongerkery again: “We must be able to utilise simple and common materials to aesthetic advantage in order that we may feel one with the multitude. Above all, we must learn to value and cultivate that important aspect of fashion, ‘individuality’, because fashion should hinge on individuality, and the artistic and creative efforts of the individuals go a long way in fashioning and refashioning the attire of a people. Today, more than ever before, must the Indian woman assume the responsibility of creating new trends in fashion and utilise the many things that the artisan in the countryside or urban areas produces by the skill of his hands.”

It is tragic to see that this challenge is being by-passed and new generations grow up condemned to wearing pale copies of foreign creations which the children don't even know how to carry. Often the young ones are exposed to great disadvantage. This must have unhappy repercussions on their growing minds. For their clothes can give them no sense of pride nor endow them with personality. These clothes are only matched by the complete foreign toys they are given to play

with. How can a free and independent nation grow up on foundations of servility?

I am glad the author has defined fashion as individual expression. That is how it should be, but alas is not. Fashion in modern connotation is the opposite of individual creation. It is rather the laying down of law as to what each of us should wear each year irrespective of what each of us feels and reacts to this so-called "Fashion". It becomes the very negation of individuality. As the author asserts very rightly the Indian handmade products as well as styles lend themselves to any new trends in costume, with some adjustments and adaptations. "It is for the Indian women to think out and utilise every item of artistic excellence whether it be the fisherman's cap, the decorated Lucknow Kurtha, silver or ivory ornaments of Kashmir or Saurashtra... The point to be remembered is the attractiveness of the article and the artistic value rather than the finery and grandeur and the cost of the article."

In spite of the many commendable efforts to develop and reinvigorate the sari tradition, the sari as a basic article is nevertheless threatened in more ways than one. One such assault comes from trying to make it look like a tailored article, especially a skirt by giving it skirt borders. Then it simply ceases to be a sari. The proper thing would be for those who fancy skirts—and there is nothing derogatory in that—to wear Indian skirts, for there are infinite varieties of them with an odhni or a pallav piece going a short way round the waist as do the Assamese women. The other threat is winding a plain six yard piece of fabric round the body and calling it a sari. It has no character of any sort, being just a piece of cloth, without a border or pallav, both of which are indispensable in the composition of a sari. To call any yardage material a sari by simply wrapping it around oneself, is perverting this very unique and well-evolved garment which has a definite character of its own. One should also bear in mind that the sari is much more than a mere fabric. And though it may be worn in a dozen or more different styles, it has a basic pattern that makes the costume known to us as sari. Whether the pallav falls over the shoulders, right or left or over the entire front length as in the Gujarati style, or is divided by a Khasta or not, it retains the basic pattern. There is a tendency now however to disturb it by letting the pallav slip down the left shoulder until it either trails on the floor doing sweeping duty

for a broom or completely slips off the shoulder leaving the bust open while the pallav is carried anyhow in a lazy and bored air, on the arm by the wearer. This is peculiar to Bombay city where the young girls think this is a great "fashion" and destroy the beautiful lines in which the sari is designed. It is not every silly head that can fool about with an established costume. It calls for a master artist to redesign it. But then fools are always ready to rush in where angels fear to tread, as the saying goes. Those who are privileged to wear the sari must respect it in order to really appreciate it. It is hoped that Kamala Dongerkery's very interesting, many-sided story of the sari will serve to restore to this garment the respect it deserves so that it will be handled with greater reverence and care.

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAYA

P R E F A C E

The Indian sari reigns supreme among the beautiful costumes of the world. Its origins are lost in antiquity, and through the ages it has evolved from a short plaid piece into a costume of a very high order, both elegant and becoming. On first thought, it may seem that fashions in the sari style of dress have not much scope and that there has been hardly any change in the mode of wear, but a closer observation would reveal that changes in fabrics, woven designs, embroidery, printing and dyeing have provided unlimited scope for fashions in saris. These changes, combined with subtle alterations in the arrangements of the veil portion or *pallav* of the sari or in its actual wearing, the fashions in *cholis* and other complementary garments help to complete the *ensemble* of the Indian woman's wardrobe.

It must be said to the credit of the Indian woman's costume that the sari is one of the most economical, well-planned and graceful of costumes, the essential characteristics of which are not subject to frequent change. A sari of a good order can, therefore, last quite easily for a couple of generations without going out of fashion or losing its usefulness and its aesthetic value. On the other hand, like a Persian carpet it would become more and more valuable. This is not to say that the fashion of the sari style does not change or has not changed. It has changed as a result of an evolutionary process in which factors other than fashion have been responsible for such change.

Since fabrics and their ornamentation form the pivot on which the fashion of the sari revolves, and the art of weaving and the designing of beautiful fabrics through numerous processes have had an age-long tradition in this country, it is only fitting that the All India Handicrafts Board should have thought it proper to review these crafts and bring to the notice of the public the important, indigenous types of fabrics which contribute to the aesthetic styles in the dress of the Indian woman in which the sari plays a major and popular role. I am indebted to the A.I.H.B. for asking me to write this monograph, and thus giving me an opportunity to write on a subject of cultural value dear to my heart. Saris produced in textile mills are outside the scope of this book, even though they may answer to the description of a sari. For my purpose I have referred to saris produced on handlooms and those produced by small power units. I have not referred to the large quantities put out by textile mills.

Books of this kind which come out first in the field and are planted on virgin soil have to be based on scholarly works of writers on allied subjects, while the conclusions arrived at may be one's own. A list of the books to which I have referred appears elsewhere. To the authors of these I am grateful, but I must especially acknowledge my indebtedness to two writers on Indian costume.

Two methods could have been used in planning this monograph. One could be with regard to historical periods, dynasties or régimes and the other with reference to phases in the evolution of costume. I have followed the latter, and I hope the reader will be carried on the wings of time, as it were, from antiquity right down to our own days. In marking the periods or phases of costume and for much material on ancient costume, Dr. Ghurye's encyclopaedic work, *Indian Costume*, has been of great value to me, while a peep into the pre-Aryan and historical periods and the varied ancient Indian fabrics has been rendered possible by Dr. Motichandra's scholarly work, *Bharatiya Vesha-bhusha*.

The photographs of sculptures in this book have been chosen with a view to illustrating ancient dress forms and not for their sculptural excellence. These sculptures indicate the variety of dresses as well as the styles in the plaid garment or sari. My

conclusions are that the sari in its various forms has remained the one common garment of Indian women through the ages and that in the course of history most of the beautiful special fabrics of the country appear in one form or another.

Care has been taken to present in the illustrations some of the traditional materials and others that are in common use rather than elaborate museum or show pieces.

Srimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya has encouraged me again and again, and this, my third book, like my first, is largely due to her interest and encouragement. Her constructive work for Indian handicrafts is of great magnitude. If Dr. Tagore opened the avenue for the cultural renaissance of the country through the fine arts, Srimati Kamaladevi, I feel, has followed up this work with her great contribution to its blossoming through her unostentatious efforts in the matter of our many beautiful handicrafts. She has tried to reach the workers in the countryside, the writers who can put the ideas across, the fashion-setters in urban areas, the foreigners who can appreciate artistic goods and, not the least, the general public of the land.

In providing much material for the illustrations the A.I.H.B. came to my rescue. My husband, Shri S. R. Dongerkery, has been a source of constant help and guidance to me. The Bombay University Library and Shri D. N. Marshall, its Librarian, as always, have been of great assistance to me in supplying me with the necessary books of reference.

If this publication, sponsored by the A.I.H.B., will present a panoramic view of the special handmade fabrics worn by the Indian woman with great simplicity of style and grace, indicate the subtlety of fashion in the dress of the Indian woman and give a fillip to the work of the Indian weavers and designers, my task will have been amply rewarded.

K.S.D.

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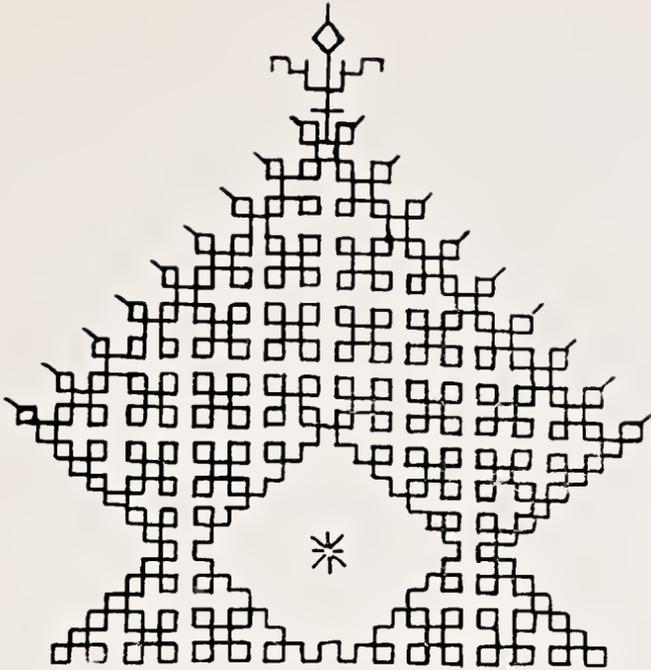
Lady Vatsalabai Chandavarkar, for lending exhibit in illustration No. 28.

Smt. Nilima Barua, for lending Assamese textiles in illustration No. 52.

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Exhibits in Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 31, 39, 42 and 49 are from the author's collection.

N.B. Exhibits relate to Saris.



Clothes and Clothing

There is no doubt that clothing originated from the idea of protection. Even among quadrupeds and birds which have not got the intelligence to protect themselves with such a thing as clothing, nature steps in to provide a substitute. She not only provides these creatures with protective covering such as a thick skin, fur and feathers, but also takes care to see that they are in harmony with their natural surroundings in design and colour, and that they also have an inherent beauty in them, in keeping with nature's own glory. It goes without saying then that the idea of protection and beauty must have simultaneously influenced man with reference to clothing, right through the ages, and that at some stage man freed himself of the protection that nature offered and conceived the idea of protecting himself with the help of the raw materials that came his way in his immediate surroundings.

He tried, however, to keep as close to nature as possible and imitated her many intricate tricks of design and her innumerable shades of colour. It is believed that this took place some time in the neolithic age when man started rearing animals and cultivating land so that he could live in greater security and comfort, and settled down to a more or less stationary existence. He had passed from that state of uncertainty which made him depend for his food as well as clothing on the game he killed and raw materials like skins, feathers, leaves and the bark of trees. He had perhaps even then access to the same materials that we have, but he could only make use of those which his tools allowed. He had not yet invented the tools for the processing of those materials. It is presumed that he must have pieced the materials together and made some sort of garments. This was the first stage in the evolution of dress.



1. *Mother Goddess : Harappa*

It is acknowledged that, when man arrived at the stage of a somewhat settled life, he made his pots and pans, mats and ropes, and built his dwellings on the spots he chose for his habitat. It is believed that he moved or migrated in bunches like herds of animals. Each clan or group, therefore, had its own way of life and its own way of dress. When ideas of protection and comfort began to dawn on his mind, his natural surroundings and climatic conditions largely determined the types of clothes he should wear.

In colder climates, fur, wool and the softer skins came into use, while in the temperate zones

cotton and plant fibres came to be adopted, and spinning and weaving, the counterpart of matting, came into vogue. The beginnings of spinning and weaving did not occur simultaneously in every part of the world. When certain areas in the world had an advanced type of civilization, others were still in the primitive stages. The springing up of new civilizations and the decay of many advanced and ancient ones have been going on endlessly. The disparities, therefore, in every sphere of life are only too apparent. In large countries like our own such disparity appears in a greater measure because of the existence of large tracts of isolated land. It is possible, therefore, to get an idea of the early stages of the evolution of dress as well as to trace the existence of early cultures in different societies in countries like ours. Side by side with modern trends, due to urban life, we have in India one of the oldest and most highly developed civilizations which gives proof of the gradual evolution of dress and its progress towards a standardized, aesthetic and comfortable form of costume.

According to sociologists and archaeologists, the rock drawings of Spain depict the earliest examples of costume. The next



2. *Didarganj Yakshi*
3rd cent. B. C. Maurya Period

evidence found so far is in the civilizations of the period of about 3,200 B.C., which include the Egyptian civilization which thrived on the banks of the Nile, the Indus Valley civilization of the 3rd millennium B.C. and the later civilization which flourished in India under the Mauryas (B.C. 323 to B.C. 184) with their capital at Pataliputra (modern Patna). This is abundantly revealed through the remains and antiquities that have come to light from time to time as a result of archaeological investigations. Concrete evidence of costume is to be noticed in the sculpture of the Parkham Yaksha's statue and of a sari in the Didarganj Yakshi from the vicinity of Patna, belonging to the Mauryan period (*circa* 3rd century B.C.). This constitutes a landmark in the history of women's costume in India.

Among the countries with ancient traditions India is perhaps the one country that has clung to her traditional costume, which she has evolved through the ages and, in a way, perfected, while most other countries with similar traditions have switched over to tailored forms of dress necessitated, perhaps, by climatic and other conditions.

3. *Terra Cotta
Mathura*



4. *An early painting, Ajanta,
1st cent. B. C.*



The two main divisions in costume, generally speaking, are, first, cut and sewn clothes or tailored garments which largely conform to the lines of the body, and, second, draped apparel which, while adhering to the body form, remains uncut and unsewn. Amongst the latter is the beautiful Indian sari whose elegance and grace surpass the best fashions of the world in dress. A liberal attitude towards costume is apparent in the dress of the men of India, who have adopted various forms with the passage of time, and especially with the changes in economic and political conditions. The women have, however, clung fast to their traditional dress. They are proud of the grace and dignity of it and have been solely responsible for continuing the style, come what may. The Indian woman will adhere to her sari, wherever she goes and in whatever conditions she is placed, and most of the women of the other countries of the world congratulate her on the simplicity and charm of her dress.

The development of the sari style in India and the factors that have influenced the woman's wardrobe tell a story of aesthetic and socio-economic progress resulting in the simplification and standardization of woman's dress to a large extent. In the costume of the Indian



5. Female Figure in Sari,
Kushana Period, Patna

woman it is not the tailor or the seamstress that is "something of the creator or divinity", in the words of Swift, but it is the village handloom weaver, the designer, the hand-embroiderer, the dyer and the printer that with their combined efforts produce the costumes of India. The weaver claims by far the lion's share in the success of the textiles he produces with his ever-fascinating and superb texture and design. Other artisans like the embroiderer and the printer, too, give the finishing touches to erstwhile drab materials. The makers of accessories like the gold and silversmith, and, perhaps, even traders like the florists have a significant role to play in the *ensemble*, because the Indian woman's costume is dominated by many ornamental



6. Female Figure,
Taxila



7. Hariti, 1st—2nd cent. A. D.



8. Hariti,
1st—2nd cent. A. D.

factors. This monograph is confined largely to the woman's sari, which is the most widely adopted form of Indian costume, and the aesthetics that go to make it a garment of exquisite beauty.

The world has travelled a long way from protective clothes or more elaborate, aesthetic styles. Through the corridors of time, poets, philosophers, sociologists, psychologists and other thinkers have given their own interpretation of dress. The poets have sung of clothes as enhancing the natural beauty or lending charm to the personality of the wearer, the philosophers have described dress as an outward symbol which indicates the attitude and mind of the wearer, and, perhaps, the economist has either despaired of the futility of expensive embellished clothes or considered them a means of viewing the standard of living. The sociologists have recognized through dress the culture and civilization of an age, and concluded that the social structure of society is closely related to costume; in other words, that "society is founded on cloth", as expressed by Thomas Carlyle. This truth has been brought home to us, Indians, particularly by the social and political revolution that shook the world under the banner of 'khadi' and the emblem of the 'charkha'. The gospel of the spinning wheel preached by Mahatma Gandhi is nothing but a confirmation of the above view, and the translation of it into practice,

which yielded abundant fruit and helped India to wage a peaceful war and contributed in a large measure to the winning of her independence. The charkha symbolized the importance of handicrafts and gained for the village artisan his rightful place in the structure of Indian society.

Today, handicrafts have assumed a wider significance. In a country comprising modern cities, progressive towns and isolated hamlets the balance between urban and rural economy has to be maintained. India has, therefore, to make a two-pronged drive to stabilize her village crafts and promote them for the prosperity and progress of the nation, while keeping pace with her urban, industrial development to ensure her place among the nations of the world.

