

Traditional costumes of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes of Andhra Pradesh

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes are the major tribal communities of Andhra Pradesh. The racial inheritance of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes are enhanced with diverse colorful cultural constituents. The distinctiveness of these tribes was extremely noted in their traditional and folk cultures. The traditional costumes of any community or tribe can be affected by the development and change of time. Therefore, the research was undertaken to restore the information of traditional costumes of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes of Andhra Pradesh through documentation, before it gets completely diminished. So that one can get detailed information regarding the traditional costumes and textiles used by the tribes of Andhra Pradesh to create new designs for costumes and textiles.

■ **KEY WORDS:** *Lambadi*, *Koya*, Costumes, Female, Male

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Andhra Pradesh is also a home for many tribal communities living in the forests and hills since centuries. Andhra Pradesh is having thirty five tribal communities with the population of 59.18 lakhs as per 2011 census and they constitute 5.53 per cent of the total population of the state. It was notified that maximum tribes of Andhra Pradesh were settled in the hilly and forest regions of the state. According to Rao (2014), the *Khonds*, *Kolamis*, *Nayakpods*, *Koyas*, *Kondadoras*, *Lambadis*, *Valmikis*, *Bhagatas*, *Savaras*, *Jatayus*, *Gadabas*, *Yanadis* and *Chenchus* are regarded as the most prominent tribes of Andhra Pradesh. Each tribe of Andhra Pradesh has their mark of exuberance and artistry.

Lambadis are the scheduled tribals inhabiting

throughout Andhra Pradesh. According to the tribal welfare department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2011 Census, the population of *Lambadi* was 3,61,520 and considered as the third largest tribe in Andhra Pradesh on population basis with 13.74 per cent of total tribal population. *Lambadis* live in an exclusive settlement called *Tanda*, usually away from the main village, persistently maintaining their cultural and ethnic identity. The *Koyas* mainly inhabit the hilly areas of West Godavari, East Godavari, Khammam and Warangal districts and are sparsely found in Adilabad and Karimnagar districts. According to the tribal welfare department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 2011 Census, the population of *Koya* is 1, 04,348 and it comprises of 3.97 per cent of total tribal population of Andhra Pradesh. The Godavari and

Sabari rivers which are flowing through their area of habitation exercise profound influence on *Koyas* social, economic and cultural life. (Ramisetty and Dyavanapalli, 2014).

Lambadi and *Koya* are the common tribal group in Andhra Pradesh and attire is the most striking feature of *Lambadis* and *Koyas*. Some of the traditional costumes are almost extinct with change of time. Therefore, an attempt has been made to restore the traditional costumes of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes through specific objective, i.e., to document traditional costumes worn by men and women for casual, ceremonial and marriage purposes.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

Two villages from West Godavari and Krishna districts of Andhra Pradesh were selected for the research through purposive sampling. Hundred per cent population i.e., 159 from both the villages i.e., 44 families from *Lambadi* (44 females and 39 males) and 40 families from *Koya* (40 females and 36 males) were selected for the research purposively according to the appropriateness of the respondents to the area being selected to carry out the research. An interview schedule was prepared to collect the information regarding traditional costumes of male and female respondents of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes. Pre-testing of interview schedule was done on 30 non sampled respondents prior to the actual administration of the tool. Data for the present study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included respondents from whom the information was collected directly and the recorded observation by the researcher. The secondary sources included libraries, museums, fairs as well as personal archives of the people. The collected data was analyzed and documented with appropriate photographs wherever it was possible.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was aimed to document the traditional textiles and costumes of selected tribes of Andhra Pradesh namely *Lambadi* and *Koya*.

Most of the respondents belong to middle age group from 45 to 55 years of age. Maximum number of respondents found to be living as nuclear families. Results also revealed that most of the respondents were illiterate, working as laborers and earning less than Rs. 10,000/- per month.

