

Chapter - 5: Pattern Making of Indian Garments

5.1 Indian Garments

Traditionally Indian women wear saree, salwar kameez, kalidar kurta suits or lehnga choli. Even in large metropolitan cities, majority of women prefer traditional Indian garments for special occasions like festivals or weddings. However, a substantial number wear it on daily basis both as working attire as well as for daily use in all the cities. Women from smaller towns and rural India wear for all purposes. Indian designers who are designing womens wear always have a range of traditional line even if they are primarily doing western garments, lingerie or resort wear.

Due to abundance of labor in India coupled with tradition of draped garments from saree to dhotis, the skill of pattern making in India did not develop in the same manner and

speed as per global benchmarks. Indian pattern makers have mastered the art of direct drafting. Traditionally Indian garments are cut by direct drafting method, be it saree blouse, choli blouse, kameez, kalidar kurta, salwar or churidar payjama.

In direct drafting method pattern is cut for individual persons measurements. In block method patterns are made as per standard measurements for example for bust size 34 or 36 following a standard measurement chart and are then adapted to make various designs. While in direct drafting method an individual is measured and a pattern for a particular design is drafted for the individual's measurement. Most of the time, it is drafted by expert tailors directly on the final fabric itself, this can be often seen in tailor shops across India.



There are advantages and disadvantages of both methods the block method is a boon for ready to wear (RTW) markets big brands range of RTW apparel is only possible through block method. Globally fashion industry follows block method to create patterns as it is easy to cut patterns for standard sizes through block method, it saves time as one does not need to test-fit again, it saves money and is easy to store patterns in standard blocks. Grading to several sizes in the range is possible even for most complicated patterns. However, fit of the garment is a big issue as standard measurement charts divides the entire population of a country in five to seven sizes it is a known fact that no two human beings are alike in structure. Direct drafting ensures that the garment would conform to an individual measurement and give proper fit it ensures, that most complicated designs also do not require a test-fit. Garment can be designed keeping the shape of the person in mind lot of detailing in garment and individual styling is possible in this method. Both the methods are opposite to each other, advantages of one are the drawback of the other method.

Interesting fact about salwar, churidar pajama and kalidar kurta is that the method of cutting the pattern is identical for both genders only change being that the required measurement of an individual. These three garments are worn by both men and women even today, though today salwar is worn by men only in certain communities.

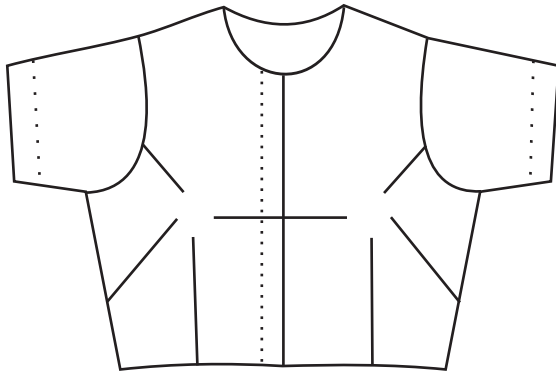


5.2 Various Kinds of Saree Blouse

The upper garment worn with a saree is called a saree blouse it has unique feature like it fits the body like a second skin. It is widely used by women from all walks of life it can be a basic one as being of the same color as the saree. It can be of different color, contrast color and is even used to make a statement.

5.2.1 Detailing of Blouse

The fabric generally used for saree blouse is 2X2 rubia, it has some inherent stretch in the fabric, If the blouse is being cut on silk with lining or in thick cotton fabrics, sufficient ease needs to be added on bust and waist level. There are various necklines that are possible in the saree blouse. The saree blouse has a placket opening that is in either front or back of the blouse. For the ladies garments the right overlap the left for the opening. The placket in the left front of the wearer is extended by $\frac{3}{4}$ " and right front is completely folded inside.



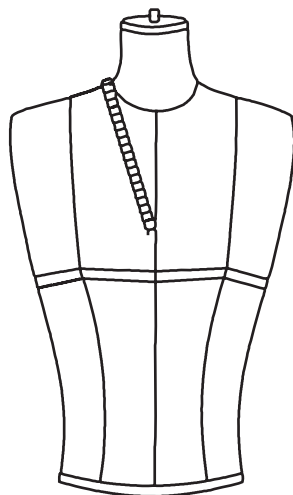
Outfit by Ritu Beri

5.3 Necklines & Its Variations

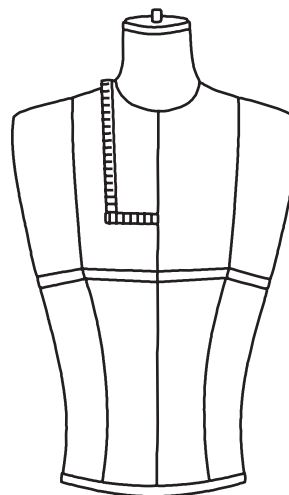
There are number of variation in necklines that are possible to make once the basic block has been drafted.