Now, more than ever, therefore, when India is attempting to revive her beautiful handicrafts and rescue the artisan from his dire poverty, it is necessary to review the most important and valuable of all handicrafts, the art of weaving, and to take stock of the typical materials that the country produces and give an impetus to the special and traditional fabrics and their allied handicrafts.



9. *Birth of Buddha at Lumbini (Gandhara Sculpture 2nd cent. A. D.)*

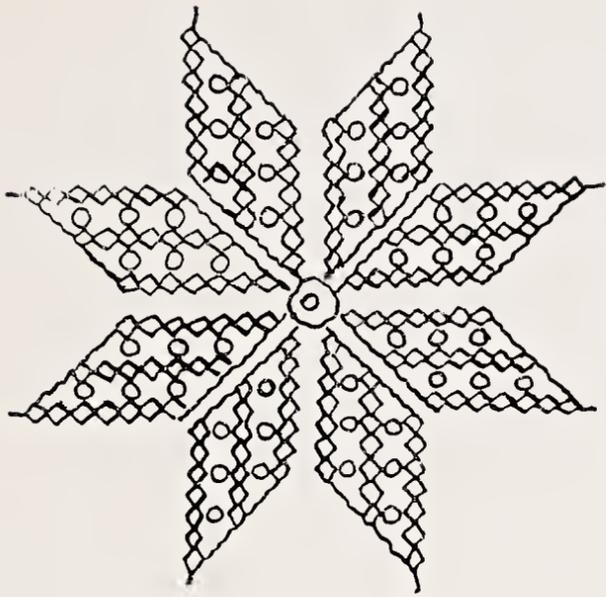
The palm goes to the Indian woman who has kept alive the traditional style of dress, appreciated the age-old patterns and evinced almost a sentimental fondness for certain characteristic, oriental materials. For her trousseau, for religious ritual and worship, and on all auspicious occasions, the Indian woman attaches great value and sentiment to certain fabrics and patterns, and the sari as a “fashioner of personality and a mirror of social life” in India plays a significant role.

The diverse climatic conditions of India have, no doubt, necessitated certain styles of clothing in different regions, while relations with neighbouring countries and the influx of populations from one area to another, owing to causes within or without the control of human beings, have had their effect on the Indian woman’s costume. While India has borrowed styles of clothing or ornamentation in the course of her association with other countries, she has adapted these styles to her own original mode of dress. It is thus worthwhile attempting to set the present Indian scene against the background of age-old traditions and costumes, because it is neither possible nor advisable just to pick up the present trends without giving a thought to the basic ideas and mode of dress of our ancients.

The exotic styles or less prevalent modes of dress of the present day in the evolution of the Indian woman’s costume are relegated to the background, as the sari assumes gigantic proportions in the matter of costume in India. Its various aspects and aesthetics no less than the role of particular fabrics in the fashioning of the sari, therefore, form the theme of this monograph.



10. *Yasoda, Deogarh, Gupta period.*



Ancient Costume

We shall not begin our study from the time when tribes and races began to enter this country and wield their superiority over the Indian people, but shall take into account the existence of an independent culture prior to the Aryan infiltration. Facts have been revealed to us through the finds in the Indus Valley and the Ganges Valley civilizations that a costume of the draped variety was prevalent in India all along. When recorded history unfolds its tale, we find that a garment comprising the pleated bunch of a plaid over a knotted end, tucked in at the navel, forms the general costume of the Indian folk. It is referred to as the *nivi* or gathers, and occurs in the early literature of this country. Although this word 'nivi' is contained in the earliest, namely, Vedic literature, it is believed that the word has its origin in Tamil literature which belongs to the oldest of the independent streams of the two Indian cultures, Dravidian and Aryan, of which there was a complete fusion later on. This is an important clue to the fact that a draped style of dress, resembling the present day mode of sari dress, existed in this country from times immemorial as an indigenous and authentic Indian costume, both in northern and southern India.

When the curtain rises over the scene of Vedic India, covering about 1500 years prior to the commencement of the Christian era, we have before us a mass of evidence of costumes prescribed for different occasions such as ritual, domestic and social purposes, the embellishment of costumes in numerous ways, draped costume and tailored costume. The complements to costume such as headgear, footwear, shawls and scarves as well as the other accessories also abound in literature. It is possible that a great many

new trends may have sprung up during the course of 'aryanisation' and the fusion of cultures, to which period Vedic literature belongs. History has, however, shown that, in the process of transformation, whatever exotic influences may creep in, the victorious party has ever tried to merge into the culture and tradition that prevails in a country, and this is especially true of costume. Whatever influences the Aryans exerted in India only contributed towards the evolution of a better costume, while it retained its essential characteristics and indigenous form.

As far as the evolution of costume goes, an eminent sociologist is of the view that it is necessary to treat the full period up to 320 years prior to the Christian era as one period, since it constitutes one phase of costume in India. By this time three distinct types of costume are discernible. A *lungi* type of garment for the lower part of the body with pleats or 'nivi' tucked in at the navel and a close fitting *choli* or bodice with a scarf-like overgarment, a second type somewhat like the sari, with one loose end or *pallav* for covering the body, instead of a separate garment, and the third type, comprising folk or *adivasi* costumes which more or less required only a meagre apparel. This was a one-piece garment tied sometimes at the waist like a skirt or knotted ingeniously above the shoulders or below the arms. There was not much difference between the dress of men and

11. Women worshippers of Jina,
Mathura Jain Stupa



12. Dancing Girls of the King of Banaras,
Gupta period.





13. Dance Scene, Ajanta.

women, and for both, where climatic conditions permitted, the upper garment could be discarded.

There is no doubt that great importance was attached to dress in Vedic India, and it was deemed necessary to be well clad. The terms *suvasana*, *suvasas* or *surabhi* indicate the appreciation of good dress. The epic period, coming towards the end of the Vedic age, gives greater information about dress. Mention occurs of *adhi-vasa* (over-garment) and *paryanahana* (wraps like shawls). There are indications of *drapi* (embroidered garments), *usnisa* (head-dresses) and *atka* (flowing garments).

Ornamentation, finery, gold and silver brocades (*hiranya-drapi*) and the costume of royalty are referred to. The special significance of the head-dress in the performance of religious ceremonies is advocated on many an occasion. Apastamba recommends the removal of the turban while paying respect to one's *guru* (teacher). Dress as an 'adjunct of personality' and as a valuable factor in social behaviour is emphasised, now and again.

The next phase of costume in India, it is believed, starts from about 320 B.C. and spills over to about 320 A.D. By now, fashionable trends, the influences of historical events and climatic considerations are positively noticed in the development of costume, and "eight to ten distinct varieties" of dresses come into vogue. The draped sari, however, predominates and holds sway over the length and breadth of India. More fashionable costumes such as the *kurta-salvar*, skirts, *cholis*, trousers, gowns and a number of head-dresses are added to the three basic types of dress mentioned earlier, viz. the *lungi* or skirt type with *choli*, the full sari with a *pallav* and a

one-piece dress, either a mere skirt or a combined garment, arranged out of a strip of material. One also comes across flowing overgarments, tubular pleated skirts, full skirts and *odhnis* (wraps), full saris, and combinations of *sadra* and *lungi* (tunic cum skirt).

In short, the tailored costume had definitely come into vogue, especially in the north-western region during the second phase (320 B.C. to 320 A.D.). The other regions that came under the influence of tailored costumes were the northern and central tracts of India, where the rigours of climate demanded greater protective measures.

The ancient and glorious seat of culture—Pataliputra, or Magadha, as it was known, is rich in evidence in many respects. Beautiful clothes and fashionable head-dresses for both men and women are noticed in the articles recovered from excavations there. It may safely be said that the stronghold of the Indo-Aryan languages, from the banks of the Ravi in the west to the Ganga basin in the east, had even more fashionable and decorative costumes than our own of the present day.

“The élite females sported spacious, fashionable and even fantastic headgears”. This definite trend in headgear fashions extended over the entire northern belt up to the eastern range. Tailored caps are further noticed such as those of the conical, squat, skull, stiff and large and straw variety. These emphasise the importance of the head-dress in the civilization of the Ganges Valley and their popularity among the people of this period. Among head-dresses a variety of forms of turbans, coming under the plaid variety, were worn by both men and women all over India in a more or less identical manner.



14. Women in a Procession, Ajanta

Most of the references of this period are culled from sculptures, terra-cottas and paintings. While it would seem that in the sculptures there are a large number of female figures the upper parts of whose body are decorated only with ornaments, it would be wrong to make a generalization in this respect and conclude that it was usual for women to dress in this manner. A closer study of many of these sculptures often indicates a close-fitting bodice or a coatee type of garment and a diaphanous apparel drawn over the body. The arm decoration on the sculptures was not always an ornament but a decorated sleeve. Scrutiny reveals an embroidered fringe or border of the *choli* either above the elbow or on the forearm or for the neck-line.

An exposure of the midriff and navel, however, seems to have been a style, the former continuing up to our own days. The *choli* or bodice was tied by a knot between the breasts, or at the back. There was invariably a decorative neck-line for the *choli* or upper garment.

It is believed that this phase of Indian costume (from 320 B.C. to 320 A.D.) more or less indicates the stabilization of costume in India, giving it a regional, or, to use a happier word, a zonal character. Further evidence is brought out with regard to distinctiveness in the professional and vocational groups, the peasantry and the main stream of inhabitants wearing a small cloth (*colaka*) arranged to cover the body according to clan rules. Royalty, soldiers, priests, foreign dignitaries and the bulk of the populace, all have distinctive costumes assigned to them.

It is considered that the *sakacha* mode of dress came to be introduced about this time. The earliest representations of a *sakacha* mode of wear is found in the sculptures of Bahrut (2nd century B. C.). The tailored trousers or pyjamas, which were more comfortable for the working people, came as a parallel to the *sakacha* style of dress. The ingenuity of this *sakacha* mode of dress is remarkable, as it indicates a method of arranging a long strip of material which would serve the threefold purpose of sari, pyjama and overgarment, all combined. This costume denotes a distinct improvement and is an index to the thought bestowed on costume with special reference to occupation and the working individual, to whom it is a great convenience and advantage.

The next change that strikes one is that the large variety of headgears met with in the Sunga period, *circa* 2nd century, B.C., and later in the Satavahana period, gradually disappear in a large section of society. There is also a discarding of it amongst women, who take more and more to girdles. With the head-dresses going out of vogue towards the end of the period, the hair styles came into prominence. Fashion cycles are perpetual, and, while one type of embellishment gains popularity, another wanes. The menfolk, however, have continued constantly with their headgear, may be because of the outdoor work frequently required of them and more as a protective factor. It may also be inferred that by this time a fuller and more comfortable costume developed and the women could do away with their head-dresses and use the loose end of the sari or the *odhni* in place of the large and cumbersome turban or other headgear.

The next 800 years, from 320 A.D. to 1100 A.D., are significant. The wheel has already turned, and the turban shows an indication of being only a complement to male costume, while it is out of vogue amongst females. A differentiation in the dress *ensemble* of males and females thus came into existence and established itself as a permanent feature.

The era abounds in data of an archaeological as well as a literary character. A classical language has been developed, literature has been enriched and the art of painting also has reached its zenith. The rich frescoes in the country enable one to come to conclusions easily. A panorama of costumes, fashions, hair styles and ornaments meets the eye and the entire picture of costume in India unfolds itself. The bifurcation into two distinct channels, *viz.* of female and male costume, is established by the end of the period.

Regional forms subsequently became more marked. The *sakacha* mode of dress became more popular and developed into a dhoti for males and a sari for females. Both found the tucking in of the bottom loose end of the front pleats, at the back, a useful and comfortable style, and this mode of dress gained ground, especially in Central India and in the Deccan. Its influence extended even down to the South, and a mixture of both styles continued in south India.

The *choli*, a complement to the sari, apparently came by now to be regarded as an essential garment all over India amongst the



15. Female Figure, Pawaya, Gwalior, 4th cent. A.D.

so-called cultured class. The clans living in primitive ways, however, continued with their original mode of dress. Rajashekhara's reference in *Karpurmanjari* that spring had set in and enabled the women to discard their bodices throws light on, and supports, the theory that the upper garment had evolved more on climatic than any other considerations.

Sanskrit and Prakrit literature contain ample references to dress and its many forms. Vivid descriptions of the varied types denote aesthetics, deportment and fashion. As many as twenty-three writers have given descriptions of dress, but Rajashekhara's *Kavyamimansa* written in the 10th century, is supposed to establish the existence of regional costume, and is considered as a more or less authentic record of the costumes that existed in India at the time. He speaks in his work of the affinities in the costumes of the north and north-western regions of Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Malva and Central India. His descriptions are considered to be a correct appraisal of the costume styles, and not merely imaginative narratives.

Rajashekhara mentions four basic costumes of the country in his work and describes the diverse modes of dress in different regions. The mode of the Central Region, it appears, appeals strongly to his poetic Muse, who settles down finally in Berar fascinated by the mode of dress there.

Taken as a whole, this period brings to notice many new features of dress such as veils, mantles, cloaks and jackets. References are also available in the matter of dress for unmarried girls, married women and mothers, thus giving further clues to the ideas, aesthetics and social customs prevalent at the time. The literature

of this period reveals the types of ornamentation on costume in a more precise manner. We have an idea of the popular colours for occasions, the intricate woven designs, the embellishments on costume, and the colours for *cholis* and materials used as *choli* lengths. A standardization of lengths for saris and *choli* pieces may have been more or less determined during this phase of Indian costume.

By far the most interesting aspect of the costume of this period is the trend towards our present mode of dress. The traces of our national costume, “the Nehru shirt, Chudidhar pyjama, the Gandhi cap as well as the Barabundi”, it is believed, are to be seen in the frescoes of this period.

Historically, this was a period of complete reorganization of Indian society, when the barriers between Vedic and non-Vedic concepts were broken down by the people accepting a philosophy “which found general acceptance among the intellectual classes”. A middle path, shorn of rigid ritual and religious bigotry, was struck in order to bring the Indian people under a common banner. Costume, therefore, must have established itself about this time, more on a geographical basis than on sectarian lines. The innumerable costumes thus gave way to more pronounced costumes approved on different lines. Utility, aesthetics and a common style of dress with reference also to the availability of materials seem to have dominated the sphere of dress, and regional costumes came to stay.

The next stage of development, it would seem, is to be looked for after the end of the 10th century. Political invasions had their impact on costume, and it was but natural for the people who were closer to the ruling powers to follow largely the styles set by them. A definite change in the costume of the people of the north-western region is apparent, and the changes are more noticeable in the costumes of men who had perforce to mingle with the powers that were and take to costumes as a matter of course or state policy. The women, however, even though influenced to a large extent, stuck to their basic Indian sari as fast as they could. This trend is noticeable in our own age as well. While men changed their styles of dress with the Moghul and British influences, and now adhere to the national costume, women have unceasingly carried on with their glorious and graceful sari. Neither foreign power nor

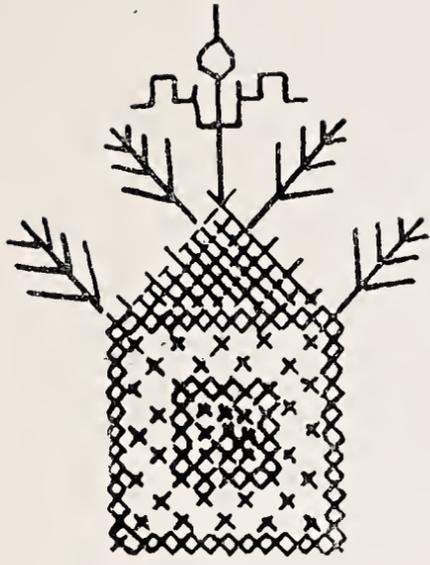


16. Toilet Scene, Ajanta

indirect influences such as foreign travel have changed women's dress in India. If ever there is a change, it must be through an evolutionary process. A universal resolve necessitated by circumstances has, no doubt, contributed largely towards the evolution of the sari style in a particular way. This fact is borne out especially after the independence movement began, when the people came closer together for a common cause. The last World War, cloth shortage and higher prices, perhaps, also contributed in their own way towards the evolution of a national form of costume for the Indian woman.