Female costumes of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribe:

The Fig.1 shows the costumes worn by *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes for different occasions, i.e., casual, ceremonial as well as marriage purposes. It was found that casual costumes of *Lambadi* females included *Saree blouse* (40.9%), *Lehengachoil* (4.5%), *Langavoni* (31.8%) and *Langa jacket* (22.7%). While in ceremonial events, the majority of *Lambadi* women wore *Lehengacholi* (72.7%) followed by *Langavoni* (25%) and *Saree blouse* (7.2%). Hundred per cent of *Lambadi* women wore only *Lehengacholi* as their marriage costume.

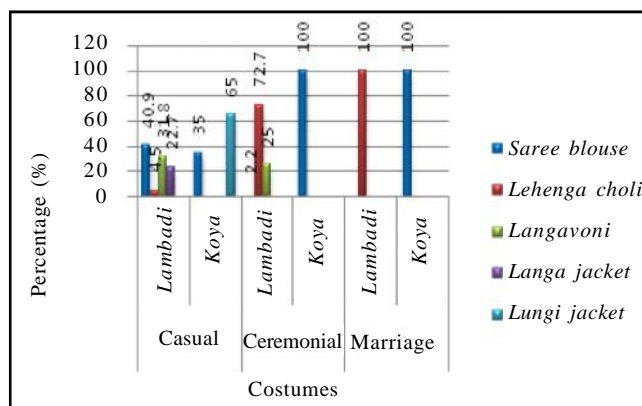
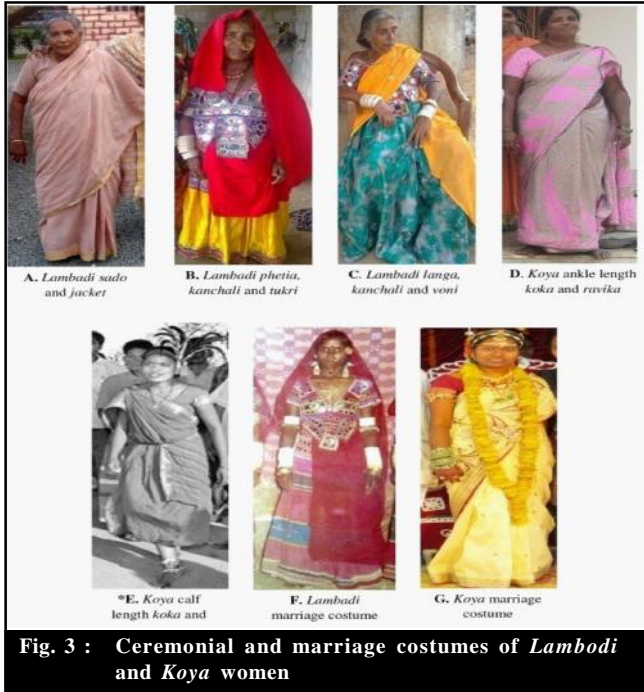


Fig. 1 : Percentage distribution of various female garments of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes

In case of females of *Koya* tribe, it was found that majority of respondents wore *Lungi jacket* (65%) as



Fig. 2 : Casual costumes of *Lambadi* and *Koya* women



Kanchali was made by quilting different coloured pieces of *Khadi* fabric. These fabric pieces were quilted with a series of evenly spaced stitches called *Dornaaki* (running) and *Rela* (herring bone). Sometimes the *Dornaaki* stitches were intertwined with a thread to create unusual geometric patterns. After the construction, the *Kanchali* was decorated with *Kapakatta* (fabric strip having ziz-zag edges at one side), embroideries, *Kache* (mirrors), *Dwalilalli* (beads), *Gavvalu* (cowries) and *Diwani* (coins). The common embroidery stitches used were *Rela* (herring bone), *Maki* (dots), *Gote* (cross stitch), *Kappagote* (thread intertwined with running stitch) and *Kappa katta* (triangular appliqué strips). The thread used for embroidery was called as *Kharodora* (cotton threads).

The distinct feature of kanchali was attachment of *Taagli* or *Talliki* above the bust and shoulders and a square piece of fabric added at waist in the front part of *Kanchali* which was called as *Peti*. *Taagli* was a fabric strip decorated with two or three *Kaviya* (large square shaped mirrors) which were surrounded by *Joondi* and edged with *Diwani*. *Peti* was made by fixing a large mirror called *Kaviya* in the centre, in turn surrounded by small mirrors called *Kache* and *Joondi*.

their casual costume followed by *Saree blouse* (35%). Whereas, *Saree blouse* was the only ceremonial and marriage costume worn by hundred per cent respondents of *Koya* tribe.

