

A STUDY OF ICONIC FEMALE SLEEVE STRUCTURES DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD OF SRI LANKA.

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Abstract

The research seeks to the evolution of the sleeve detail which is a completely exotic element of Sri Lankan female clothing culture and its structural evolution with the time and the lifestyle of the women. Sri Lanka had its own clothing culture for the females, which was influenced by the Indian attire based on "uttariya and antariya". It was a two-piece garment that could be worn with a specifically required draping method. It was upheld to the constructed garment with the colonial invasion and the European cultural imprint on Sri Lanka. With the colonialism, Sri Lankan society was driven based on the social class and caste domination, which needed to be interpreted with the attire. Based on that, the sleeve became a more identical element of women's attire in different social levels, which were existing in that time. According to the social hierarchy of Sri Lanka the society has been structured into 3 social classes, such as high class, middle-class and the working-class. The females of these high- and middle-class deliberately had been worn delicate attires that have prominent sleeves. The research will be focused on 'the sleeve' and its structural evolution with the colonial invasion. The research was based on the hypothesis that the lifestyle and social hierarchy was being iconized through the sleeve and its structure. The research is a qualitative driven and sampling was done with the purposive sampling method. In conclusion, it was realized that the aristocratic women had opportunities to inspire European new trends to stylish themselves, yet the lower caste women were lived with restricted clothing styles. The process was conveyed as descriptive researches as the methodologies were used are observations, analytical studies, field visits, and secondary data.

Keywords: *Lifestyle, Colonialism, Evolution, Social-classes, Women's sleeve, Fashion*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The history of Sri Lankan female clothing culture goes back to ancient times. The history reveals that female clothing has been evolved by using the technique of draping and wrapping clothes over the waist.

During the Portuguese period, Sri Lankan female clothing was developed under specific terms such as Kabakuruththu cloth, Baju hattaya, saya, and bachchuwa. The saluwa was an item of dress and beeralu (bobbin) was a handmade lace technique. During the Dutch period, Sri Lankan clothing acquires different terms, tunics, and gingham skirts. During the British period, these dress styles were modified and developed with the British sartorial elements.

1.2 RELEVANCE AND JUSTIFICATION

Mainly focused on the colonial fashion influence in sleeve designs female clothing and the impact. After became a vassal state of Europe, the clothing culture became more structural and systematic.

The scope is to research on the alterations and imitations from European fashion culture for the female sleeve designs and its structural evolution with the time and the lifestyle of the women.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

Most prominent objective of the research is to study the unique sleeve details and their structures of day to day lifestyle the and investigate the impact towards the social hierarchy in the colonial period

1.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research will be done based on grounded theories of fashion adoption to probe the facts to analyze how the European clothing culture acquired by the Sri Lankan society.

The “Trickle Down Theory” coined by economist Thorstein Veblen in 1889, the trickle-down theory of fashion adoption assumes that fashion begins in the upper echelon of society. Styles worn by the wealthy change, and those changes are gradually adopted by the middle and lower classes. “ (Powell-Smith, 2019)

In Trickle Up theory the trend pushes its way up to the higher-income groups, and then to the runways of high fashion shows. Based on those theories the research will be carried out thoroughly.

“A more appropriate way to explain the trickle up theory is that it’s, a fashion that originates from the streets, or the lower-income groups” (Trickle-Up Fashion, 2019).

As the trend flows, women followed Victorian and Elizabethan styles to cover up their bodies to elaborate their class, wealth and beauty.

1.5 METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The data gathering for the research will be done involving primary and secondary data resources. The data was gathered separately about the colonial influence of details in female clothes and its adaptation and evolution.