The phase of costume in India during the last 900 years, *i.e.* between 1100 and the 20th century, marks the rise and fall of two imperialist powers in India. Their influence in the matter of dress has been tremendous on the nation, as a whole, especially on account of alien ideas in dress and the import of piece goods which poured in with the increasing trade of western countries with this country and more or less determined the tailored costume and helped to spread it widely. But the beginning of the 19th century shows greater signs of the evolution of a national costume and the mid-20th century will be a landmark in the history of women's costume in India.

With the dawn of independence there has been a greater consciousness in the minds of the people with regard to national arts and crafts. There has been a concerted effort for their revival in new forms to suit the modern age and the living conditions of modern society. The beauty of the age-old handicrafts of India, born of the thought and effort of generations of artisans, is being recognized more and more. The new age, undoubtedly, promises prosperity for the artisan and calls for a greater creative effort on his part in the context of rapidly changing circumstances, and, in its turn, demands greater all-round patronage from the general public.



CHAPTER III

Fabrics and Handwork

From a general idea of the evolution of women's dress in this country we may now pass on to the actual materials that were used for the purpose. The introduction of cotton as raw material for clothing constitutes one of the landmarks of civilization. In this country it can be traced back to pre-historic times, since pieces of coloured cotton material have been recovered from the Indus Valley excavations. Besides, the Babylonian and Greek words 'Sindhu' and 'Sindon' respectively, for cotton are associated with its origin in the outlying tracts of the Sindhu or Indus river, as far as foreign references are concerned, but the fertile black earth region of the Deccan, comprising the oldest plateau in the world geologically, as a cotton yielding area, cannot be ignored by us, and we have to conclude that cotton was produced in several parts of the country, as at present.

The facts of the material having been found in the Indus Valley excavations, which showed a stage of textile development in the woven, dyed and finished product, and the existence of the weaving industry in the southern cotton-growing areas, no doubt, enable us to come to the conclusion that cotton formed one of the staple cloth fibres in the weaving industry of this country. Wool also must have been one of the yarn constituents, at least in the north-western regions, but the tropical climate relegated its general use to the background, while silk has had a wider popularity in the country, as a whole, owing to its tropical utility. Cotton was also more economical, of a washable and enduring nature, and produced in larger quantities, compared to wool and silk, with the result that it came to be used as the chief material for the clothing of the bulk of the population.

Nevertheless, the role of silk has been equal to that of cotton, while imitation as well as cheaper silk fibres have been spoken of in several places in ancient literature. It seems that there existed various other types of fabrics also. For example, ancient literature and the classics, in particular, contain the words, *hiranyadrapī*, *patto*, *kossu*, *candataka*, *kambal*, *shamulya*, *barasi*, *dursha*, *kshouma*, *pandava*, *tarpya* and, last but not least, *karpas*, which embrace nearly all the prevalent materials of our own age.

Amazing links are to be found in the chain of historical evidence of recognized and famous costume fabrics. One can go back to the Ṛgvedic period for the gold-woven fabric—*hiranyadrapī*, to the Epic period for the pearl-fringed fabric—*manichira*, the fine cottons of Ganjam, Mysore and the Karnatak, to the Jain authorities for Indian silks—*patto*, to the gorgeous Paithanis from the great ancient trading and industrial centre, Pratisthan or Paithan, as it is now known, figuring in the early records of Greece (2nd and 3rd centuries B.C.), to Buddhist literature for Banaras fabrics—*Baranseyyak*, to the descriptions in Banabhatta's works of the 7th century for the tie and dye materials—*chunaris*, to the finds of Fostat, the old capital of Egypt, where cloth of Gujarat manufacture has been found, to the existence of the *Patola* of Gujarat in the 10th century *circa*, to the Sultanate period until the 16th century for the fine muslins of Oudh and Dacca, to the great Moghul and Kashmir rulers for the effulgence of the art of embroidery and carpet-making and to the Maratha period for the gold-encrusted Chanderi silk gauzes and the beautiful Indore saris. All these bespeak our cultural heritage and the age-old story of hand-weaving and handicrafts.

While there are comparatively few records in the very early literatures with regard to the actual textiles or costumes, a few can be found on the subject in the *Asvalayana Gṛhya Sutra*. But the fact that costume played a significant role in connection with religious ceremonies has been proved in later periods of that age. That there was an independent culture prevailing in India before there was aryanisation has also been proved. Even after the infiltration and intermingling of peoples and the blossoming of a new culture, India “could not escape being looked upon as the country *par excellence* of non-Aryan peoples”. Besides, there is a

view prevailing that the word 'siri' occurring in Vedic literature has been adopted from the Tamil 'siri, cire or silai'. The sari is also associated with the word *shati* (Vedic), meaning an overgarment. According to the view that both the words *nivi* and *siri* have their origins in ancient Indian literature, the latter having been adopted from the word *silai*, one cannot help concluding that the origins of the modern Indian words *niri* or *gathers* and *sari* are lost in antiquity, and had been associated for ages with the Indian woman's dress, even before the Vedic times, and during the pre-historic period of Mohenjo-daro.

Later literature, represented by the *Satapatha Brahmana*, Panini's works and the great Epics, contains innumerable proofs of the existence of clothes, and clothes, too, of a high order, with ornamental features embodied in them. 'Vasana' or cloth meant costume generally, and the Rajasuya Yajnya was an occasion for the bringing together of clothing materials from all parts of the country for display. Subsequent to the Vedic period and the Epics, Jain literature points to the widespread use of silken garments. The word '*patto*' occurring in this literature still prevails in some Indian dialects and languages. 'Chinansuki' or 'Chinansuya' is another reference to silks and, perhaps, indicates the contacts that India had with China.

Woollen materials, too, were equally popular. The *Atharva Veda*, the *Mahabarni* and the *Shivi Jatakas* often speak of woollens, while Gandhar (Kandahar) and the Punjab were also famous for woollen materials. We next come across Pali or Buddhist literature for further evidence. At this stage, the atmosphere has become clearer and there are references to special fabrics and colours and to the tastes of the people. Pali literature refers in detail to *Baranseyyak* or *Kasseyyak* (Banarasi fabric).

It is said that when the Buddha attained *nirvana* (eternal rest) his body was wrapped up in a Banarasi fabric which shot rays of dazzling blue, yellow and red colour. Banarasi fabrics are also mentioned in the *Majjhimanikaya*. It would be pertinent to refer here to the fashions and tastes of the people of Vaisali who had a great liking for beautiful clothes. It is said that, when they went to meet the Buddha who was on his way from Ambapalika, they adorned themselves with clothes that matched their

complexion. Dark-skinned persons wore lighter and brighter clothes, while the fair-skinned wore darker clothes. In one of the *jatakas* containing the description of Kalkanni, it is said that she wore blue clothes, blue make-up or *vilepana*, and adorned herself with blue beads. Thus, the matching of colours with clothes and ornaments, suited to the complexion of the wearer, was not only known thousands of years ago but widely practised. Much earlier in the Vedic period also coloured clothes are referred to. Not only are they in evidence, but certain colours were supposed to be worn for certain ceremonies. There is, thus, a reference to the yellow clothes worn by Sita and red blouses worn by others on certain occasions. The Mohenjo-daro finds have revealed that madder-dyed fabrics were also prevalent in the pre-historic civilization of India.

To turn to the ornamentation of fabrics and their aesthetics



17. Banaras Fabric

from the materials that have come down through the ages in our country, it is clear that design and colour are the pivot on which the fashions and styles revolve. The forms of Indian costume have undergone changes, gradually and imperceptibly. The basic mode of dress has continued ceaselessly, but subtle arrangements in the *pallav* or veil portion of the sari, or its actual tucking in, and the seemingly few changes in borders, *pallavs* and in the ornamentation of fabrics by various methods caused fashions to continue in a state of constant flux.

Handwork has vast potentialities, and the standardization and uniformity of the plaid material in clothes enables the weaver and the designer to display their talents to the full. It would be no exaggeration to say that any two uniform designs would be entirely different, if produced by different individuals. There would be an appreciable difference also in the texture of the fabric.

The enhancement of the beauty of fabrics through various processes such as weaving, dyeing, printing, embossing and embroidery is of considerable importance in Indian costume fabrics, especially in the sari. All these beautiful handicrafts have been practised in India for centuries, and evidence to this effect is also abundant. Apart from the sources already mentioned, the diaries of foreign travellers indicate the great advance made in the ornamentation of materials with the help of work-rooms, guilds and large-scale manufacture of artistic goods.

Combined processes for beautifying fabrics and slight variations of designs, where the artisan's skill and imagination played a prominent part, are of great value. They display a considerable artistic and creative effort on the part of the artisan. These designs are based on a number of factors, and may even be associated with legend and symbolism. The chief motifs are drawn from nature's untold wealth. The religious symbols which are



18. *Chunaree or Bandhani*



19. Patola Sari

often seen on fabrics must be interpreted as an outcome of a spiritual urge springing from a close association with natural environments, and not merely as influences of religion in a narrow sense.

The Vedic period records a number of ornamenting factors for fabrics, chief among them being the art of weaving. Spinning and weaving were chiefly practised by women, and a number of terms for the process of cloth making have been found. The love for a great deal of ornamentation and the liking for elaborately designed fabrics seem to be ingrained in the minds of Indians ever since the period of recorded history.

Kasida, or embroidery, was widely prevalent. Gold and silver wire was invariably used for finery, borders, *pallavs*, frills and tassels. It would be in the fitness of things to note that 'pesas' is a term for such work and that the adornment of textiles with 'pesaskari' was in great vogue. Interesting light has been thrown upon the word 'aroka' which is believed to be a synonym for *alankar* or adornment of clothes. The word 'aroka' is also believed to be derived from the Tamil word 'arukani', which means the ornamental borders of cloth.

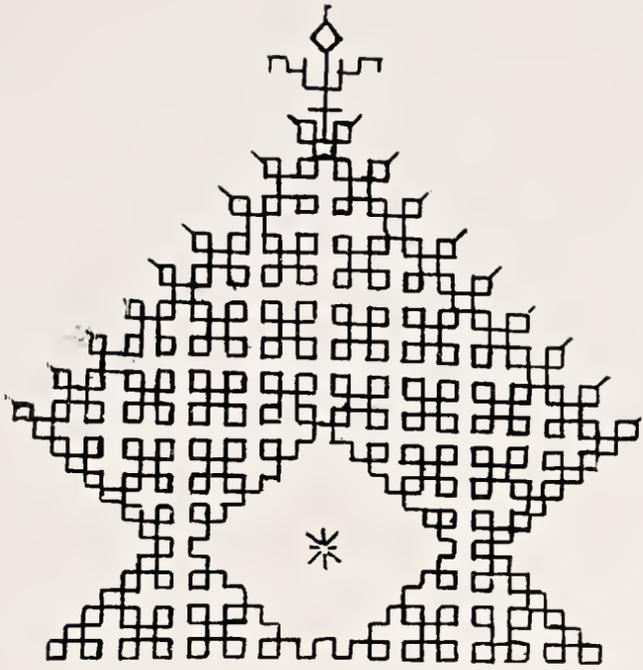
The Tamil origins of words relating to costume and the style of wearing clothes which have come down to us through the ages, lead us to infer that the authentic Indian costume comprising a distinctive plaid type of garment existed in this country ever since the beginning of the history of costume. The wearing of this form of garment thus assumes great significance in the history of our country. Its stabilization and the improvements in its quality, design and quantity have, therefore, to be regarded as a national responsibility in which both the Government and the people have an equal stake.



20. *Kasida (Mysore)*



21. Orissa Ikkat Sari
(handspun and handwoven silk)



CHAPTER IV

Handloom Products

From a brief and casual survey of the Indian woman's ancient costume and its constituents we can say, without hesitation, that loom products constituted by far the larger proportion of costume in ancient India. By loom products are meant those fabrics which come ready for wear straight from the looms in a complete form. Piecegoods and tailored costumes were comparatively less common, and are largely the result of the modern machine age.

Being the general costume of almost half the adult population of the country, the sari naturally assumes great significance, especially from the economic point of view, and calls for attention from different angles. As far back as 1866, when a general survey of costume was made by J. Forbes Watson, it was concluded that the bulk of the clothing of the Indian population came directly from the handlooms, and that it constituted the plaid variety. Long strips of material of standard length and width were used as saris, dhotis, turbans, shawls, scarves and *dupattas*. Even the *choli* pieces were of standard size. Thus, the range for the marketing of handloom products was a wide one. Even the complete transformation of costume in India during the past fifty years, with the introduction of powerlooms, the establishment on a large scale of the mill industry and the tendency towards modern styles of tailored garments, as a result of greater western contacts have not appreciably diminished the demand for the handloom sari. The durability and individuality of handmade products and the conformity of the plaid type of garment to the functional needs and decorative aspects of costume, place these products in an important



22. *An old Baluchar Sari.*

position. The handloom sari fulfils thoroughly the purposes required of it. There is no wastage of design or ornamentation, and the loose end which gives the costume a robe-like dignity and beauty affords the weaver ample scope for his skill, ingenuity and aesthetic sense. The mode of wear also minimises his labours in the matter of ornamentation, since he has the option to delete ornamentation in unnecessary portions of the garment. The texture of the sari goes a long way in the matter of comfort and the draping of the sari normally, and it also adds to the richness of the costume. Handloom fabrics, therefore, with their individuality of design and texture, meet the demands of the public to a large extent and, in a way, set the fashion.

At this stage, it would be worth pondering the exact situation of handloom weaving as contrasted with that of powerloom or mill production. The foundations of power weaving were laid in Bombay in 1854 with the establishment of the first mill. The powerlooms in the mills in the country now number about 2,03,786. After the Fact Finding

Committee's report in 1952 and the All India Handloom Board's estimate that there are 25.6 lakhs handlooms, it has been generally accepted that there are at least 20 lakhs of looms which can provide employment to two persons each on an average. It is also believed that, with the expansion of the mill industry, about 30 lakhs of handloom weavers had been thrown out of employment in the space of 20 years.

The efforts of the Government of India by the establishment of an All India Handloom Board and the Board's efforts to organize the handloom weavers on a co-operative basis have resulted in a marked improvement in the manufacture of handloom fabrics. The sales of these materials also have been stepped up considerably. A sum of Rs. 250 lakhs was set apart for the promotion of handloom textiles in 1954-55. It was aimed that over 22 lakhs of looms should be brought under the co-operative scheme. This all-round drive for the development of utility handloom textiles is expected not only to revive the production of such fabrics, but also to give a fillip to traditional designs that embellish these fabrics through the work of the All India Handicrafts Board.

The All India Handicrafts Board and the Handloom Board have, therefore, launched a two-pronged drive in this connexion. The Handicrafts Board is especially interested in the aesthetic revival and popularisation of ancient designs as well as



23. The Pallava design marks the advent of the steam engine in India



24. Paithani Sari

improvement of design in all handloom products. With this end in view, research design centres as well as emporia for the promotion of sales have been set up. Exhibitions and show centres are being organized in foreign countries. Already, a number of exhibitions have been held, and design centres have been started.

It is an established fact that in mill-production the wage bill of the workers constitutes a small percentage of the cost, while the handloom provides a very high

percentage of earnings and also employment for a larger number of workers. It is on this basis of providing employment for a larger number, and ensuring the flow of a greater quota of wealth to the worker, that efforts are required for the encouragement of handicrafts as a whole.

Looking back a hundred years to 1866, one is amazed to find that, in spite of the heavy incursions of the mill industry into the field of handicrafts, the textile as well as other handicrafts still survive. Most of the age-old centres of handloom textiles which were taken stock of in 1866 still continue to produce beautiful materials. It must be remembered that the traditional crafts of India are carried on zealously by certain families or groups of people in specific areas. There has been, no doubt, a great depression in the matter of the handloom industry with the impact of power-looms, but the encouragement given to the handloom weaver and



25. A century old heirloom in raw silk from Hyderabad



26. Old Sari (Nanded)

the artisan after independence, and the efforts that the Government is making through the two Boards to restore the equilibrium between handloom textiles and mill products, have borne fruit to a large extent.

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, in his book, "*The Economics of Khadi*", dwells at length on the importance of *khadi* or handspun and handwoven cloth. He describes it as an important handicraft, "precious to the nation as a symbol and a concept". This handicraft has been linked up with the nation's struggle for freedom from the time of the awakening of the people at the time of the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills in 1918-19, and is now considered the symbol of independence in this country.