Upper garments of Lambadi and Koya tribes:

The upper garments of *Lambadi* and *Koya* women were *Kanchali* and *Ravika*, whereas the lower garments included *Phetia*, *Langa*, *Lungi* and *Lopalalanga*.

Kanchali:

Kanchali is a blouse worn by *Lambadi* women. It was a loosely fitted, low waist length garment which covers only the front portion of the body, by leaving the back portion exposed as shown in the Fig 4. It consists of V neck, quarter length set in sleeves and all the edges including neckline and sleeves were finished with the help of piping. *Kanchali* had tying strings at two places, i.e., at the neck level and waist level. These fabric strings were called as *Doria*. The *Doria* at the neck level was continuous from one shoulder to another shoulder, whereas the *Doria* at waist level were separated for right and left side of the *Kanchali* and can be tied while wearing the garment. The ends of *Doria* were finished with beads arranged in circular order called *Joondi*, which was used for decoration.

Ravika / Jacket:

Ravika was a simple tight fitted blouse made up of cotton material which is used by *Koya* and some *Lambadi* women as shown in Fig. 5. It was of waist length with round neckline and quarter length set in sleeves. *Ravika* consists of opening in the front of the



body and it was fastened with the help of hooks. The fitting of blouse was done with the help of darts. There was no colour limitation and the choice of colour was totally based up on the availability of colours in the market.

Lower garments of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes

Phetia:

Phetia is a *Lehenga*, also called as *Ghagari* which was made up of synthetic fabric for ceremonial and *Khadi* fabric for marriage purposes. It was used as a lower garment for *Lambadi* females during ceremonial and marriage events. It was a flared garment having pleats or gathers at hip level. The total length of *Phetia* was kept till below calf to show the ankle ornaments. *Phetia* was tied at the right side of the waist with the help of a cord called *Gero*. After tying the *Phetia*, the remaining *Gero* was hanged till the knees. The end of the *Gero* was ornamented with *Gavvalu* and *Dwalilalli* and this ornamented end of *Gero* was called as *Kwadi*. The *Phetia* consists of 15 to 20 cm long yoke downwards from waist to hip level called as *Patteda*. *Patteda* was the most distinctive decorated and attractive feature of *Phetia* and it was decorated with different colored fabric strips, *Kache* and *Dwalilalli*. The remaining portion of *Phetia* was a simple skirt with pleats attached to lower portion of *Patteda*. The hemline of *Phetia* was attached with a border called as *Laavan*. *Laavan* was decorated with multi coloured narrow fabric strips called *Phool*, *Kache* and *Dwalilalli*. The common colours used for *Phetia* of *Lambadi* women were red, orange, yellow and blue etc.



Fig. 6 : *Phetia*

Lopalalanga:

Lopalalanga was a pleated *Saree* petticoat used

by women of both *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes. The length of *Lopalalanga* varies from knee to ankle and the type of *Lopalalanga* varies from tribe to tribe and occasion to occasion. The calf length *Lopalalanga* was used as an under garment by *Koya* women for their ceremonial dance costume (Fig. 3 E). An ankle length *Langa* was used by both *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes, when they drape *Saree* in normal non-tribal style (Fig. 3 A and D). *Lopalalanga* was tied at the waist with the help of draw strings. The hemline of *Lopalalanga* was finished with frills occasionally as shown in Fig. 7.



Fig. 7 : *Lopalalanga*

Langa:

Langa was a pleated or gathered skirt which was worn as a casual lower garment by *Lambadi* women. *Langa* was either printed or plain material with little decorative borders. It was tied at the waist with the help of draw strings. The fabric used for this casual *Langa* was either cotton or synthetic with varied colours based on the availability (Fig. 2.B and D).