The **measurement** required for any neckline is the depth of the neck measured from the nape of the neck point to the center front diagonally. (Neckline measurement A)

In case of necklines like square, glass neck, sweet heart measure in a straight line on the body for the length and for the width of the neckline at that point to the center front is also measured. (Neckline measurement B)



Neckline measurement A



Neckline measurement B

5.3.1 Points to be kept in mind for developing Necklines

1. If a neckline is made wider in the front, the same needs to be done for the back.
2. Try avoiding deeper neckline for both front and back at the same time. In case one decide to keep the neckline deeper in both front and back then an ease of about $\frac{1}{2}$ " needs to be taken out on the centre front neck.
3. The measurement which is taken diagonally should be marked diagonally on the pattern and a measurement taken straight should be marked straight.
4. For curved neckline, always square out $\frac{1}{4}$ " either side at center back and center front and on shoulder level.

5.4 Various Possibilities in Necklines



V-Neck



Broad V



Round



U



Square



Glass



Sweet Heart



Sweet Heart Variation

5.5 Finishing of Necklines

The necklines in a garment can be finished with a collar or a separate finishing like facing or piping, since the neckline is cut as a shape it has a substantial amount of stretch so it needs to be secured properly. The neckline also frames the face of the wearer hence it draws maximum attention. Both kinds of facings that are cut on bias or a shaped facing are prevalent in all kinds of clothing around the world, however, piping is generally only used in Indian garments specially the sari blouses.

Piping is a bias strip of fabric 1¼" wide and is attached to the neckline on the seam line after stretching. The piping is finished either by hemming or machine stitch. It is finished to about 1/8" - 1/4" wide ready on the right side of the garment. It is a popular finish for blouses and other Indian garments.

Facings are of two kinds - bias facing and shaped facing.

Bias facing is a similar strip of fabric like piping but is attached to the neckline without stretching. The same is finished completely on the wrong side.

Shaped facing: A shaped facing is cut following the shape of the neckline and is attached on the right side and then is completely turned in. The width of this facing varies for each design but is generally 1½" wide.

Summary

This part of the chapter covers the following topics:

1. The overview of Indian Garments.
2. Saree blouse and the stitching procedures to finish it.
3. Pattern of a sleeve of a saree blouse.
4. Sleeveless saree blouse pattern
5. Various kinds of neckline designs and patterns for them
6. Neckline finishing with facing and piping.

Exercise

1. Collect pictures of various traditional Indian garments and maintain this information in your scrap book. Can you identify the state or region they may originally belong to?
2. Collect pictures of various Indian Garments designed by today's designers and label these various outfits and designers. Is information in your scrap book. Can you make pattern for these designs.
3. Collect pictures of various necklines and maintain this information in your scrap book. Try making patterns of these necklines.

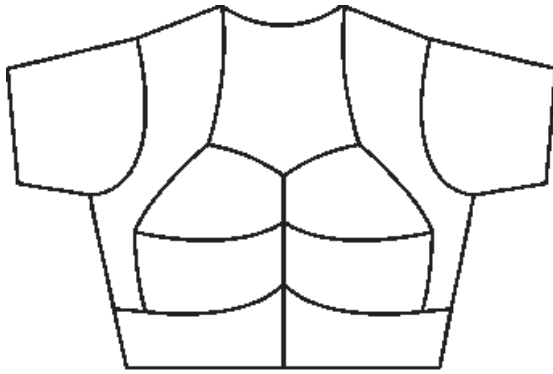
4. Fill in the blanks

- a. Traditionally Indian women wear _____, _____, _____ suits.
- b. Indian pattern makers have _____ the art of _____ drafting.
- c. In direct drafting method pattern is cut for _____ measurements while in block method patterns are made for _____ measurements.
- d. In India pattern is _____ by tailors _____ on the final _____.
- e. In direct drafting garment can be designed keeping the _____ of the person in _____ a lot of _____ in a garment and individual _____ is possible.
- f. The method of _____ pattern of _____, churidar pajama and _____ is _____ for _____ genders.
- g. _____ Blouse fits the body like a _____.
- h. The armhole dart is at least _____ from apex.
- i. The _____ height of saree blouse sleeve is kept _____ so as to provide maximum _____ in the sleeve to allow for _____ movement.
- j. In a sleeveless blouse go _____ on the _____ level.
- k. To ensure that the neckline doesn't end in a point go out _____ on _____ of the bodice.
- l. While making a neckline deeper in front it is _____ not to make the neckline _____ and _____ at back.
- m. A _____ neckline is drawn using a French curve.
- n. The _____ facing is cut keeping the pattern of the _____ of the desired piece.
- o. The measurement required for any neckline is the depth of the neck measured from the _____ of the _____ point to the center front of the _____.