In an earlier chapter mention has been made that cotton weaving constitutes a landmark in the history of civilization. It can be said without hesitation that the *khadi* movement was the beginning of the renaissance of Indian culture. To quote Shri Nanda's words again, "for India the revival of *khadi* marks the beginning of an epoch of spiritual regeneration, the power and beauty of which time alone will unfold."

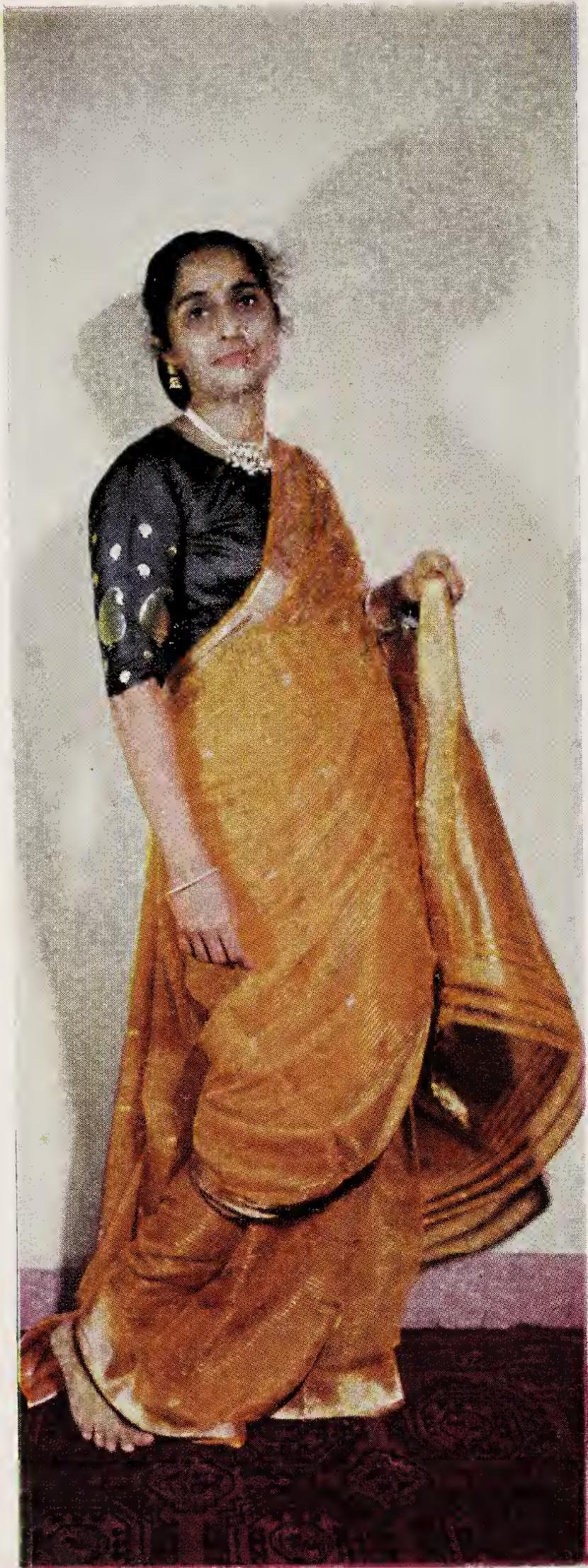
To revert to the typical fabrics of India during the last hundred years, it is clear that both fine and coarse textiles were being

produced all over the country. They included plain, figured, striped or checked materials. Special centres existed for coloured cotton, while Nepal and Burma also were contributing skirt materials to this country. The latter country was a part of this nation until recently. Eastern and, especially southern India, including the west coast, show a number of silk weaving centres, including wild silk centres. Among the States, Bengal headed the list for silk exports, Madras followed next and Bombay was third in order. Large consignments of silk were exported from all over India to Europe, the Middle East and the Far East during the 19th century.

For some of the famous Indian textiles like the Paithani, Baluchar, Indore and "Chunderi" fabrics, Baroda, Nagpur and Berar saris one has to go back another two hundred years and more. The strongholds of Maratha power, the Peshwa power, in particular, which can still take pride in the production of these fabrics, were famous centuries ago for these special fabrics. Even with the incursion of the powerloom the characteristics of their products have not changed.



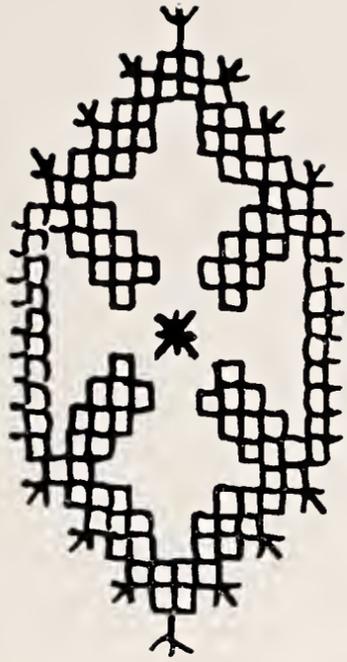
27. *Muslin and Gold*



28. *Chanderi Sari*
(*Maharashtrian Style*)

On the other hand, there has been an improvement in some textiles, and they are producing textiles suited to modern needs with millspun yarn in the same traditional designs and colours through small power-driven weaving machines.

The table in Appendix II will give an idea of the centres that were operating about a century back.



The Modern Indian Woman's Costume

The modern Indian woman's costume during the past twenty-five years has undergone vast changes. The political awakening and the fight for freedom brought far-flung territories nearer and the bonds of friendship were knit into a common pattern of life. Such a situation was even more conducive to the evolution of a common style of dress which best suited the needs of the day. Other factors like the Khadi movement added still more to the growth and development of a national costume, and today one finds that India has moved fast towards it.

It would be advisable, however, to classify the dress of Indian women into different groups by analysing the principal modes of wear. Variations in styles, the introduction of new styles or the adaptation of certain features in the matter of clothes would then be easier of approach. Variations in styles or ornamentation add largely to the beauty and character of the *ensemble*. It is a healthy sign that oriental designs have found a place in the woman's wardrobe, and the excellence of the style is now more or less determined, not by the value of the fabric, but by aesthetics, individuality and the maximum use of Indian materials and accessories. The story of the Indian woman's costume has necessarily to be the story of sari and *choli* fabrics, which mainly set the styles in this form of costume. Important cities like Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta lead in oriental fashions and modern women are more and more appreciative of rural styles and thereby help in bringing to the urban areas the picturesque atmosphere of the Indian village. Most of the oriental textiles are now being appreciated, and there has been a definite move towards traditional Indian designs.

In a style of dress it is not fashion alone that is important. Other factors such as comfort, utility and endurance of the beauty of a style are of even greater significance. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, and, no matter what happens, a beautiful thing will always retain its character and continue to communicate aesthetic joy to the person who owns it or sees it.

Styles in dress, at one time, conveyed distinctive qualities between clan and clan, when society was grouped into smaller units. Today, the social sphere is widening and there are signs of even geographical barriers breaking down. This means a blending of

29. Gujarati Style



styles and the acceptance of new and good features of another style for the improvement of a current style and, simultaneously, encouragement of handicrafts and their utilization to the best possible economic advantage of the nation. Therefore, in enumerating styles, emphasis has been laid on cultural aspects and the handicrafts that help to fashion dress rather than on cut, form and variety which are the chief features of the new fashions in modern tailored garments.

The five or six yards' sari with a *choli* has set in as a common style of dress in India today. This common style has been handed

30. *Nivi or Modern Style*



down by our ancients and today, at the end of thousands of years of history, promises to remain as the most suitable, graceful and convenient style for this country. It also promises to the artisan a fair share for his work. Side by side with the sari, the demand for *choli* fabrics, skirt materials and children's dress material promises unlimited scope to the dealer in piece-goods as well.

The present popular sari style is such that the same sari can be worn in a number of enchanting ways (Madras, Orissa, Gujarat, Bengal, Rajasthan and so on), if one may say so. The originality in selecting and enhancing the beauty of a particular fabric rests with the wearer, who must choose a *choli* fabric to match the pattern in the sari fabric and also choose other accessories to complete the *ensemble*.

Side by side with the six yards' sari style which may be henceforth termed as the 'nivi' style is the 'sakacha' style comprising a longer strip of 9 yards of material which is more prevalent among working women, especially in Central India. This style is advantageous in view of the freedom of movement it enables for the limbs of the wearer. A parallel to this is the *kudta-salvar-dupatta* style, which has been accepted by voluntary organizations like the Home Guards for women's uniform, and is also prevalent in north India.

Innumerable other costumes, each more picturesque than the other, are to be seen, but they do not all find a place here, as this monograph is neither a costume study nor a fashion book. Our purpose is to evolve and promote a homogeneous mode of dress which has potentialities both from the aesthetic and economic point of view, and which can be used widely. At the same time, the picturesqueness of the rustic costumes and the adaptation of some of their materials to modern styles of dress need to be emphasized both for the continuance of traditional materials and from the point of view of handicrafts. The new age promises prosperity for the artisan, if public patronage and appreciation are forthcoming. The creation of literature on the Indian woman's dress has, therefore, its own value and significance. This volume may serve as a pointer to the many beautiful handicrafts that are allied to that premier and ancient art, the art of weaving, and its development in India. Details of costume that are cumbersome and elaborate, even though gorgeous and beautiful, have been omitted from this monograph for reasons already mentioned.

Coming to the details of the basic styles, it must be said that they fall into four categories:—

- (1) The 'nivi' style, which has become almost universal, comprises a five to six yards' sari of 45"—52" width, one loose end of which is either tucked into a skirt or fixed by a knot with enough material going round the waist and forming one end of the knot. The remaining portion is then gathered and tucked in over the knotted portion and, after being wound round the body, is draped over the left shoulder, the *pallav* end falling loose over the back and coming down to the seat. A variation in this style is made by the loose end being brought forward over the right shoulder again and the top end being tucked in at the waist (left side). This brings the *pallav* end in front and in a way fixes the pallav. In both styles the sari can be taken over the head, if required. Another style is to follow the



31. A shot silk sari from Bangalore



32. Bengali Style

second method and take the end over the left shoulder instead of tucking it in at the waist. Very often, a weight, usually a bunch of keys, keeps the *pallav* end over the left shoulder, but the *pallav* is retained in front. These are the three principal variations in the *nivi* style. These styles require a full undergarment reaching down to the ankles from the waist in the form of a skirt to serve as a lining to the fine apparel. A close-fitting *choli* to match with the sari completes the outer garments.

- (2) The 'sakacha' style requires a length of at least nine yards and a width of 52 inches. A narrow border and a narrow or a broad *pallav*, i.e. a breadth-wise border is required at one end. The sari is first worn like the 'nivi' sari, but the folds or *nivi* are voluminous. These are then split by taking the central bottom end between the legs and tucked in at the centre of the back, on the waist line. Among women of the working class and those living on the hills for the sake of compactness and comfort a shorter length is used, and the *pallav* and other loose ends are tucked in neatly. This prevents the sari from getting entangled

in machinery or bushes, as the case may be.

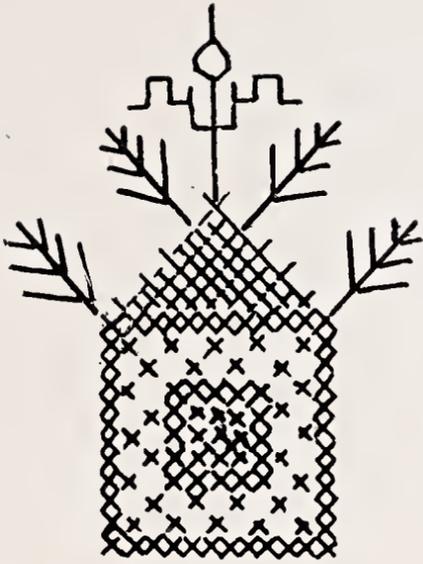
- (3) The 'Rajasthan', 'Malva' and 'Saurashtra' styles are similar to the 'nivi' style, but the gathers of the skirt are voluminous. The sari assumes secondary importance and can be of very light, diaphanous or flimsy material and of shorter length and width. It would then serve as a veil and is termed an *odhni* or a *dupatta*. The cholis in these styles are different in cut and pattern and sometimes leave the back bare.
- (4) The fourth group comprises the style where the sari recedes into the background. The skirt (*ghagra*) or the *salvar* contains voluminous folds, while a plaid strip serves as an *odhni* or *dupatta* over the *kudta* or *khamis*. This group does not strictly fall in the category of a sari, since it is really a composite, tailored garment.



33. Fashion Parade



34. *A South Indian Style*



CHAPTER VI

Sari Fabric Groups

In the previous chapter a classification of the general styles in the sari costume has been attempted. With each of these styles go certain fabrics, because the suitability of material and its special ornamentation tend to give to each style its characteristic beauty and elegance. Nevertheless, a blending of materials and their proper use in costumes is highly desirable, especially when the traditional and national dress assumes a significant role. Good selections of fabrics are important enough, but the small embellishments in the total *ensemble* of the Indian woman's dress also play their part as complements to it. From the point of view of handicrafts and the prosperity of the artisan the question of costume and its various styles, including the knick-knacks that help to beautify it, is worth pursuing. A detailed survey would be a colossal and statistical piece of work. In order to enable the lay person to get a panoramic view of the position of the Indian woman's dress and the textiles associated with it a casual survey of renowned fabrics has been attempted in this monograph.

It must be made clear that, while there are standard lengths for the different styles of saris, it is possible to buy the textiles peculiar to regions in nearly all the lengths required.

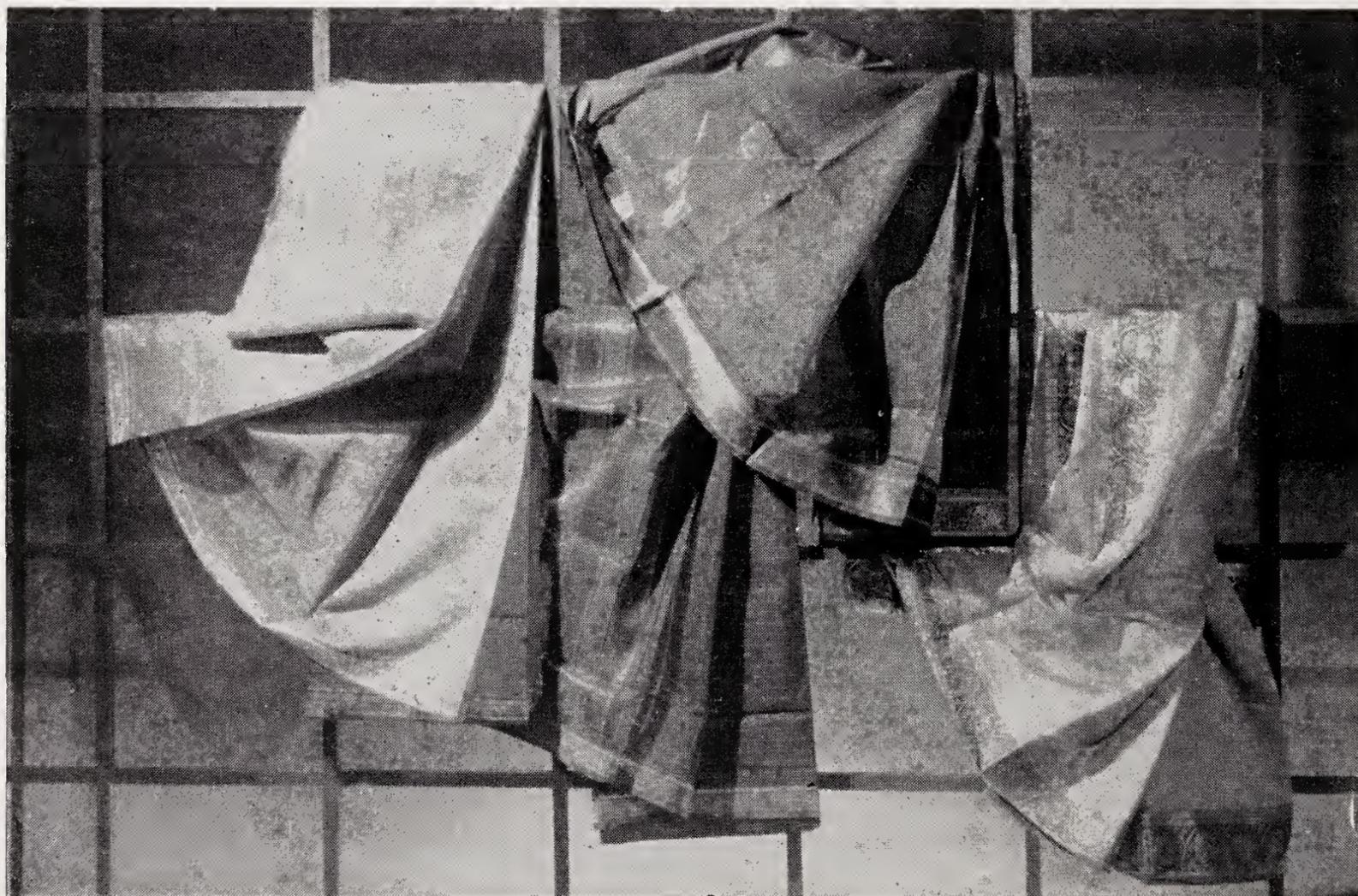
The plaids or sari lengths for different modes of wear are manufactured by several methods: (a) by complete hand processes like khadi which is both handspun and handwoven, (b) partly by hand with mill-spun yarn on handlooms and (c) with mill-spun yarn on small power-driven looms. In all these three categories it is possible to get saris of traditional designs and colours. Here the artisan plays

a definite role, his artistic sense and individuality are discernible in the goods he produces, and he is assured of a better economic deal in the sense that he is able to live in his normal surroundings, lead a normal domestic life in a fairly decent way and create the beautiful fabrics which he has learnt to make by a long period of apprenticeship to his elders. For a better wage and economic affluence he naturally depends on the appreciation and demand for his goods, which means popularity with the public and patronage from them.