Secondary data will be gained from historical data, journals, actual time-related photographs in chateaus (*walawwa*) books, newspapers, academic research papers, and wall paintings in the British period (*Kathaluwa, Karagampitiya*), etc. The research is done based on the qualitative method

2.0 Literature Review

Evolution of Female Sleeve Jacket

2.1 WOMEN’S ATTIRE IN PRE-COLONIAL SRI LANKA

As the written and verbal relevance’s shown, the precolonial women’s attire was based on the “antariya and uttariya” even in the royal families in Sri Lanka. Before the colonial period, most of the *sandesha kawya* has revealed about the breast clothes that women have worn and the Uttariya that was thrown over the shoulder to cover the breasts. Though they have used such materials as cotton and silk. Silk clothes were most probably imported, and cotton was produced locally (Dian Gomes, K.G.D.Wimalarathne, 2001).

After the colonialization the Sri Lankan women were chosen to wear as the European style, so the attires became more civilized and controversial.

In ancient Sri Lanka had a weaving culture which is most related to the clothing of that period such as “*pada hela*”, *lansolu* (women), *Diya kachchiya*, etc. The sizes and shapes of the clothes woven by village weavers by their own (Dian Gomes, K.G.D.Wimalarathne, 2001).



Figure 1 Lansolu (draped over the shoulder) and Cloth made from Somana cloth

2.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE SLEEVE AND ITS BEHAVIOR IN SRI LANKA

2.2.1 What is a sleeve?

The sleeve is a “part of a garment which covers the arm, or through which the arm passes or slips” (Sleeves - Sleeve Definition - Definitions for the Clothing & Fabric Industry, 1999-2017).

During the Kandyan era, women wore a cloth which can be identified as the basic idea of *ohoriya*. The cloth has draped around the waist area and then the other edge of the cloth has thrown across the shoulder to cover the breast area and tucked again in the waist area.



Figure 2 Kandyan woman Image source - <http://www.serendib.btoptions.lk>

In the 19th century, a Czech artist Travik Frantisek (1877-1947) has done a painting series of sceneries of Kandy- *Dalada Maligawa* and around. The women who appeared in that paintings wearing a cloth across the shoulders (which can be considered as *Uttariya*).

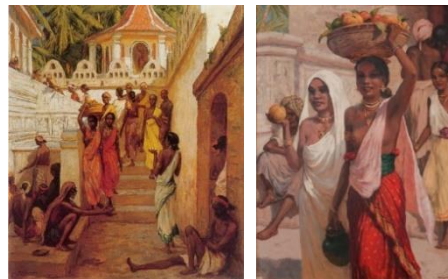


Figure 3 Kandy Ceylon, oil-painting-three-women at the temple of candy-Ceylon - Image Source- <http://www.tfsimon.com/Oilpaintings-in-miniatures.htm>

As the literatures have shown, the majority of Sri Lankan women was being topless and there are no evidences of sleeve details during the pre – colonized Sri Lanka.

2.3 WOMEN’S ATTIRE IN COLONIAL SRI LANKA

Within the colonial imprint on Sri Lankan Society, it became more rebellious. “Especially among the higher echelons of society, there was no need for compulsion as there was an enthusiastic shift to Western dress. ...the women embraced layered Victorian dresses with crinolines (stiffened petticoats) - also unsuited to the climate - and accessories such as hats, gloves, and umbrellas” (Island Dress, 2016). Some puritanical influences came with Western colonial rule and the imposition of Judeo-Christian culture on the liberal tradition of Hindu-Buddhist culture that prevailed in ancient Lanka. "In the mid-seventeenth century under the influence of the puritanical Dutch, lace collars, frills, cuffs, and hemlines began to be freely used. Lace-making was introduced as a cottage industry " (Wickramasinghe, 2003).

3.0 Research Methods

To identify the parameters for the data collection the idea of qualitative research was purposefully selected. Documents or visual materials or both types which will provide the best answers to the research question.

3.1 OBSERVATION

In the research, multiple observations were done. The observations were recorded as descriptive notes with descriptive sketches, notes included a description of the physical setting, important features of the painting, or sculpture, photographs. With some sketch's series and toil experimentations distinctive details, parts, features, forms, and shapes were identified.