5.6 Choli Blouse

Choli blouse is an outerwear garment which fits the body like second skin and provides the support of foundation garment. Traditionally women did not wear any lingerie with a choli blouse yet felt comfortable wearing the same. In the traditional pattern the choli or cup cut on bias that would stretch to fit on various bust sizes) and gathered on the center front to give ease over bust. It has an under bust band cut on lengthwise grain to give support (which doesn't stretch).

Modern version of a choli blouse has a choli piece and a waistband, but it does not provide the requisite support so use of lingerie is not eliminated. The choli blouse fits closer than the traditional saree blouse. Women with a smaller bust highlight the across bust seam with contrast piping and sometimes the two parts of the cup piece is made up of different fabrics.



5.7 Salwar Kameez

The salwar kameez suit traditionally used in north India predominantly in Punjab is the result of Mughal influence. The suit initially was referred to as Punjabi by people in some southern states of India and is now an accepted dress pan India cutting across religious, state and income boundaries so much so, that it is readily available in ready to wear avatar in several price ranges in a number of brands with innumerable design variations. Each state and region has its own variation and a take on this outfit.

5.7.1 Salwar

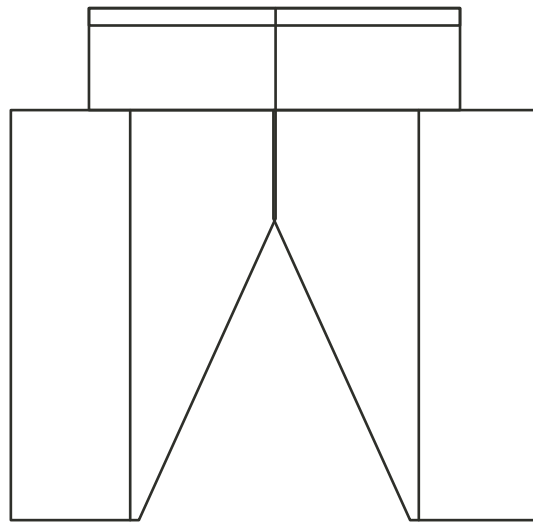
Salwar lower part of the set is worn by both men and women in North India, however, its use by men in modern India is limited to certain communities. Women use it on daily basis as it is one of the most comfortable of lower body garments which has sufficient ease for manual work, sit or squat on floor and even to sleep in it.

The hem of the salwar is stiffened to enable the garment to fall and drape well. The traditional salwar had full waist which was generally cut one and half times of hip measurement or even could be cut of free size, ensured that one size fitted majority of women and covered for body changes due to weight gain or loss. It was tied with a draw string, it required an expertise of handling a large amount of fabric and modern day version is a salwar with a belt, which is cut in proportion to an individual's hip measurement.

Salwais made up of basic geometric shapes to create a garment that has no wastage using the width of fabrics. Also by placing the patterns intelligently and using various widths of the fabric variations in designs of the salwar are possible, e.g. a design variation of Patiala salwar uses the larger width fabric, the side panel or kali is cut on fabric i.e. 45" in width, a Peshawari salwar is cut with double the width of Patiala salwar.

By traditional method the fabric required for a salwar is 2.5 meters.