We shall attempt the grouping of fabrics on a zonal basis. In a zonal classification the particular layout and design of the style is noticed, while certain special textiles are known by the name of the original producing centre. Some of these centres no longer produce these textiles, and there are some textiles which are produced in other centres, though they retain their original names.

The Central and Western India Group:—The central and western zones of India, comprising Madhya Bharat, Madhya Pradesh and Bombay States, have a distinctive style in saris. These saris are available in cotton and silk, in imitation silk or in mercerised

35. Madhya Pradesh Group

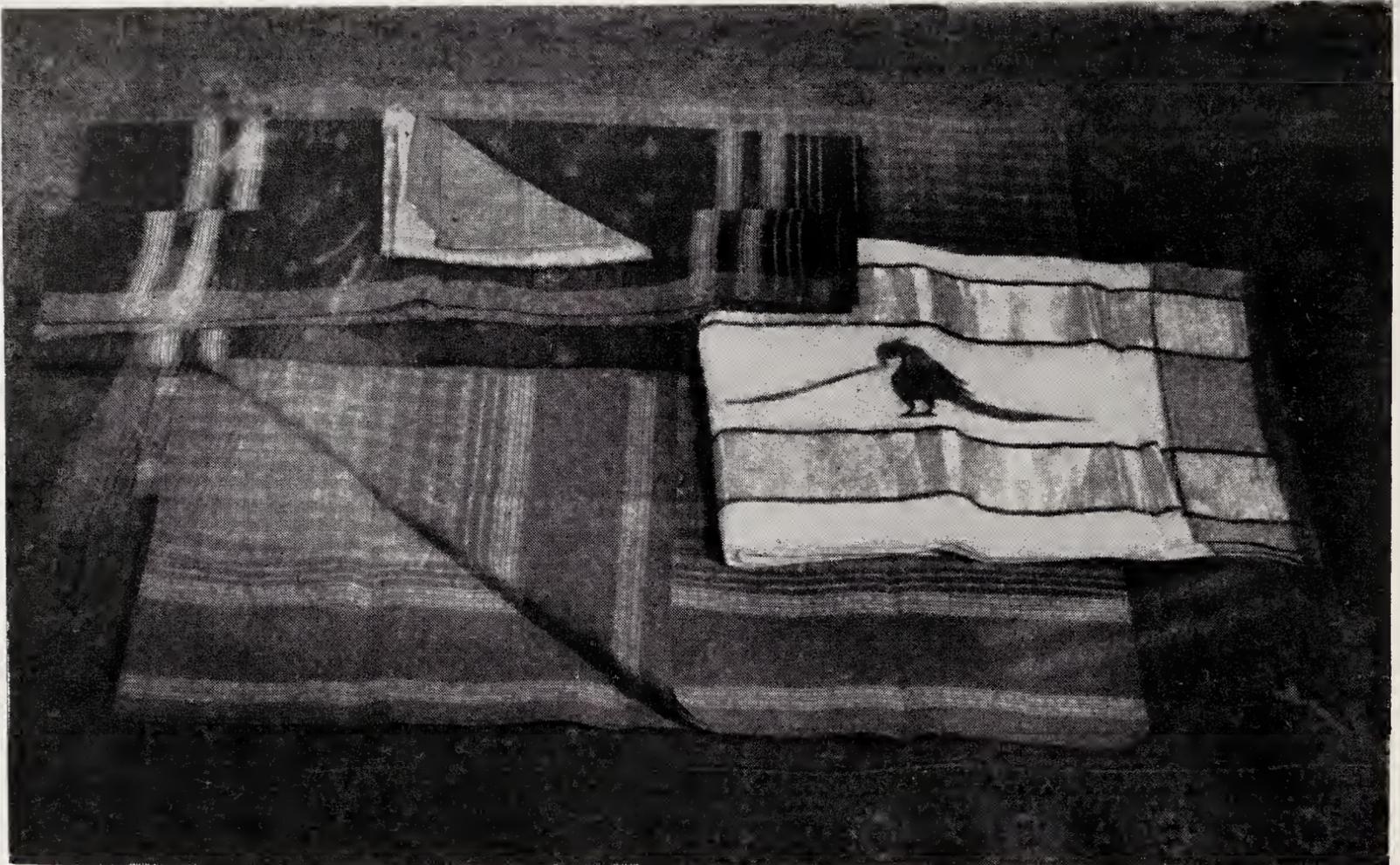


cotton and latterly also in rayon and nylon. They are fine in quality and are found both in pastel shades and in oriental colours. The sari patterns are in one or more colours and have striped or check designs. The borders vary in width, usually up to three inches, and are designed with several strands of lengthwise designs on a bright-coloured border strip. They have also floral motifs woven into the borders, which may be in cotton, silk or gold thread. The *pallav* is usually a three-striped, breadthwise band on either end of the sari. Several places in the districts of Ahmednagar, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Belgaum, Bijapur, Dharwar, Indore, West Khandesh, Kolhapur, Mhesana, Nasik, Nagpur, Poona and Thana are noted for a special style of saris known as Maheshwari, Indori, Khambayati Nagpuri or Shahapuri saris. There are variations in these styles, but basically they are of the same type. There is a difference in borders, especially with regard to the motifs, but the field of the sari itself has very much in common in colour and pattern, the floral motifs being normally absent.

The Deccan Group:—The Deccan group of saris is akin to the central India group, though a slight variation exists in the colour schemes which are of a darker shade, the borders are broader and

36. *Madurai & Coimbatore Group*





37. *Kalakshetra and Venkatagiri Saris.*

38. *Warangal and Wanaparti Textiles*



the *pallavs* much wider, and both are in the brighter tones of red, green and purple. The famous regions for these saris are Dharwar, Bijapur and Belgaum. There are several towns in these three districts which produce saris, but they are all known by the general names—Irkal saris and Shahapur saris, both Irkal and Shahapur being towns in the Bijapur and Belgaum districts respectively of the new Mysore State. Shahapur saris are akin to the Maheshwari type.

The Southern Group: (a) Coimbatore, Salem, Madurai, Madhavaram and Mangalore Saris:—This group of saris excels most of the other handloom saris in texture, design and colour. They are mostly in cotton with ordinary or *jari* borders, and are durable, fast in colour and produced in ever new designs. For day wear amongst the cotton, coloured saris, perhaps, they are the most comfortable and commendable.

The Southern Group: (b) Venkatagiri, and Travancore saris:—This class of saris is usually of the unbleached



39. Saris for casual wear

variety, with *jari* borders. The Venkatagiri saris have floral, leaf and bird motifs for the *pallavs* as well as the field. One must not miss the simple, yet elegant, materials of Malabar. Though there is not much of design in these materials, the quality itself is enough for the Travancore textiles to be classed among the good fabrics. They are invariably in white cotton, bleached or unbleached, with an elegant border in colour, or mostly in *jari*. Checks and stripes are also to be found in these materials, while simple motifs, too, are not uncommon.

The North-Eastern Group and West Bengal fabrics:—The textiles of the north-eastern zone, including Bengal, Bihar and Orissa may be placed in one category as the patterns of the saris have an affinity. The field of the sari is usually plain with a border of about two to four inches and the *pallav* has breadthwise stripes, plain or in the motifs of the borders. Ordinarily they are in cotton. Shantipur



40. *Irkal Saris*

and Bishnupur, however, produce saris of fine quality in silk, somewhat like the Chanderi textiles. Bengal fabrics have special characteristics, and the districts of Nadia, Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum, Hooghly and Kadia are especially known for their cotton saris with silk borders manufactured in pastel shades and with intricate motifs for borders and *pallavs*. The *Nilambari* is a popular and traditional sari of West Bengal. Murshidabad ranks high among the important silk weaving centres and it produces silk saris similar in style to the cotton saris and *thans* in silk which are used for the printed saris, very popular among modern women.

Manipur textiles:—Manipur has some very beautiful handloom cloths, though the sari styles are comparatively fewer, but distinctive. Manipur is especially known for oriental cloths, more suitable for shawls, skirts and drapings or as furnishing fabrics.

Assam fabrics:—The style of wear of the Assamese women being distinctive from other styles, in as much as it has retained its two piece character, comprises plaids woven on small looms with floral motifs and stripes both in silk and cotton. Raw silk known as moonga and tasar is used. Delightful designs are to be seen in the pallavs and borders and on the field of the plaid pieces (see ill. No. 54.)

The Rajasthan and Saurashtra group:—We cannot say that these areas have special handloom textiles, but they certainly excel in the ornamentation processes, using for the purpose both the fine and the coarse varieties of materials available from handlooms and mills. When we refer to this group, we have to take into account the *bandhani* or *chunari* plaids in floral and striped designs, both in cottons and silks, of Jaipur, Ajmere and Bikaner, used for saris, turbans, *odhnis* and *dupattas*, the hand-embroidered skirt and *choli* lengths and the *Khari* prints of Cutch and Kathiawar. Printed *odhnis*, comprising two and a half yards length each, are also extensively worn by a section of the people of central and western India. The Vanjaras, Bhils and several forest and peasant sections of the people use such *odhnis* over a short plaid garment tucked in, in the *nivi* style, at the waist. These *odhnis* are of a distinctive character, unlike the finer *odhnis* of Rajasthan.

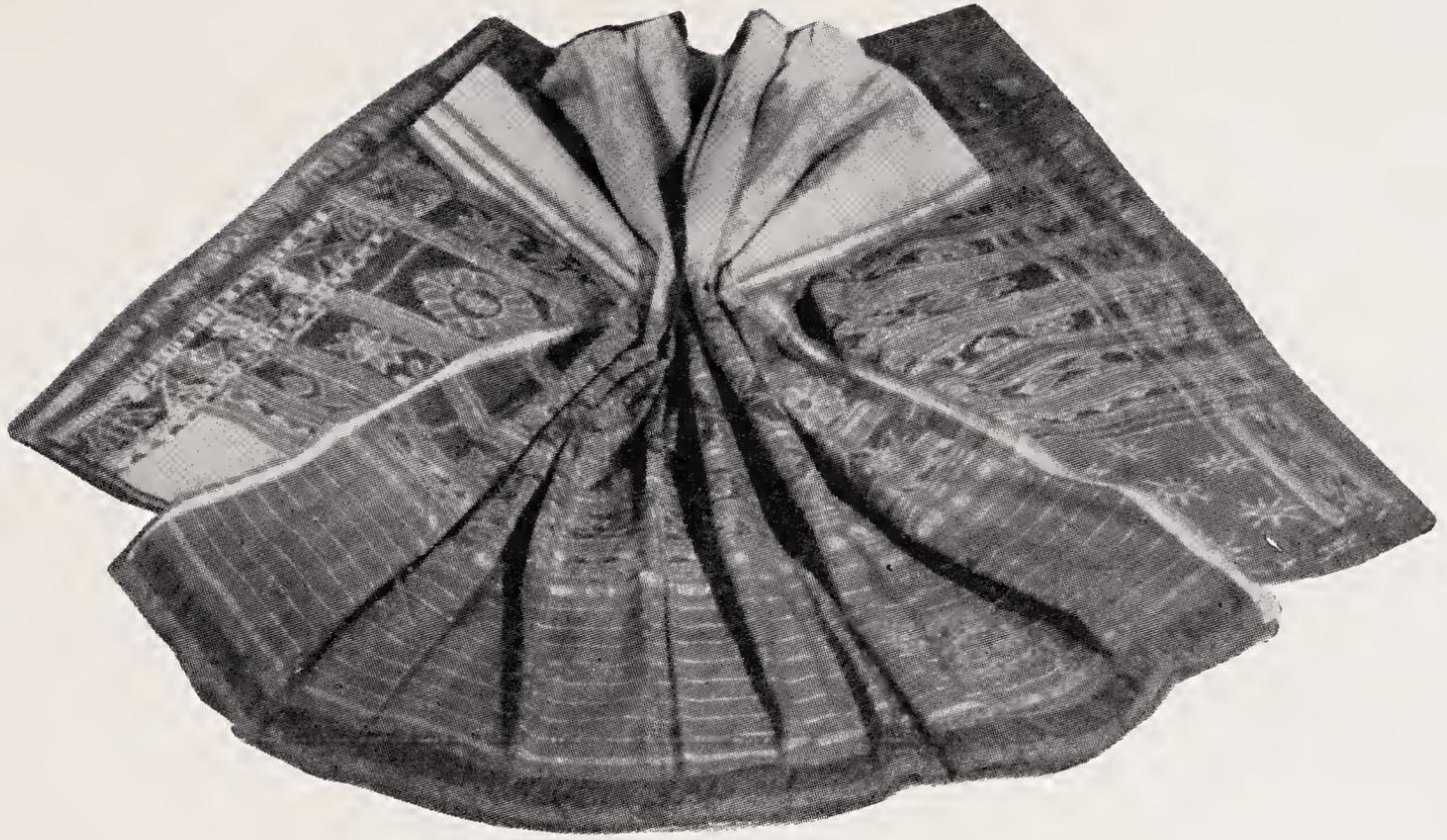
Common materials for saris and cholis:—Before we close the chapter on the common sari fabrics, we should enumerate them