3.2 COLLECTION OF DATA

Data Collection Type	Options within Types	Advantages of the Type
Observation	Observer as participant	Can be recorded information as it is represented in the actual site.
Visual materials, Photographs, Mural paintings, Sculptures, Carvings	Unobtrusive method of collecting data. Provides an opportunity for researcher to share the reality with the objects.	Can observe the behaviors holding on to the actual time
Books / Documents	Publication documents such as minutes of meetings, newspapers Private documents as journals,	Can be accessed at a time, an unobtrusive source of information

4.0 Sleeve Type Analysis in Colonial Sri Lanka

4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE SLEEVES ACCORDING TO THE LENGTH LEVELS

According to the anatomical structure of the human body, the arm is an extended part which is built up for holding and grabbing support. The human arm can be divided into three main levels as its bending positions. As a fashion element, the sleeve is the part which is decorated or cover on purpose. As the sleeve originated to covers the arm, yet the sleeve has become the way of being fashionable which is more impact on the silhouette.

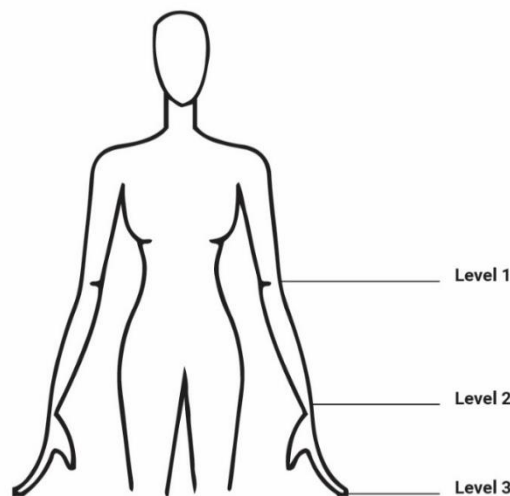


Figure 4 the levels of the sleeve length

According to the figure 05, the fashion silhouette of the female upper body, the arm can be divided into three levels.

- Level 01 - from shoulder end to the elbow
- Level 02 - from elbow to the wrist
- Level 03 - beyond the wrist

The method is used due to the behavioral qualities and the bending positions of the physical body. Rather than the levels, the construction methods were depending in each era and will be described as below.

4.2 FOREIGN INVASION AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN’S ATTIRE

Portuguese landed in 1497 and during that era the middle-class people who were more dragged themselves to the tailored cut and sewn clothes in stylish way to European influence.

As a design element the bobbin lace techniques have been introduced in the Portuguese time and it was more mixed up in the southern coastal area. The name “beeralu” derives from the Portuguese word bilro (bobbin) (Cassim, 2016)

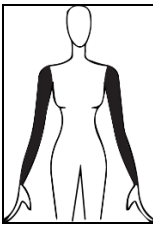

The sleeves used to be larger than the arm among the high-class women as royals. But it reflects the royalty, the pride and her royal lifestyle through it. (Figure 06)


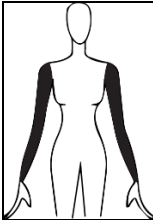



British period left the European cultural aspects for the Sri Lankan. The British turned the Lankan people to be Live as English. The people who belonged to the middle class instantly dragged and imitated the styles of British people and show their affection for the British.

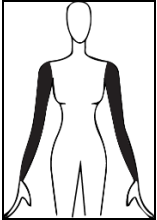





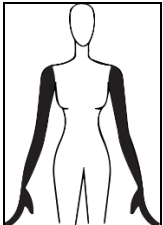

Women transferred themselves to be worn as British ladies and tried to maintain “hourglass shape”, especially in the “upper and urbanized “middle-class women enthusiastic towards the British influence.



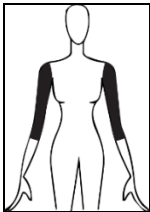



The Ceylonese upper-middle and middle-class women chose the richest fabrics did unique additions such as the lace and embroidery work which was available at that time. They used the Victorian and Elizabethan style as the most iconic image and followed. The layers of dress and suiting required were impractical, sometimes uncomfortable but always beautifully fashionable. As the style came to the lower class as a result of the trickle-down theory only some elements were trans passed as sleeves, fabrics and trims.