Sado / Koka:

Saree was called as *sado* in *Lambadi* language and *Koka* in *Koya* language. *Saree* is worn by both the tribes, but the draping style of *Saree* is different from tribe to tribe and from occasion to occasion. Casual draping style of *Lambadi* (Fig. 2.A) and marriage draping style of *Koya* (Fig. 3 G) women was same. They drape the *Saree* in normal way like non-tribals. *Saree* was draped by tucking one end of the *Saree* at the waist and wrapped around the body with pleats in the front and pleated *Pallu* was thrown over the left shoulders.

Some of the *Koya* females perform bison horn dance during their festivals and marriage ceremonies. The dancers of *Koya* female drape their *Saree* in different way which provides comfort to the participants while dancing. It was draped upto the calf without any pleats in the front. The quarter width of *Saree* was tucked in the waist and it was wrapped around the body where other portion was folded in upper direction and pleated *Pallu* was thrown over the right shoulder and it was taken from back to front from left of the waist and tucked in the waist (Fig. 3 E).

Few respondents from *Koya* tribe wore *Saree* upto knee length by tucking almost the quarter width of the *Saree* in their waist. It was worn from right side of the body to right side and the *Pallu* was thrown over the right shoulder (Fig. 2. F).

Wraps:

Lungi:

Lungi was a casual lower garment worn by *Koya* women. *Lungi* was a cotton or synthetic rectangular piece of fabric wrapped around the waist to cover the lower part of the body. It was of knee length and sometimes it reaches till the calf (Fig. 2.G).

Chinna lungi:

Chinna lungi was a loin cloth used by *Koya* women. It was a 1.5 mts long and 1 m wide fabric which was used to cover the lower private parts. Occasionally it was tied around the waist over lungi. The loin cloth was mostly white in colour and the other colours used were light colours like cream, off white, grey etc., Loin cloth was substituted with *Lungi* and few are still using it (Fig. 2.G).



Fig. 8 : *Tukri*

Tukri:

Tukri was a dupatta used by *Lambadi* women (Fig. 8). It was a piece of 2 yards *Khadi* fabric, where one end was tucked at the left waist and the other end was thrown over the head, so that the naked back of the body can be covered slightly. The casual *Tukri* was almost plain and sometimes attached with borders. The front portion which covers the head called as *Ghumto*, was attached with beautifully embroidered and decorated piece of fabric. The ceremonial and marriage *Tukri* was decorated with embroidery, *Kache* work and appliqué work. The *Ghumto* was decorated with embroidery, *Kache* (mirrors), *Diwani* (coins) and *Dwalilalli* (beads). Sometimes it was attached with different sizes of *Gugra* (beads) at the edge of *Tukri* in the front portion to make them fall on the forehead. It was believed that the *Ghumto* prevent the casting of evil eyes.

Thundugudda:

Usually the *Koya* women do not cover their upper torso. But sometimes they use a piece of approximately 2 yard in length and one yard width fabric to cover the bust portion which was called as *Thundugudda* (Fig. 2 G).

Male costumes of Lambadi and Koya tribes:

The Fig. 9 shows the costumes worn by *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes for different occasions, i.e., casual, ceremonial as well as marriage purposes. It was apparent that *Lambadi* men wore *Lungi- kurta* (41.02%) and *Dhoti-jubba* (58.9%) as their casual costume and *Dhoti-kurta* (100%) as their ceremonial and marriage costume. Whereas, *Koya* men wore *Lungi-shirt* (44.4%), *Loin cloth-jubba* (33.3%) and *Loin cloth*

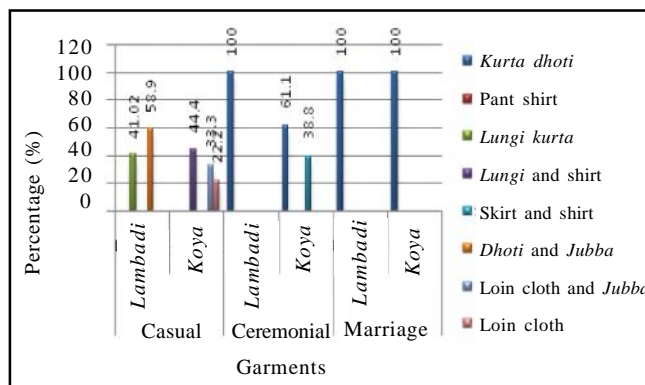


Fig. 9 : Percentage distribution of various male garments of Lambadi and Koya tribes

(22.2%) as their casual clothing. *Koya* men wore *Dhoti-kurta* (61.1%) and *Skirt-shirt* (38.8%) for ceremonies and *Dhoti-kurta* was the only costume worn for marriage purposes.