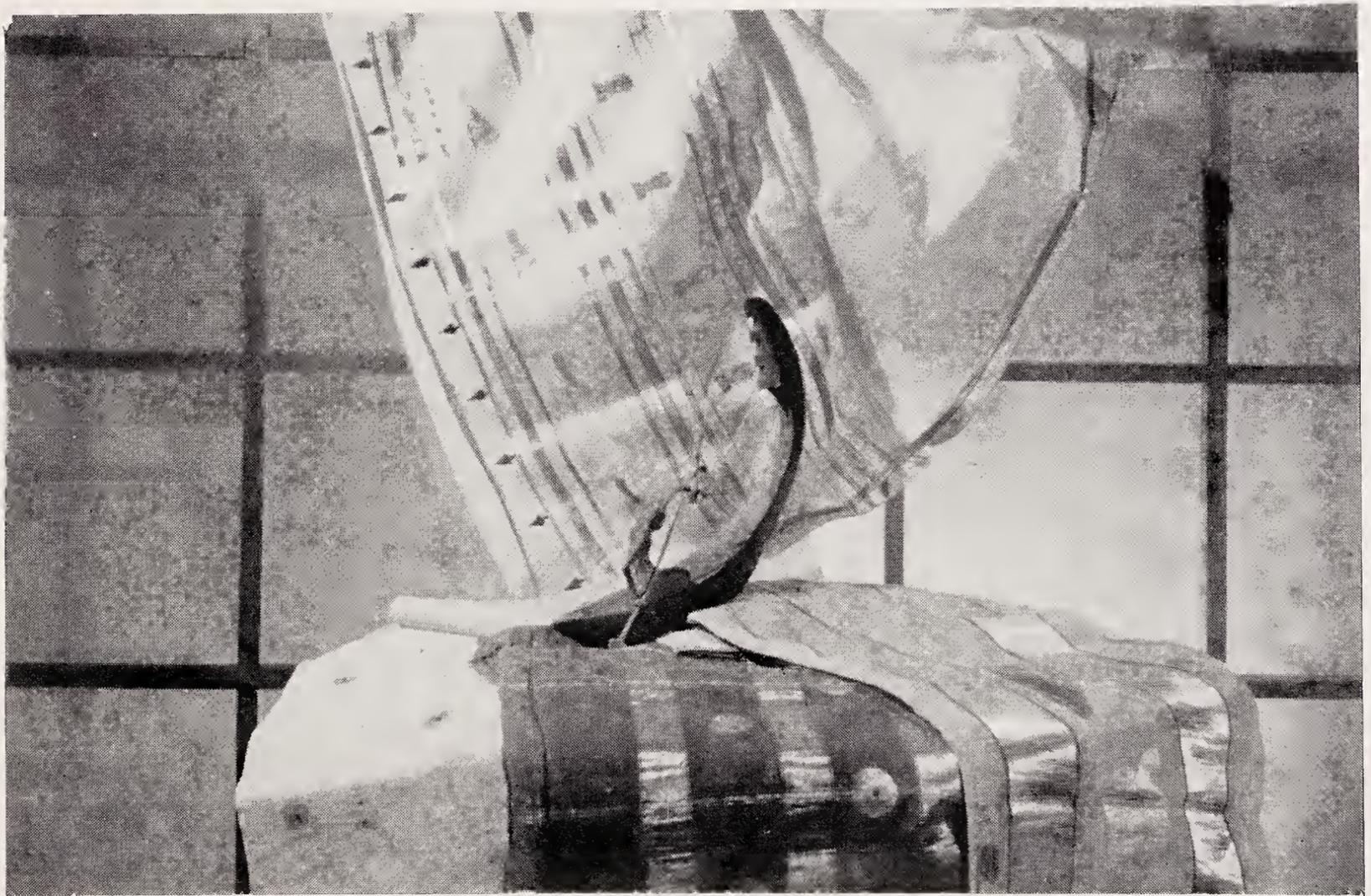
41. Jamdani Sari



42. *Bandhani with Jangaon Bead Blouse*



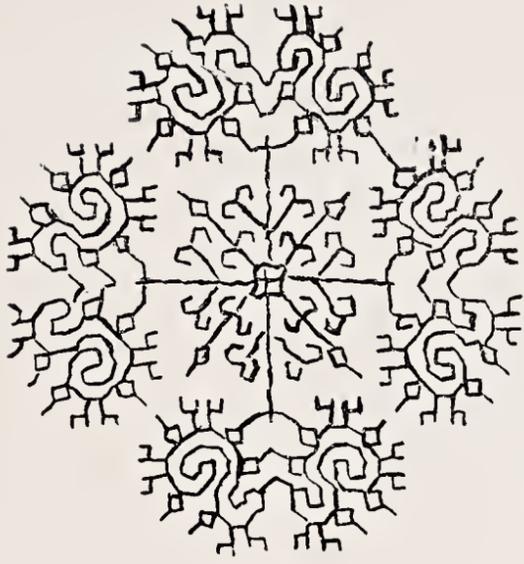
43. Orissa Saris



44. Travancore Saris



45. Bengal Group



CHAPTER VII

Specialities of the Country

India has every reason to be proud of her artistic handmade fabrics. These especially artistic textiles are not the result of modern or recent developments. As mentioned earlier, their existence can be traced back thousands of years to the early periods of history. It is amazing how the crafts have survived the ravages of time and the impact of political changes, often of a radical nature. Indian textiles of great merit have reigned supreme in world markets for well-nigh two thousand years. It was only after the 18th century that there was a decline in the consumption of Indian crafts in the country itself, even though the place in world markets which India held continued firmly. The production may also have appreciably diminished. This state of affairs was due to the growing poverty and depression in the country as well as the increasing taste for foreign goods on the part of sophisticated people who had the power to spend.

The art of fine weaving, the varied processes of printing and dyeing and the arts of hand and loom embroideries were perfected by our people even when conditions of work were different and difficult. Today, there are greater facilities for handicrafts, and small mechanical aids are available. This should enable larger production and even a standardization of goods, subject to the retention of the general traditional character of the fabric.

The crafts were mostly hereditary. The qualities required of a true artisan were apprenticeship, devotion to duty and co-operative effort. The knowledge of the arts and crafts was imparted by preceding generations; the business passed from father to son and general competition was eliminated by means of co-operative guilds.

Let us look back only a century and view the position of textiles then. Foreign traders looked to India as a lucrative market where labour was cheap and there was a high degree of excellence in the production of goods. The Memorandum submitted to the Government of that time actually recommended that it was not the “upper ten millions of India..but..the hundreds of millions in the lower grades” that should be clothed with piece-goods from abroad. At the same time, it was recognized that India should sell her artistic goods in foreign countries, because nowhere could such beautiful things be produced for a song. “Make India buy and sell her textiles” was the slogan. But it was meant that India should buy cheap foreign goods. We may still adhere to the slogan, but consume our own goods and sell our best products. Let us revive all those fine materials and enable the worker to have a fair wage for his labour and, above all, let us attempt to clothe those hundreds of millions with durable, artistic and economic fabrics.



46. Khadi Group

We have already mentioned several unique textiles of ancient India. They are in our own days known as Kinkhab or Banaras and Surat brocade (Baranaseyyak or Kasseyyak), Andhra Khadi (fine cottons of Ganjam, etc.), Kashmir, Bengal and Mysore silks (*patto*), Bandhani or Chunari of Saurashtra and Rajasthan, *Patolas* of Ahmedabad, Bengal muslins, Kashmir embroideries, Chanderi, Indore, Paithani and Baluchar saris. There have been further developments, in the textile art, and several regions have developed beautiful

cottons and silks of a very special order. We shall enumerate in this chapter some of the present day special fabrics and their characteristics very briefly.

Before we pass on to the new and improved forms of textiles a word must be said about the 'prints' that have assumed enormous proportions in this country of late. Even though printing is an ancient art, newer methods of printing on textiles have given a fillip to the industry. The popularity of printed materials is even threatening the *jari* and weaving industry, but it redounds to the credit of the printer as well as the designer of blocks that, while keeping the traditional patterns going, they have adopted some new processes. This has certainly popularised the industry. There is also further scope in the printing industry for *kalamkari* and *batik*, both being methods of Asian origin and having their affinities, the former with the Japanese and Chinese textile decorative method and the latter with our tie-and-dye or Bandhani method, the resist being obtained in one case by adhesives and in the other by tying up the required portions for the creation of designs. A design centre has been established at Bombay under the Board for research and designing, where work on *batiks* is being done.

We cannot brush aside the embroiderer's art. Embroidery has developed into a cottage industry in several regions. The northern region again carries the palm for embroidery. Recent political changes, however, as well as the public consciousness of Indian handicrafts is responsible for the intermingling of regional or zonal embroideries. This is, no doubt, a healthy and welcome sign so long as each retains its traditional and cultural traits. The decorative methods of Indian embroidery are superb. Where stylised designs are not to be seen in the weaving, either the printer or the embroiderer steps in to give the final touches.

Paithani patterns :—Figuring in the records of Greece, Prasthan, now known as Paithan, is described "as a great centre of trade" (300—200 B.C.). It was one of the old cities where industry and trade flourished. Situated on the banks of the Godavari, about 30 miles from Aurangabad, it was a place of importance. It has also been mentioned in the fourteenth Edict of Asoka and was ruled by an Andhra King in the 1st century A.D.

Until the first decade of the 20th century Paithani fabrics were considered to be of a high order, both in enduring quality and traditional design. The designs seem to have been inspired by the motifs of flowers, birds, animals and figures portrayed in the art of Ajanta. Themes on religious subjects such as are connected with the worship of Krishna are often noticed, since a large number of Krishna worshippers for several hundred years had been associated with the weaving industry. Apparently, weaving was practised amongst a large section of the people, irrespective of religion, but diminishing resources compelled the artisans to take to other forms of labour. Two to three scores of workers, however, stuck to their last and, with the initiation of a programme for the revival of Paithani fabrics by the All India Handicrafts Board, the languished craft shows signs of recoument, and it is hoped that very soon "Paithani fabrics" will come into their own.

The Paithani fabrics have now been developed into what are known as Ajanta styles, since the flower and



47. *Raw Silk Print, Assam*

bird motifs conform to the Ajanta fresco motifs. The *paithani* style, especially in the borders, has been borrowed freely in the fabrics of the Deccan group. What are known as the *pharaspeti* and *indori* borders are but further developments of the *paithani* style. The revival of the original *paithani* is absolutely necessary, though it will have to suit modern ideas of comfort and utility rather than finery and gorgeousness.

The process of designing in Paithani styles is much the same as that followed by the Banaras weaver. Both keep the design underneath the silken warp strands and weave into it with the help of shuttles with great skill and precision lovely specimens based on the motifs already mentioned. It is said that a large number of Paithan weavers went and settled down in Alibag (Kolaba District, Bombay State) round about which place handloom products are still produced in large quantities, even though they have undergone vast changes and now follow the Maheshwari and Indore styles.

Patola or ikkat fabrics :—The Ahmedabad *patola* is a textile of a unique character. Mhesana district, in Ahmedabad, is noted for the beautiful material. The methods of weaving in the *ikkats* of Orissa, the Pochanpalli textiles and the *patola* are somewhat similar, but the *patola* weaver has retained his geometric designs. Whatever patterns or floral motifs he may choose for his materials, he prefers to set them in geometric order. The order in the development of artistic work has always shown that geometric patterns come in the earlier stages, while stylised and floral motifs follow later. We may thus conclude that the *ikkats* are the later innovations of the *patola* style of weaving. The riot of colour in the *patola* makes it gorgeous. The interesting point in these textiles is the fact that the yarn in the warp is first dyed or block-printed according to the requirement of the motif. The design is achieved in the fabric almost with miraculous effect with a simple operation of the woof. This type of weaving is essentially Asiatic in character and is noticed in Chinese and Japanese textiles also. It is said that already during the Han Dynasty silk textile artisanship was at its height. A notable piece, “shuryomon-nishiki”, now with the Horyuji monastery in Nara, depicts the beautiful textile art. It is akin to our *patola* and *ikkat* fabrics.



48. South Indian Ceremonial Brocade Sari
(Red and Gold)

Orissa textiles :—Orissa *ikkat* styles in cotton and silks are to be classed among the special fabrics. The weaving process is the same as that of *patola*, mentioned above. They may also be included in the usual variety of goods of that place. Cuttack, Puri, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Baripada, Sambalpur and Bagasara are famous centres producing beautiful saris. The fish and flower motifs predominate in these saris.

Baluchar saris :—The Baluchar saris of Bengal had almost become extinct. They were to be seen only in museums and with a few families as heirlooms until their revival recently. These saris may be termed as historical in character, as the designs in the saris invariably depicted certain periods or influences. They were produced in raw or dyed silk with a floral and foliage motif for the border. The same motif was repeated in large and small mango or Paisley patterns both for the field and the *pallav*. The *pallav* was planned with breadthwise bands to form a rectangle with smaller compartments. These compartments usually depicted different scenes. A temple

scene, the goddess Kali, a darbar, a Moghul smoking a hookah, a Rajput scene, etc. were noticed. Plate 23 illustrates the historical character of the saris. It bears the motif of a railway engine. Being about a hundred years old, it is believed to mark the advent of the steam engine in India. (It belonged to a British railway official who was in India, and was presented to the author by his heir.) Baluchar designs are now being produced by the Banaras weaver with his dexterity in new designs.

Chanderi or Madhya Bharat textiles:—The silk gauzes of Chanderi are unsurpassed in elegance. They are sheer in quality and subtle in shades and of the finest texture. Chanderi, situated a few miles from Gwalior, is the original home of Chanderi fabrics. Many weaving centres have tried to imitate these fabrics, but the finish of Gwalior products is exquisite. The borders are usually of gold in floral motifs and two border bands run breadthwise at the *pallav* end at a distance of about nine to twelve inches, between which the floral motifs appearing on the field are reproduced at a shorter distance. The motifs appear as encrusted gold designs.

The Indore, Nagpur and Berar saris are also good in texture and produced in deeper colours, but they are a little thicker than the Chanderi saris and suitable for day wear. The Indore saris especially have borders and *pallavs* akin to the Chanderi saris, but the floral designs on the field of the sari are nearly always absent. The field is plain, striped or finely checked.

Kornad or South Indian saris :—The saris of South India have a character all their own. They are manufactured both in cotton and silk with beautiful oriental designs. The borders and *pallavs* are distinctive, even though in texture they do not usually form a conspicuous part of the apparel as in the saris of the central and Deccan groups. The borders and *pallavs* are part and parcel of the entire colour scheme, and may vary in breadth from half an inch to eight inches, and half a yard to a yard and a half, respectively. The motifs are many and varied. For such styles in saris a number of districts of the Andhra, Madras and Mysore States are famous. At one time, these saris were styled generally as Kornad saris. Kornad is a village in Tanjore district and may have perhaps been the original producing centre. Now, Dharmavaram, Kanchipuram, Adyar, Arni, Doddaballapur, Tanjore itself, Bangalore and

Kumbakonam manufacture the saris, once known as Kornad saris, in silks in innumerable designs.

Kalakshetra or Adyar saris:—Special mention must be made of the Kalakshetra centre at Adyar (Madras) founded by Smt. Rukmini Arundale, which has helped to encourage traditional designs in South Indian saris when there was less appreciation of these patterns and they were giving way to sophisticated modern mill designs. New and aesthetic designs were promoted by her centre. This went a long way in stabilizing oriental designs and keeping the traditional *Kornad* style alive.

Andhra khadi group :—Andhra is famous for the beautiful khadi or khaddar saris that are produced there. It is also known for its handloom fabrics of millspun yarn. These conform sometimes to the styles of the South Indian saris, though they are chiefly in white cotton with coloured borders and occasional motifs on the field of the sari. The fine muslins of Ganjam district (Chicacole) are of ancient origin, and it seems the art of weaving these muslins has never waned. The Velama and Pattusali superfine varieties are unique in many respects. The Sundaramani, Nakshatram and Rudraksham borders are typical of Chicacole, and the Kuppadam and Pithapuram varieties present both silk and *jari* borders. The chintz fabrics and the *kalamkari* of Andhra are famous. The *kalamkari* print which was mostly done on linen for household furnishings is now used for the ornamentation of saris and satin as well with great success. It should be a greater success in *choli* fabrics.

Andhra fabrics:—The handloom textiles of Andhra are many and varied, and are of a very high order. Among these, one comes across loom embroideries, *ikkat* weaving, brocade weaving and cotton textiles for saris and *cholis* in innumerable varieties, with floral, bird, animal and geometric motifs, Anantpur, Guntur, East Godavari and Bellary districts producing a number of traditional designs in textiles. The weaving centres are chiefly in the districts of Chicacole, Medak, Nalkunda and Raichur. Some of the Hyderabad textiles have acquired world renown. It would be advisable to note some of the towns producing the textiles, as they are known by these names. They are Pochanpalli, Siddipet, Sangareddy, Armour, Narayanpet, Peddapuram, Wanaparti and



49. Kalakshetra Sari

Ponduru. The All India Handicrafts Board has already begun the revival of the traditional and ancient designs at Pochanpalli, Siddipet and Wanaparti, through special centres financed by them. The marketing of these goods has also been undertaken. The saris of Gadwal and Uppada are now gaining in popularity. They are of a distinctive character, produced in cotton with *jari* decorative borders and *pallavs* in bright Indian colours, and are of a superior quality.

Banaras or Uttar Pradesh fabrics:—The textiles of Uttar Pradesh are of world renown, Banaras being the centre of a highly developed type of weaving. It may be said that the art of weaving has reached its zenith in Banaras. The weaver can produce on his loom any design shown to him. Banaras, Mau in Azamgarh, Lucknow, Banda and Jhansin are the production centres, the last named specialising in *choli khanns*.

The northern semi-circular belt of India from east to west appears to have been dominated not so much by the art of weaving as by ornamentation of the material. We, therefore, notice a number of small and

big handicrafts practised in these areas, which have taken the shape of cottage industries. They may be dyeing, printing, *jari* work, loom embroideries or hand embroideries. Uttar Pradesh stands out as a luminous spot with its dazzling brocades and Banarasi fabrics, while the whole of South or peninsular India specializes in the art of hand weaving.