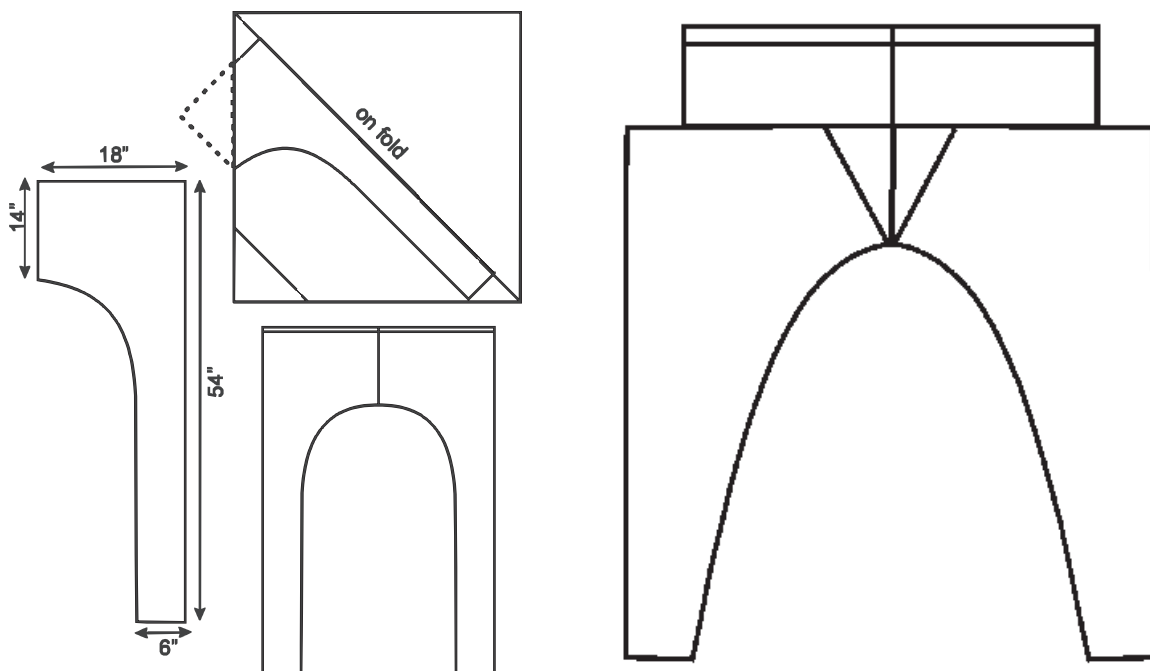


Salwar

5.7.2 Churidar Payjama

Churidar payjama traditionally was cut in a very interesting manner, the fabric was folded and stitched to create a bag where the entire fabric was on a bias grain thus making the churidar to be very close fitted and yet give ease of movement to the wearer. This method required a much smaller length of fabric for an adult woman of average height of 5 and half feet, fabric required of usual width of 36" was only 1.75 meters.

The modern version of pajama is cut by folding the two lengths of fabric into half lengthwise and then folding it diagonally.

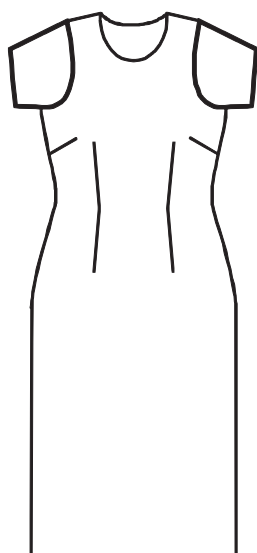


5.8 Upper Body Garments

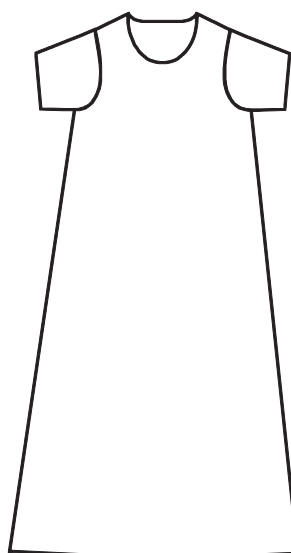
5.8.1 Kameez

The top half of the suit is called a kameez, it is a long top worn over the salwar. The traditional kameez is a longer version of the saree blouse. However, with influence of global fashion trends and needs of modern women the kameez has changed several silhouettes from being closely fitted short length in 60's to long loose tent silhouette of 90's to an individualistic length of the 21st century. It changes its looks keeping with the global trends it has also appeared on the international ramps regularly for last couple of years since the beginning of this century in various avatars.

The trends have changed its silhouette to suit the needs of modern Indian women from traditionally being worn with salwar or churidar its modern versions are teamed with slacks, trousers, leggings and jeans.