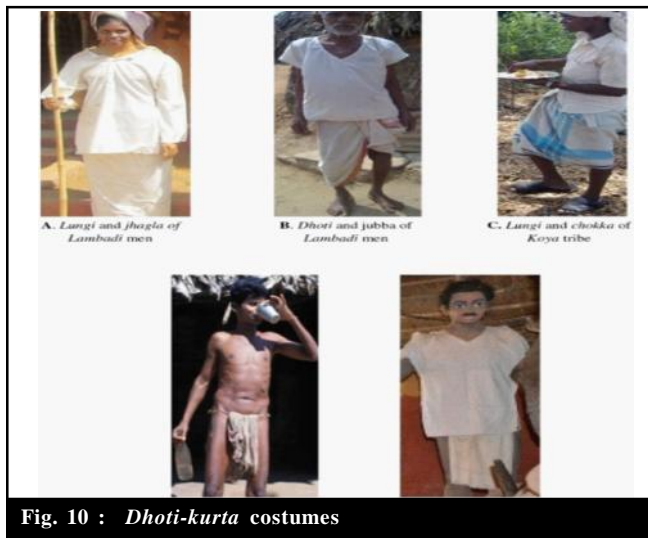


Fig. 10 : *Dhoti-kurta* costumes



Fig. 11 : *Dhoti-kurta* was the only costume worn for marriage purposes

Upper garments of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes:

Dovathi:

Dovathi was a male sleeveless and collar less white coloured under garment worn by both the tribes for occasional purpose. It was worn underneath the *Kurta* or shirt (Fig. 11E).

Jubba:

Jubba was a loosely fitted hip length upper garment

worn by *Lambadi* and *Koya* men as their casual upper garment. It has half length set-in-sleeves and V shaped neck which was finished with facing (Fig. 10B and C).

Chokka:

Chokka was a simple shirt worn only by *Koya* tribe as their casual and ceremonial garment. It was a hip length loosely fitted upper garment with standard collar and patch pocket at the left side of bust. It consists of half length set in sleeves and full placket opening in the front which is fastened with the help of buttons. Traditionally, only light colours like white, cream, grey colours were preferred. The collar less *Chokka* with half sleeves was worn by *Koya* men during ceremonial dance was of red colour (Fig. 10C).

Jhagla:

Jhagla is a *Kurta* which was used as a casual upper garment by *Lambadi* men and used as ceremonial and marriage upper garment by both *Lambadi* and *Koya* men. *Kurta* was a loosely fitted thigh length garment. It consists of full length set in sleeves with or without cuffs, inseam pockets at the right and left sides of the garment at hip level. It consists of small size placket opening in the front of the garment which is fastened with the help of buttons. Some times *Kurta* contain standard collar as shown in (Fig. 11A) and mandarin collar as shown in (Fig.11C) according to the availability. *Kurta* had approximately 10 to 12 inches slits on both the sides of *Kurta* and sometimes the hem line was rounded off. *Kurta* was usually white or cream in colour and made up of mill made cotton fabric.

Lower garments of *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes:

Pancha:

Pancha is a dhoti worn by both *Lambadi* and *Koya* men as their ceremonial and marriage costume. It was called as *pancha* by *Koya* tribe and *Dhoti* by *Lambadi* tribe. Casually dhoti was worn upto the knee length as shown in (Fig. 10B). The style of draping *Dhoti* for marriage purpose was till ankle length, provided with few pleats in the front as shown in (Fig. 11.A,C and D). The *Dhoti* used for casual wear consists of a dark colour border in the weft direction on both the ends. Whereas *Dhoti* worn for special occasion consists of zari border on four sides of the *Dhoti*. *Dhoti* was usually white or cream in colour and made up of mill made cotton fabric.