Aurangabad saris:—In the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay there is a large collection of Aurangabad saris. These are in silk with *jari* motifs and borders akin to the Banaras saris. They abound in floral, bird and animal motifs produced in exquisite design. At present, Aurangabad is only a *himru* manufacturing centre and what are known as Aurangabad saris are now produced in Banaras. They are designs produced in coloured silk. They are also known as *katan* silk saris.

Figured muslins of India:—The muslins of India have had an age-long history. Megasthenes wrote about the flowered muslin garments of the Indians. Prince Goyame's white robe is supposed to have surpassed the delicacy of a horse's foam, worked with gold at the corners, while King Harsha's dress for the battle-field was of white bleached cloth with the swan design on it. Again, Banabhatta says that Malati was dressed in a *kanchuka* of white, bleached cloth underneath which gleamed a saffron petticoat with spots of various colours. Thus, muslin in its woven, embroidered and printed form has reigned supreme through the centuries. The figured muslins of Tanda and the muslin saris of Bengal embroidered on the loom itself



50. A Gadwal Silk Sari

are lovely. The latter are usually in diaper designs. The muslin prints of Rajasthan in gay stripes, tie-and-dye motifs or block prints appeal to the public by their sheer quality.

The well-known *Chikan* muslins of Uttar Pradesh though hand-embroidered abound in intricate designs and frequently bear the motif of the tree of life so popular amongst the Moghul embroideries. *Chikan* work is invariably in self-colour and large quantities of saris and blouse pieces are produced for tropical wear.

Indian silks:—Like the muslins of India, silk has been one of the ancient fabrics of world renown and an item of export. It is an important fabric for ceremonial wear and, especially, during religious worship. Most of the saris of superior quality are of silk and nearly all the groups of saris for casual wear have their silk counter parts. Silk is particularly associated with Mysore, Madras, Kashmir and Bengal, as these States have large silk producing centres.

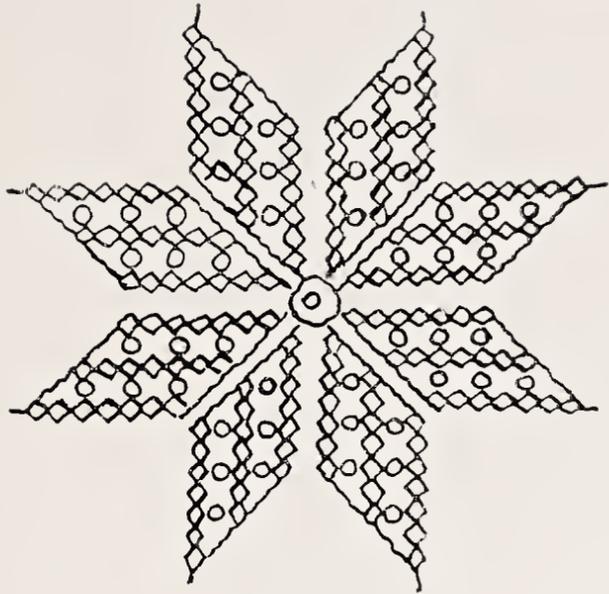
Mysore and Madras silks are, perhaps, the best silks, the latter specialising in traditional South Indian saris and the former in modern fabrics like georgettes, chiffons, and crepes, on power-



51. Banaras Fabrics

driven looms. Kollegal is an important silk producing centre. The speciality of Mysore State is that, even though modern fabrics are produced, the sari is still complete with the requisite borders and *pallav* woven ready on the looms much to the delight of the modern woman. The field is also studded with lovely designs and the saris are available in beautiful Indian and pastel colours.

Kashmir, perhaps, ranks next, since the bulk of silk for the printed silk sari comes from Kashmir, and charming prints are made in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras. Bengal was once the foremost silk exporting centre. Murshidabad silks still continue to come and handspun and handwoven silks with the traditional Calcutta prints are sold through the Khadi emporia in large quantities.



Adivasi and Folk Costumes

While reviewing the subject of costume and its allied handicrafts, the large sections of people who come under Adivasis or the original inhabitants of the land, cannot be ignored. While the population of the Adivasis can be roughly computed at nineteen million, the figure for the common folk of this land, comprising the peasants and village people, would be more difficult to ascertain. They include the tillers of the soil, the floating population of cities and towns where the folk migrate in search of employment in their lean days as well as those tribes who colonise or are nomadic in character.

The costume of the first group is fairly simple to enumerate, comprising as it does three main divisions of the land where Adivasis are to be found. These are: (1) the southern zone of peninsular India, south of the river Krishna, (2) the central zone between the Garo Hills and the Rajmahal Hills, or the table land and mountainous tracts between the Indo-Gangetic basin and the Krishna river and (3) the north-eastern zone consisting of the sub-Himalayan and north-eastern mountain ranges. The Adivasis of the north-eastern zone as well as those of the central zone are supposed to be in a slightly higher stage of development. They cultivate land or do terrace cultivation, and do not depend entirely on hunting and food gathering from forests. Of course, some of the southern tribes like the Todas also do terrace cultivation, have an economy of their own, and are better off. Those tribes that have a more settled life naturally use more clothing, and some do their own spinning and weaving.

Among the north-eastern Adivasis or tribes weaving has been greatly developed. It is done on narrow looms. Spinning



52. Assam Costume

53. Saurashtra Costume

and weaving are the occupations of the women folk, and they have beautiful embroidered clothes which are produced on looms from Tibet.

Certain other tribes, like the Bondo of Orissa or those of the central zone, produce lovely materials from fibres for their skirts. These materials are about 10 to 12 inches wide and about three feet long. The great significance of this meagre piece of dress, the skirt, is apparent. In Verrier Elwin's words, "It is the badge of the tribe, established in mythology, enforced under penalty of stringent sanctions; to weave it is the supreme occupation....all her (the woman's) art goes into this one form of self-expression..... she is proud of the varieties of stripe and colour".

While costume for some of the tribal people or the so-called primitives is a "protection against elements....expression of modesty" and a means of satisfaction of their aesthetic urge, others have no "tradition for clothing" or "personal adornment". They

54. *Punjab Costume*



buy pieces of cloth from the nearest weaver or mill cloth from a nearby retail store. Some of the Adivasis of the central zone prefer a one-piece, skirt-like apparel, especially for young girls, while the elder women wear a plaid or sari type of cloth called "chitra" or "lugra" round the waist, one end of which is carried over the left shoulder and tucked in at the back. This is sometimes also taken over the head.

The "kanch" or *sakacha* type of sari is, however, worn by Bhumia women, who are more or less influenced by their Gond contemporaries. The *kanch* or *sakacha* is typical of the central Indian Maharashtra country-side, which has been the scene of many wars and has produced women warriors as well. This mode of dress, both in war and peace and for workaday life, has been found useful and convenient, and is widely prevalent in these regions.

Some of the ancient costumes seen in the sculptures and paintings of India are to be noticed among Adivasis or certain clans like the *vakkals* (agriculturists) of Kanara who lead as simple a life as the



55. Gujarat Costume



56. *Kashmir Belles*



57. *Rajasthani Costumes*

Adivasis. Actually, a piece of coloured, striped or checked handloom cloth tied above the breasts and knotted over one shoulder serves as a garment to the *vakkal* woman. The centre of attraction in the costume is the voluminous bead and coral adornment necklaces covering the breasts and the neck fully, which tend to make the costume of secondary importance. The Todas of the Nilgiris also wear a somewhat similar costume.

To many of the central and southern Adivasis the idea of a *choli* or blouse is abhorrent; while in some clans like the Bhils and Bhumias they do wear a blouse or *jhulwa* or jacket. Some tribes consider clothing as a punishment or curse, and there are many legends or stories regarding the wearing of clothes. The skirt type of garment, however, seems to be a relic of our primitive forefathers, and the affinity to our present-day stitched skirt and its continuous use through the ages is clear. An adaptation of white materials for costume is seen amongst several tribes, including some in a higher stage of development like the Todas. It seems that the day will not



58. Toda Women (Nilgiris)

be far off when colourful standard loom-lengths for the plaids, useful for adivasi costume, will be aesthetically and economically developed. There is no reason why the Adivasis should not continue with their meagre clothing in our tropical climate, provided the purpose of protection and modesty is served.

FOLK COSTUME

The peasant group of costumes has the most picturesque garments. As items of beautiful handicrafts they are superb. The peasant or folk costume generally hinges on the utilization of odd materials to aesthetic advantage. Any waste material consisting of cloth as well as tinsel, metal discs and shells is enough to add

splendour to their heavily decorated costume. Each item that is laid on is stitched and fixed with thread and braid until the most fascinating results are obtained. Saurashtra, Telangana and Rajasthan have the most colourful costumes.

Folk literature, folklore and songs abound in enchanting descriptions of a number of items of folk costume and display a sentiment towards certain fabrics. The gaiety and hilariousness of rural India centres round folk music and songs of which the pranks of the divine cowherd (Lord Krishna) form the theme. The charms of the *chunari*, the *lahariyo*, the *dakhni cira*, the *ghungat*, the *kalidar* or the *phulphagarano ghagra*, the *ghera ghumalo* or the *patli* are sung with fervour in folk music, and continue to thrill the countryside population, while the aesthetic beauty of the *chunari* and the magnificence of the *ghagra* also awaken the urbanised woman to the consciousness of her rich heritage and bring before her eye the panorama of Indian handicrafts produced as the result of patient labour, intense aesthetic devotion and skill acquired through the instinct and experience of preceding generations. The separate pieces that go to form a folk *ensemble*, being each a piece of artistic creation, provide the background for an expression of the talents of different artisans.



59. Orissa Costume

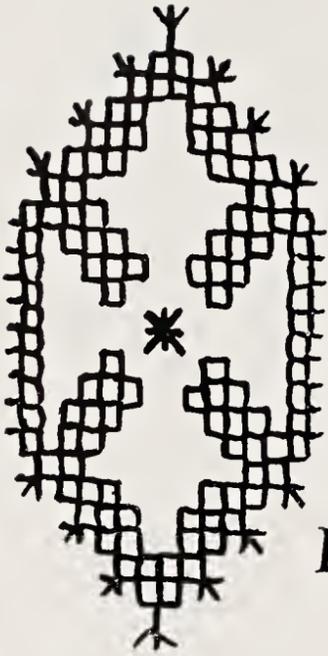
Like her urban sister the rural woman has her special items of wear for occasions, typical materials for presentation purposes, clothes for bridal dresses and items for auspicious ceremonies, which a married woman or a *sumangali* would wear. Thus, the cycle of production and consumption goes on ceaselessly with ever new and lovely patterns produced by the skilful artisans for the Indian woman's wardrobe.

The women of several parts of India, especially those of the

north, like the Kashmiri, Kulu or the Lamani women, wear either a tunic or a *khamis* over a skirt or *salvar*. These costumes are very becoming and have a dignity of their own. They are suited to the cold regions. Similarly, the women of Marwar wear heavy red skirts, while some wear the same type of materials in the form of *sakacha* sari, but draped over the body so as to give the impression of a red *salvar* and *odhni*.



60. *New design, Bagalkot.*



Revival and Adaptation of Ancient Designs

As we look back on the evolution of the costume of the women of this vast continent, comprising different races and peoples, professing different creeds and religions, and inhabiting regions with diverse climates, both temperate and extreme in nature, and with varied economic resources, whose aesthetic aspirations show different inclinations and stages of civilization, we cannot help concluding that, even though there have been numerous strands of culture, admixtures of racial characteristics amongst the people and exotic influences, Indian culture is one living and dynamic organism. Its sparks are to be found in all aspects of Indian life, howsoever differently organized. This living organism of Indian culture has survived the onslaughts and impacts of invasions, wars and domination. Its life has been rejuvenated from time to time by the infusion and planting of new and healthier cultures. The story of costume, therefore, depicts the homogeneity of the Indian people, their attitude towards dress and the significant role costume and its constituents play in the aesthetics, economics and politics of the nation.

It would be sad, indeed, if, in emphasising a homogeneous national costume, we were to restrict ourselves to the sari or the plaid garment, important as it is from the angle of textile economy, and neglect the beautiful costumes of rustic India that lend charm and enchantment and give colourful finishing touches, as it were, to the Indian landscape. We could not, for a moment, brook the diminution of this rich store of India's beauty which shows unity in diversity and luxury in adversity. The picturesqueness of the Indian countryside is even more enhanced by the vivid costumes that are part and parcel of the life of the people in their humdrum, daily avocations.

To the woman working in the fields to the rhythm of the swishing rain, the woman in rumbling factories and mills, filled with cotton haze, the woman in quarries and building operations, the woman in the fishing business, in short, to the working woman, her hours of hard work are her only recreation hours. The working woman, therefore, decks herself in the most picturesque and colourful sari or costume and thus removes the drabness or murkiness of her environment. The setting and composition that she presents is one of great aesthetic satisfaction and beauty and would make a perfect picture for a painter's canvas.

While the sari reigns supreme in the life of the Indian woman, countryside costumes can have their place in the sphere of clothes for children and adolescent girls in urban areas. Here, there is unlimited scope for fashion, design and the adaptation of old designs and styles to new and modern forms of dress. An adaptation of Indian designs and colours, incorporated in the fashions of teenagers, would be in harmony with the general costume of the people and would, perhaps, transform India into an oriental fairyland,

Western clothes, however beautiful, comfortable and useful, do not as a rule, fit into the picturesque pattern of Indian life.

One must concede that modern conditions necessitate the launching of new trends in costume to suit present needs. Today, when leisure is restricted, money is scarce, due to inflation, and finery and pomp have no place in a democratic society, our attitude must be revised towards simplicity and elegance. We must be able to utilise simple and common materials to aesthetic advantage in order that we may feel one with the multitude. Above all, we must learn to value and cultivate that important aspect of fashion, namely, individuality, because, as a rule, fashion hinges on



61. *Katan Silk Sari*

individuality and the artistic and creative efforts of the individual go a long way in fashioning and refashioning the attire of a people. Today, more than ever before, must the Indian woman assume the responsibility of creating new trends in fashion and utilise the many things that the artisan in the countryside or in urban areas produces by the skill of his hands.

Most of the handmade fabrics lend themselves to modern trends in costume. Similarly, some of the old styles may be copied for modern wear with slight adjustments. For example, the short waistcoat and skull cap, at one time famous among the Parsis, and the normal attire of some of the clans in the north-western region, worn over a *sadra* and *salvar* and made out of the *himrus* and *mashrus* of Aurangabad and Hyderabad, would make a beautiful costume for children. The embroideries of India like the Phulkari, Kasuti and Kashmir embroidery on blouses for the teen-ager would be as effective as the embroidery on Hungarian, Norwegian or Slav blouses. Skirts in the fabrics used by Vanjara women or khaddar prints make pretty and attractive costumes for teen-agers.

The Kangra school of painting provides a feast of material for the costume of adolescent girls. With slight modifications and a choice selection of materials, a new orientation is possible. The modern girl who needs greater freedom for her limbs may require a shorter skirt or a smaller veil, but the basic style can be adopted with the required variations.

In the *ensemble* of costume, apart from the dress materials that form the chief items, there is a wide range of accessories that give elegance or final touches to costume. Here, the handicrafts of India play a definite role. It is for the women of India to think



62. Batik Silk Sari

out and utilise every item of artistic excellence, whether it be the fisherman's, the Bhayya's or the Bohra's cap, whether it be the decorated waistcoat or the ornamented *chappals* of the Pathan, the silver or ivory ornaments of the Kashmiri and Saurashtra women, the colourful turban of the Rajputs, the coral necklaces of the *vakkal* women of Kanara or the floral decorations for the hair of the women of the south.

A great many items like Indian caps and girdles, suited to the teen-ager of today, may be revived with advantage. They would be much more artistic than imported elastic bands or plastic belts or hats or beret caps. The caps of India, of many types, beautiful in their own way, could very well protect the teen-ager from the scorching sun, if adapted properly. The point to be remembered, however, is the attractiveness of the article and its artistic use rather than the finery or grandeur, or the cost of the article.

The new movement for an all-round development of handicrafts that has been launched by the All India Handicrafts Board, the Khadi and Village Industries Board and the All India Handloom Board in different directions needs the active support of Indian women who have for so long, even in the days of depression and servitude, kept aloft the banner of the Indian textiles and handicrafts. Their responsibility has increased with India's independence.