Traditional kameez

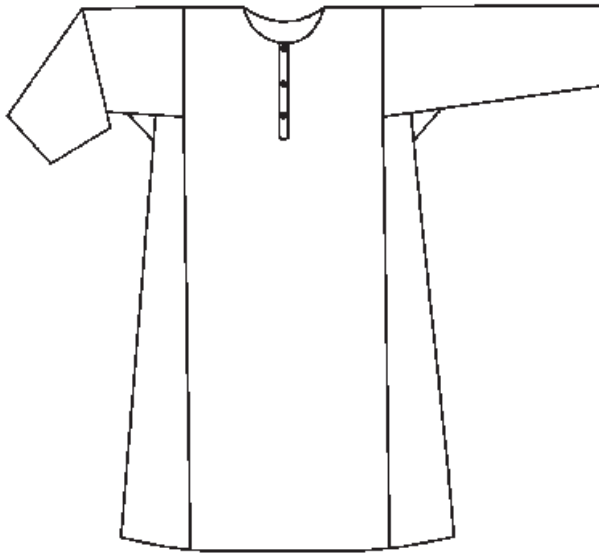


A-line Kameez

5.8.2 Kalidar Kurta

Kalidar Kurta a comfortable garment and has an interesting pattern. The pattern is made up of geometric shapes. The only measurements required are chest/ bust, length of kurta and sleeve length. Traditional kurta was cut with the center panel on fold. The kalis or side panels of kurta are cut in a similar manner as side panels of salwar. The sleeve has a straight armhole and traditionally a square gusset is attached between sleeve and kali for ease of movement.

Variations in designs of Kalidar kurta are Bhopali kurta, Jama, Angarkha which are gaining international popularity these days and all of them are cut on basic principles of kalidar kurta, if the pattern cutter understands the nuances of kalidar pattern then variations are easy to cut.



Kalidar Kurta



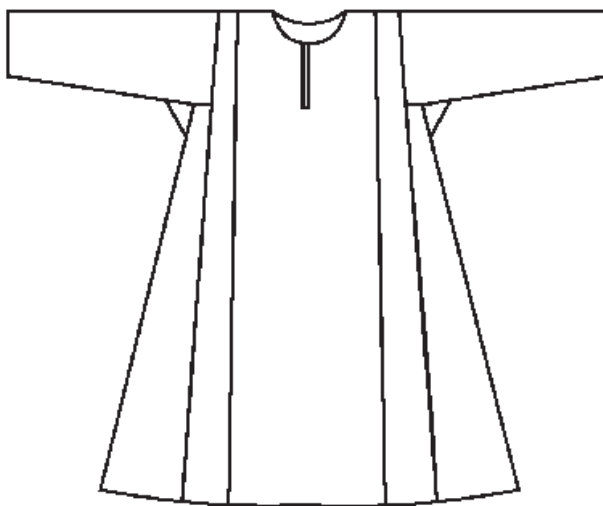
Variation of Kalidar Kurta by Ritu Beri

Two Kali Kurta

Another popular variation of the kalidar kurta is a two kali kurta where one of the kali or panel starts from the shoulder itself

Variation of Kalidar Kurta by RituBeri

The kurta has several kalis starting from the waist level.



Various kinds of Kurta



Summary

The chapter covers the following topics:

1. The traditional Indian garments for women's wear.
2. The different kinds of sari blouses.
3. Different kind of bifurcated Indian garments salwar and churidar payjama.
4. Different kinds of upper body garments kameez and kurtas.

Exercise

1. Collect pictures of various traditional Indian garments and maintain this information in your scrap book. Can you identify the period they originally belong to.

2. Collect pictures of various Indian Garments designed by today's designers and label these various outfits and designers. Is information in your scrap book. Can you make pattern for these designs.

3. Fill in the blanks

- a. _____ blouse provides the support of a _____ garment and fits _____ than a regular sari blouse.
- b. In the traditional pattern the choli or _____ cut on _____ would _____ on _____ bust sizes.
- c. Salwar a lower _____ is worn by both _____ and _____, however, its use by _____ in modern India is limited to certain communities.
- d. The salwar kameez suit traditionally used in _____ India predominantly in Punjab is the result of _____ influence.
- e. The _____ of the salwar is stiffened to enable the garment to _____ and _____ well.
- f. _____ is made up of basic _____ shapes to create a garment that has no _____ using the _____ of fabric.
- g. The traditional kameez is a longer version of the _____.
- h. The Kurta pattern is made up of _____ shapes, only measurements required are _____, required _____ of kurta and _____ length.
- i. Traditional kurta was cut with the _____ panel on fold, _____ of kurta are cut in a similar manner as side panels of _____.
- j. Variations in designs of Kalidar kurta are _____ kurta, _____, _____ which are gaining _____ popularity these days.
- k. The _____ of the Kurta is cut as a square measuring _____ of _____ plus one inch.
- l. _____ was traditionally cut in a very interesting manner; the fabric was _____ and stitched to create a _____ where the entire fabric was on a _____ grain.
- m. The modern version of pajama is cut by folding the _____ lengths of fabric into half _____ and then folding it _____.
- n. Fabric required for a churidar in traditional cutting method was only _____ meters and by modern method is _____ meters.
- o. The belt in a salwar or churidar measures _____ hip plus _____ ease.