Langa:

Langa was a colourful calf length male lower garment used by *Koya* men. It was worn as a dance costume during ceremonies and marriages. It was made up of white or red coloured cotton fabric. Colourful fabric strips were attached around the skirt at equal distances shown in (Fig. 11B). There were few gathers at the waist level for decoration and tied at the waist with the help of fabric draw strings or elastic band.

Pants:

It was a loosely fitted garment which can be tied at the waist with the help of draw string and it was worn by *Lambadi* male over dhoti marriage occasion for some time to perform some rituals in the marriages shown in (Fig. 11D).

Lungi:

Lungi was a 1 meter wide and 2 meters long cotton fabric worn by both *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes as their casual and ceremonial lower garment. Sometimes it was sewn into a tubular skirt like garment. It was wrapped around the waist, where two ends of the upper edge of the *Lungi* are brought together, twisted and tucked in the waist by overlapping right over left. While working length of the *Lungi* can be adjusted by tucking in the waist to make it resemble like a short skirt. Traditionally *Lungi* was white in color as shown in (Fig. 10A) and other dark colours with chequered or stylized patterns were also used for casual purpose. It was worn along with shirt or *Kurta* based up on tribe and occasion. The image of chequered pattern *Lungi* was shown in (Fig. 11C)

Gochi:

Gochi is a simple loin cloth which was a small piece of fabric used to cover the private parts by both the tribes as shown in (Fig. 10D and E). It was a white coloured cotton fabric woven with plain weave. A cord called *Molathradu* was used at waist to hold the *Gochi*. One end of the *Gochi* was tucked in the front portion and the other end of *Gochi* was passed in between the legs and tucked in the cord at the back.

Male wraps:**Rumal:**

Rumal was a white colour cotton fabric made up

of plain weave which was used by *Lambadi* male for casual purposes as shown in (Fig.10A). It was approximately 1.5 mts length and the colour used was always white. It was thrown on the shoulders and was used to wipe the face and to cover the head during hot climate. While working *Rumal* was tied around the waist and sometimes it was tied around the head as turban.

Paipancha:

Paipancha was an unstitched piece of cotton fabric with 1.5 mts length and having 3-5 inch wide border of red or orange colour, over which zari patterns were woven as shown in (Fig. 11A). It was folded and thrown on left shoulder or around the neck.

Thundu:

Thundu was a piece of fabric used by *Koya* male to throw over the shoulders, to wipe the face and to cover the head during hot climate. Sometimes it was tied around the waist and was also used as turbans shown in (Fig. 10C). It was approximately 1.5 mts in length and made up of plain weave. There was no colour limitation in *Thundu* and was used according to the availability of colours.

Dupatta:

Dupatta is a 1.5 to 2 meters long piece of synthetic sheer fabric made up of plain weave used by both *Lambadi* and *Koya* tribes. It was used in ceremonial and marriage occasions along with dhoti and *Kurta* by *Lambadi* men to throw around the neck as shown in (Fig. 11.A). It was usually red in colour and occasionally it was tied as a turban by allowing one end of it to fall on the back of the body which is called as *Phankto*. *Dupatta* was called as *Chunni* by *Koya* men and they use blue colour fabric during their *Kommu* dance. It was taken from back of the neck and again tied at the back by making criss cross draping in the front as shown in (Fig. 11B). Other colours like green, orange, yellow were also used by *Koya* men.

Pachchadam:

Pachchadam was a thick coarse mill made plainly woven shawl which was usually red in colour and used by the *Lambadi* male *Groom*. Chequered pattern fabric was also used according to the availability. It was draped over the head in such a way that it can cover head as

well as half of the face of *Groom*. It was used by the groom for entire marriage ceremony as shown in (Fig. 11D).

Conclusion:

The documentation of tribal costume is definitely useful for the fashion industry to create and adapt the features of costumes in the modern clothing. Due to the development and modernization, some of the traditional costumes are almost extinct with change of time, so, it is very helpful for the future generations to know different traditional costumes worn by different tribal groups.

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