5.0 Pictorial Analysis Based on the Three Sleeve Categories in Accordance with its Construction Basis

Time Period	Sleeve Level	Special features	Sleeve Type
Portuguese	 <p>Level 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Way bigger than the arm - Shaggy lower part - Not much constructed 	 <p>Figure 5 Combination of Bishop and Mameluke sleeve</p>

		<p>-Simple sleeve structure with up turned hem</p>	<p>Dona Catherina - Image source – A true and exact description of Ceylon – Phillip Baldeous, 1672</p>  <p>Figure 6 Long sleeve with a turned-up hem- Baju Hettaya and camboy</p>
<p>Dutch</p>	 <p>Level 2</p>	<p>-Open at the hem -Simple sleeve structure</p> <p>-Fitted sleeve - Puffed upper arm expresses many layers had been worn underneath - Opened hem</p> <p>-Fitted Sleeve -Not much constructed with the body measurements (Loosen upper arm)</p>	 <p>Figure 7 Long fitted sleeve Native woman in Redda Hatte Image source – Hand colored engraving from Haafner, 1808. Galle-V.O.C. Vestiging in Ceylon, Lodewijk Wagenaar)</p>  <p>Figure 8 – Long Fitted Sleeve - A mestice woman - Image source – Hand colored engraving from Haafner, 1808. Galle-V.O.C. Vestiging in Ceylon, Lodewijk Wagenaar)</p>  <p>Figure 9 Long fitted sleeve A mestice woman (European and native mixed) -Image source – Original Engraving by Cornelis de Bruins,1711, Illustrations and views of Dutch Ceylon 1602-1796</p>

<p>British</p>	 <p>Level 02</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Puffed sleeve usage -More identical part of the whole attire - Much fabric usage for the sleeve structures -Smocking, ruffles, gatherings make the sleeves unique from one to another - Variation of sleeves with unique elements Virago, Leg-o-mutton, Trumpet 	 <p>Figure 10 Long fitted sleeve- Image Source - Hindagala Temple</p>  <p>Figure 11 Long fitted sleeve- Image Source - Mulkirigala Temple</p>  <p>Figure 12 Leg-o-mutton sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>  <p>Figure 13 Leg-o-mutton sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>  <p>Figure 14 Puffed Trumpet Sleeve Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>
	 <p>Level 03</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sleeve structure made beyond the arm -Flowy silhouette -Edges finished with lace -Bias cut usage for frills -Puffing and gatherings made sleeve more larger 	 <p>Figure 15 Flounce sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>

			 <p>Figure 16 Two layered puff bell s sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>  <p>Figure 17 Angel sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>
	 <p>Intermediate level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sleeve stays between elbow and wrist -Puffed silhouette -Used to start the sleeve with lace ruffles (at the shoulder area) 	 <p>Figure 18 Trumpet sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>  <p>Figure 19 Puffed trumpet sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions</p>  <p>Figure 20 Marmeluke sleeve- Image Source – The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>

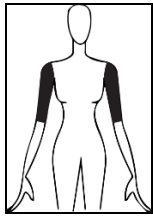




	 <p>Level 01</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identical sleeve in the Kandyan era -Puffed look has got with the gatherings in the shoulder - Used to add extended ruffle part from the shoulder\ - Embroidery were used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Puffed look gained from the to and the hem of the sleeve -Hem finishing was done with longer ruffles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fitted sleeve construction -Hemline was finished with embroidery 	  <p>Figure 21 Puffed sleeves - Image Source- National Museum – Colombo, Kandy. Taken by Author</p>  <p>Figure 22 Puffed sleeves – Image source- The Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon</p>  <p>Figure 23 Short fitted sleeves- National Museum- Colombo, Line drawings of the sleeve details – Taken by author</p>
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Figure 24 Figure 25 Studying the constructions by making toiles -Puffed Sleeves



