

# Designer Approaches to the Heritage Textile Craft Amalgamation in Hand Knitting; Local Adaptation of Hand Knitting Technology

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**Abstract** – Hand knitting is a versatile experimental craft that can be explored in many ways. Knitting is the process of looping yarn around two or more needles to form a collection of interconnected loops that will eventually become a finished clothing item or another sort of fabric. This craft came to Sri Lanka during foreign invention and primarily to produce pure Norwegian wool yarns began producing machine knitted sweaters somewhere in the 1950's. And further expanded as cottage knitting centers in several of the island's rural communities. In literature, hand knitting is typically connected with western countries. Even though it is generally associated with the western countries, Sri Lanka also considers it as a heritage textile craft. Hand knitting is a common practice in every household worldwide. However, because of the lack of climatic necessity, hand knitting is not a well-established craft in Sri Lanka as compared to other crafts. And also, the knitting industry has still not started to cater in terms of the Sri Lankan context. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka has thriving, economy-based craft organizations and communities with highly talented artisans who have more than 35 years of expertise in hand knitting and produce export-quality goods to different countries. There are countless possibilities with hand knitting, and this method is capable of adapting to local context in many ways. Craftsman's, different companies are also approaching this. The term "amalgamation" describes the mixing of cultures as opposed to one group eradicating another or one group assimilating itself into another. Hence Craft amalgamation is one approach where hand knitting can be introduced according to local preferences. The main objective and the intention of this research is to understand how local designers in Sri Lanka amalgamate various other heritage textile crafts in Sri Lanka with hand knitting technology to integrate into the local context. This creates an opportunity for local craft communities to uplift their craftsmanship towards the creative economy and also to give a new knowledge to the Local designers who tend to form new designs related to hand knitting for the local context. Literature reviews and case studies are used as the main research approach for this study to examine the Sri Lankan hand knitting industry and its strengths and weaknesses. Several case studies will be carried out for designers who are engaged with knitwear, and it will be conducted to identify the ways they

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have taken through the amalgamation of heritage crafts. Craft amalgamation may be challenging, but efforts have been made to remove these challenges from their design processes. In the end, each of these projects clearly illustrates the potential for craft amalgamation. Hence this will open up to future possibilities which are related to hand knitting.

**Keywords:** Local hand knitting craft practices, Craft amalgamation, Heritage textile craft

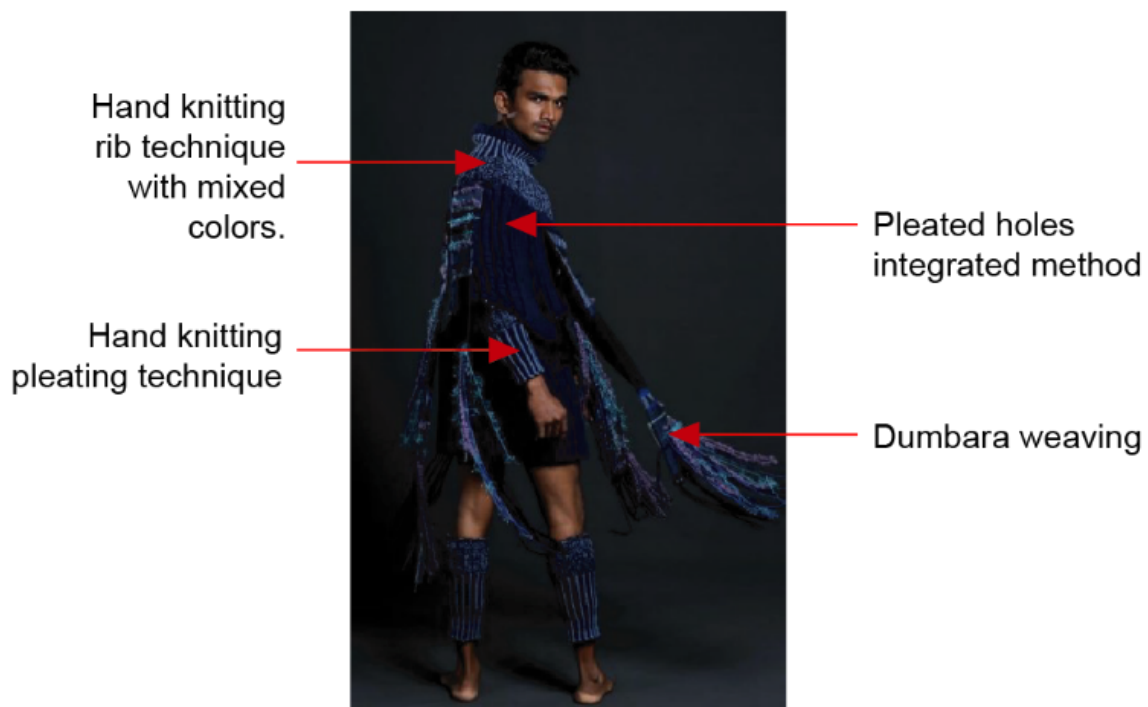
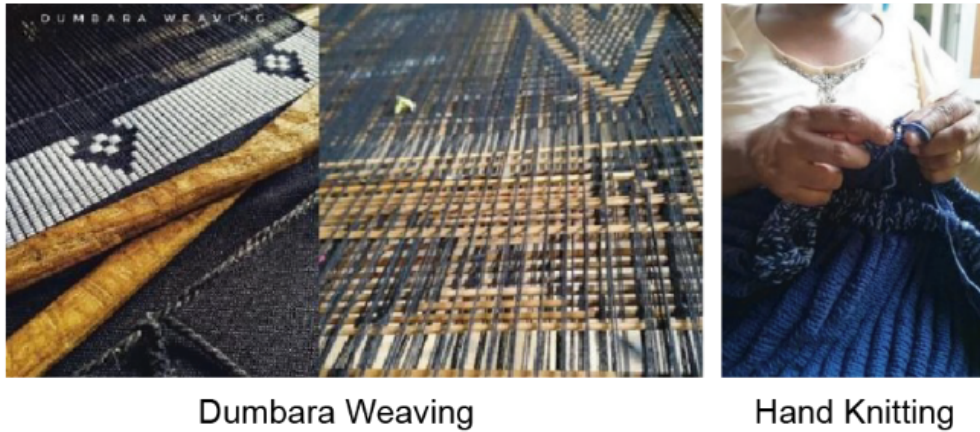


Fig.1 - Analysis of Amalgamating hand knitting and other textile crafts.