63. Gadwal Cotton Sari.

The All India Handicrafts Board has also attempted, with a fair measure of success, the revival of some of the old and beautiful designs as well as some of the types of saris like Baluchar, Gadwal and Paithani which had become extinct. The revival of earlier forms of the brocades of Banaras in geometrical and highly stylised designs has also been taken in hand. Training has been introduced for



64. *New Design, Baluchar*

the promotion of *jari* motifs in *ikkat*-patterned saris. The *khann* and *kalamkari* designs are also being attempted in the sari field. Since private enterprise has also been helpful in the revival of ancient designs, it is difficult fully to enumerate the many designs that have been revived. It would be of advantage and interest for the public to know that the All India Handicrafts Board has started pilot centres where training in weaving is being given. There are already several such centres working, as, for example, in Kanchipuram and in Surat.

More than forty exhibitions have been organized so far under the auspices of the All India Handicrafts Board, which included, among others, a Textile Prints Exhibition, a Phulkari Textile Exhibition, a Mobile Prints Exhibition, an All India Bamboo & Lacquer Work Exhibition and a Sari Exhibition.

The All India Handloom Board, in its own way, has been concentrating on the organization of co-operative societies of weavers throughout the country, wherever there are colonies of weavers, or in towns where there are large numbers of weavers.

The display of handicrafts, the promotion of their sales, the revival of ancient and extinct designs, the adaptation of old designs to modern ideas, the promotion of new designs, rehabilitation of craftsmen as well as the popularisation of handicrafts have been making brisk progress under the Board's direction. These exhibitions have been held both in India and abroad. The occasions of International Fairs and Congresses have been utilized for the purpose, while our own Embassies have from time to time displayed Indian arts and crafts to great advantage. The establishment of the Indian Handicrafts Development Corporation is a great forward step.

It is a healthy sign that the efforts of the Board are bearing fruit. A greater consciousness is being noticed all round with regard to handicrafts, and the revival of ancient and oriental designs is in full swing. Some of the articles which had become extinct are now seen making their appearance, and the public, above all, on whom depends the entire position of the revival and progress of handicrafts, has rallied round with enthusiasm and vigour. If greater attempts are made by the public to bring out the innate artistic qualities of the Indian artisan by appreciating and encouraging Indian handicrafts, a further impetus will be given to them.

Finally, the utilization of materials and their adjustment to modern conditions need to be re-emphasised. The women of India must encourage all crafts by utilising every opportunity of buying and displaying the artistic goods of this country, both here and abroad. Above all, the extent to which the Indian woman interests herself in the reorientation of handicrafts and in the setting up of new trends in oriental fashions will largely determine the aesthetic quality and the economic progress of the unostentatious artisan.



65. *New Design in Baluchar*

How to Wear A Sari

Nivi or National Style

A sari for beautiful draping has to be six yards long and forty-five inches wide. To ensure a graceful fall the texture of the material is important. There is, normally for a traditional sari, whether it is of five, six, eight or nine yards, a narrow border at the two lengthwise edges, a decorated broad border or “pallav” breadthwise at one end and a smaller or “keel pallav” at the other end.

Fig. 1. Note the two “pallavs” and the position of the sari. The under garments besides the skirt and choli may be according to one’s liking and comfort. The petticoat or skirt should flow from the waist down to the ankles. The petticoat should be tied firm at the waist by means of the tape. The gathers of the petticoat at the waist should be few and the width at the hem should be from 2 to 2½ yards. The material selected should match the sari.

Figure 1

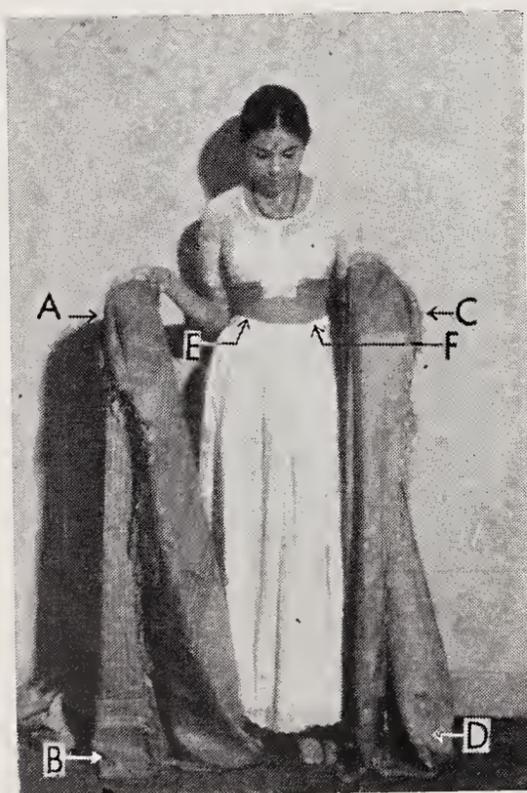


Figure 2



Figure 3





Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

Fig. 2. Tuck in point C and E, cover the navel and go round the waist tucking in all the time. Stop at F and turn round. Allow the sari to hang an inch or two below the petticoat.

Fig. 3. Tuck in the sari with a few gathers, as shown, at the back of the waist and go on to point E. Tuck in again. You have now lined the petticoat with the "keel pallav" and a portion of the sari comprising roughly a yard of the sari from E to E again.

Fig. 4. Adjust the length of the "pallav" from finger tip to finger tip, as shown: points A to G. The sari should be taken loosely over the shoulders for adjustment.

Fig. 5. Tuck in point G at F. You have now two loose portions of the sari from E to F and F to A.

Fig. 6. Gather up from points A to B in pleats of 3-4 inches each.

Fig. 7. Veil yourself with the loose portion of the sari throwing the "pallav" end over the left shoulder.

Fig. 8. Gather up the portion from E to F, as shown, with pleats or Nivi of 4-5 inches each.



Figure 13



Figure 14

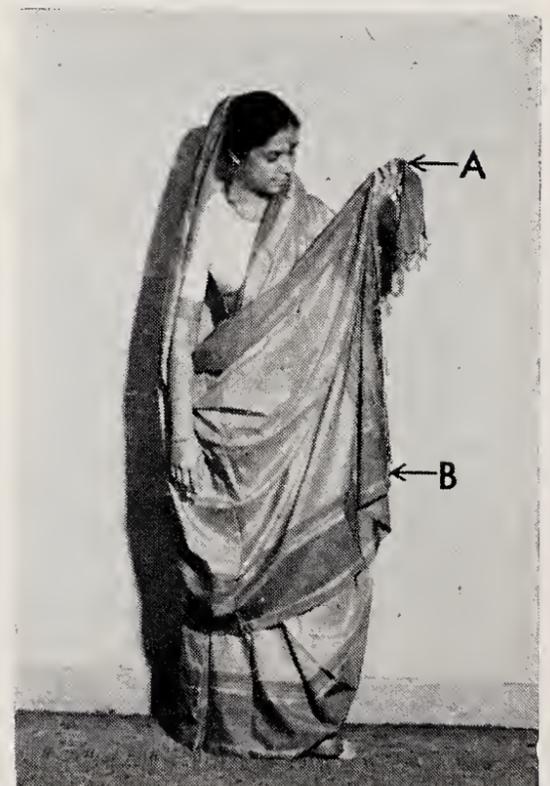


Figure 15

Fig. 9. Tuck them in firmly at the navel.

Fig. 10. See that the sari flows evenly at the feet all round and allow a portion of BD top to flow from the left shoulder or arm to the right knee gracefully.

Gujarati Style

Fig. 11. To drape according to the Gujarati style, follow instructions up to Fig. 4. Leave the sari over the shoulder as in Fig. 5, but allow twelve or eighteen inches more for the "pallav". Tuck in the front pleats or Nivi as in Figs. 8 and 9.

Fig. 12. Bring the gathered "pallav" over the right shoulder from behind. Tuck in point A at the centre of the back of the waist.

Bengali Style

Fig. 13. Follow instructions up to Fig. 4. Make broad pleats from E to F and *vice versa*, three on each side, tucking them in firmly.

Fig. 14. Take loose portions of sari from E after the third pleat up the shoulder and over the head.

Fig. 15. Bring end A from under the right arm and drape it over the left shoulder. Point B will flow over the left knee.



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

Kalakshetra Style

Fig. 16. Follow instructions up to Fig. 8, but leave for the pallav end from A to G one and a half times that of A to G, as in Fig. 5. Secure the centre of “pallav” and A to B. Tuck it in at F bringing the “pallav” forward and allowing it to drape in two triangular shapes over the knees.

Coorg Style

Fig. 17. Follow instructions up to Fig. 3. Tuck in by pleats of 4 to 5 inches each at the back as in Fig. 3, instead of in front, the loose portion up to G.

Fig. 18. Take the “pallav” end from point G below the right arm, above the chest below the left arm, to the back and bring point A over the right shoulder in front in a little veil and secure with a brooch or pin.

Sakacha or Maharashtrian Style

Fig. 19. For this style the sari has to be nine yards long and fifty-two inches wide. A skirt or petticoat is not necessary. Instead of tucking in point C at E, as in Fig. 3, secure the “keel pallav” end firmly



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21

round the waist by tying with a firm knot points C and E to form a petticoat.

Follow instructions in Figs. 5, 6, 7 and 8, making pleats of 4-5 inches up to point G, but, instead of tucking in the Nivi, roll them forwards adjusting the length of the sari and securing them under petticoat flap E—F.

Fig. 20. Divide the gathers into halves at point H.

Fig. 21. Take central end H at the bottom through the legs to the back.

Fig. 22. Gather H into pleats of 2-3 inches and tuck in the “sakacha” H firmly at the centre of the back of the waist. Fold in the sari around the calves neatly and secure the inside ends I with garters.

Fig. 23. Front view.



Figure 22



Figure 23

APPENDIX I

Textile Manufactures of India (1886)—Cottons

<i>Cottons</i>	<i>Muslins</i>	<i>Prints</i>
Madras	(figured, striped, checked, gold	Arcot
Coimbatore (Coim. Mad.)	and silver printed).	Cuddapah (Cud. Mad.)
Calcutta	Dacca	Ponnary (Mad.)
Congeevaram (Chingle. Mad.)	Madras	Futtygarh (Farruckabad,
Bekul in Canara (N. Kan. Bom.)	Chicacole (Gang. Mad.)	N. W. Prov.)
Pondicherry (S. Arcot. Mad.)	Arnee	Agra
Chundeyree (Gwalior)	Nellore (Nell. Mad.)	Beejapore (St. Bomb.)
Gangam (Gang. Mad.)	Trichinopoly (Trich. Mad.)	
Arnee (North Arcot. Mad.)	Cuddapah	
Ventapollam (Gunt. Mad.)	Banaras	<i>Coloured Cotton Goods</i>
Cumbaconum (Tanj. Mad.)	Berar, Nagpur	Madras
Cuddalore (Arcot. Mad.)	Jeypore	Surat
Mangalore (S. K. Mad.)	<i>Skirt Materials</i>	Shikarpore
Belgaum	Khatmandoo	Palamcottah
Surat	Nepal	Tinnivelly (M.)
	Pegu	Loodhiana.

Tartan Patterns or Lungis

Broach
Ludhiana (Punj.)
Madras
Cuddalore
Coonatoor (Chingle. Mad.)
Pulicat (Chingle. Mad.)
Tanjore
Masulipatam.

Kerchiefs

Coondapore (S.K.Mad.)
Ventapollam (Guntur Mad.)

Masulipatam (Mas. Mad.)
Pochanpalli

Textile Manufactures of India (1866)—Cotton & Silk

<i>Cotton and Silk</i>	<i>Silk (predominant)</i>	<i>Silk and Cotton</i>
		(plain, striped, checked and figured)
Banaras	Benares	Tanjore
Madras	Nagpore	Lahore
Belgaum	Berar	Madras
Tanjore	Tanjore	Mudpore (Punjab)
Trichinopoly	Belgaum	Bhawalpore, Punjab (State Ind.,)
	Barhampore	Hyderabad
	Cumbaconum (Tanj. Mad.)	Trichinopoly

Textile Manufactures of India (1886)—Silk and Cotton

Wild Silks

(Tussar and Moonga)
Warungul (Deccan)
Bhagalpore (Bhag. Beng.)
Cachar (Cach. Beng.)
Darjeeling
Dacca

*Gold and Silver Loom
Embroidered Fabrics*

Banaras
Hyderabad
Sattara (Deccan)
Tanjore
Trichinopoly

Sari Manufactures

Ooppaddy (Mad.)
Coimbatore
Bekul
Congeevaram
Calcutta
Pondicherry
Arnee
Bellary

Ventapollam
Gangam
Gya (Beng.)
Madras (Sydapet, Mylapore)
Cuddalore
Cumbaconum
Mangalore
Belgaum
Surat
Bombay
Ponnary
Nagpur
Mangalore
Bhagalpore (Bhag. Beng.)

Silk Exports

from India to all parts of the world and especially to U.K. France, America, Europe China, Arabia, Aden & Suez. 1850-51 to 1864-65

1. Bengal (heads the list)
2. Madras
3. Bombay
4. All India.

Gold and Silver Tissues

Hyderabad
Moorshidabad
(Rajshahya, Beng.)

*Hand Embroidery
on Cotton and Silk*

Gwalior
Dacca
Sylhet
Agra
Ahmednagar
Dehra Ismael Khan (Deraja Punj.).

*Hand Embroidery
Gold, Silver and Beetlewings*

Madras
Hyderabad
Trichinopoly.

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GLOSSARY

Sari: The plaid material in standard lengths, comprising the dress of the Indian woman.

Pallav: The loose decorative end of a sari which falls like a robe.

Choli: A close-fitting blouse.

Khadi: Handspun and handwoven cloth.

Charkha: The spinning wheel.

Nivi (Niri): Gathers of a sari.

Lungi: A plaid piece worn in a skirt-like manner without gathers.

Adivasi: Original inhabitant.

Suvasana: Lower garment of a lady.

Suvasas: Garment made of fresh and untreated wool.

Surabhi: Good cloth.

Adhivasa: Over-garment.

Paryanahana: Wrap like a shawl.

Drapi: Mantle.

Usnisa: Head-dress.

Atka: Flowing garments.

Hiranya-drapi: A golden mantle.

Guru: Teacher.

Kurta—Salwar: Tunic and pyjamas.

Odhni: A wrap over a skirt.

Sadra: A tunic.

Colaka: Small cloth.

Kacha: Close-fitting salwar-like style of wearing a plaid in which pleats are tucked in at the back.

Sakacha: Style of wearing a nine-yard or plaid sari, in which pleats are tucked in at the back, forming a salwar-like garment and with a loose end for the *pallav*.

Patto: Silk material.

Kossu: Silken garment.

Candataka: Long, loose, front open coat.

Kambal: Woollen blanket or cloth or upper garment.

Kshouma: Linen.

Pandva: Uncoloured woollen garment worn by the kings at sacrifices.

Tarpya: Garment made of a particular vegetable substance (tripa).

Karpasa: Made of cotton.

Siri: Sari.

Cire: Sari.

Silai: Sari.

Shati: Over-garment.

Niri (Nivi): Gathers.

Vasana: Cloth.

Baranseyyak: Banaras fabric.

Kaseeyak: Kasi fabric.

Nirvana: Eternal rest.

Jatakas: Tales of the Buddha.

Vilepana: Make-up.

Kasida: Embroidery.

Pesas: Embroidery.

Alankar: Adornment.

Dupatta: A small plaid-piece like a stole.

Khamis: A tunic or shirt-like garment.

Ghaghra: Skirt.

Jari: Gold thread.

Kalamkari: Masulipatam printing.

Batik: A type of resist printing prevalent in South-East Asia.

Vakkal: Peasant of Kanara.

Jhulwa: Jacket.

Lahariyo: Zig-zag and multi-coloured.

Dakhni cira: Cloth from the Deccan.

Ghungat: Veil over the head and face.

Kalidas: Name of a famous Sanskrit poet.

Phulphagarano: A Sinuous and spacious skirt.

Ghera Ghumalo : Voluminous gathers of a skirt.

Patli: Front pleats of the sari.

Himru: Brocade of Aurangabad.

Mashru: Silk textile of Aurangabad.

Chappals: Sandals.

N.B.—The terms for fabrics and a few other words which have been explained in the text are omitted from the glossary.

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