Figure 26 Studying the Construction by making Toiles -Long Fitted Sleeves and Flounce Sleeve



Figure 27 Sleeve Construction with Single Pattern

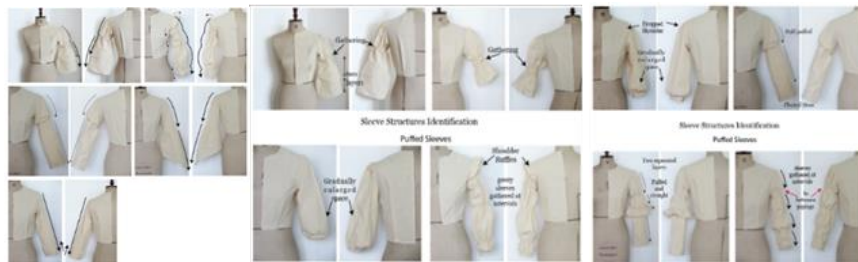


Figure 28 Sleeve Construction with Two Patterns



Figure 29 Sleeve Construction with Three or many Patterns

6.0 Conclusion

The colonialization took the country to a different level which is more mixed, with the western cultural aspects, not only the clothing, also the religion, thinking patterns, philosophy, and the whole social network.

During the Portuguese era, the women's attire became more constructed rather than the pre-colonial clothing due to the cut and sew method which came from the Portuguese culture. Ex. The jacket and the cloth (baju, camboy) As a result of its simple sleeves were added to the jacket. With the culture, cut and sew method combined with the attitudes and willingness to be changed. The social status was shown with the structure of the sleeve. Even though the sleeve length remains the same, the level was iconized with the puffy look.

After the invasion of the Dutch, the Ceylonese people again conjunct with its culture. But the silhouette seems not to be more different from the Portuguese time sleeves. The sleeve of the Dutch era in women's clothing kept longer till the wrist. To express the class classification upper-class mestice women have worn the sleeve bit puffed which is more related to the leg-o-mutton sleeve yet the lower-class women worn the long-fitted sleeve.

The British cultural imprint took the women's sleeve to more complicated and garnished level. The sleeve was the most elaborate detail in the costume rather than the Portuguese and Dutch era clothing. The sleeves are more differentiated from one to another and each detail has given uniqueness to each sleeve. All the sleeves typically imitated the Victorian style of clothing which was arisen in Europe.

The Kandyan era has brought separately due to its uniqueness of clothing. Kandyan women used to drape a cloth as the "ohoriya" without a jacket during the pre-colonial era. But after the colonial impact, the women in the Kandyan Kingdom used to follow the foreign clothing adaptations. The sleeve types of Kandyan clothing was imitated the puffed sleeves and long sleeves. Even though the Kandyan era lasted from the Dutch period to the British period, the Kandyan culture has kept the limitations

dragged the suitable essence of the European culture. "They patterned the jackets with different types of sleeves, necklines, collars, fastenings, and decorative trimmings such as frills, and ornamental cuffs with traditional designs and motifs." (Karunaratne, 2014)

As a conclusion, the sleeves of the normal woman were done with an awareness of the social responsibilities which was expected from the society to be done. Due to that reason, the sleeve kept neutral. Even the sleeve was long or short, it kept flexible with the movements of the arms. The women who were in aristocratic families followed the fashion and the new trends which brought from Europe to stay stylish. As it comes to the British era the sleeve fashion was identical and stylish at its best. Most of the sleeves in low country aristocratic women kept the sleeve length, sometimes it was longer than the arms. The lifestyle of the aristocratic women always got the backup for their day to day life from the slave women who were willing to become slaves and lower caste women.

As the topic is about the lifestyle and social hierarchy of the woman were being iconized through the sleeve and its structure development (during the colonial period); the study is limited to the sleeve and not going further on analyzing the clothing styles in the colonial era. There is visible evolution on the sleeve part from the beginning to the end of the colonization.

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