

Fashion as a Resistance Method for the Afro Sri Lankan Community

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Abstract – This research article aims to address the dearth of research on Afro Sri Lankan fashion as a means of resistance and identity. It employs an ethnographic approach, commencing with an analysis of fashion preferences within the Afro Sri Lankan community. The research delves into existing literature on Afro Sri Lankan history, cultural diversity, and contemporary profiles, while also exploring fashion persistence methods in other cultures from a cross-cultural perspective. The community and the influence of various factors on their current fashion preferences pay particular attention to the historical and current use of fashion. An interpretivist philosophy guides the research methodology, and a pragmatic approach is adopted to gather qualitative data through in-depth interviews with six participants from the Afro Sri Lankan community residing in Sirambiadiya, Puttalam, Sri Lanka. Key themes emerging from the interviews provide insights into the community's fashion preferences, the determinants of their fashion choices, fashion preservation methods within the community, and the challenges faced by the community. The research culminates in a comprehensive examination of the Afro Sri Lankan community's cultural attire, the determinants of their current fashion preferences, and their sartorial expressions of Afro Sri Lankan identity.

Keywords: Afro Sri Lankan; Fashion; Resistance; Identity; Ethnography

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I. Introduction

The Afro Sri Lankan community, a small yet vibrant ethnic group with African roots, traces its origins to the colonial era, when Africans were forcibly brought to Sri Lanka as slaves (Arachchige, 2017). Despite a long history marked by displacement, marginalisation, and cultural assimilation, the community has preserved a distinct cultural identity that continues to evolve. Although their population has declined over time (Herath, 2014), Afro Sri Lankans maintain cultural practices that affirm their heritage, with fashion serving as one of the most visible and meaningful expressions of identity. Their dress, adornment, and lifestyle behaviors reflect a blend of African ancestry and Sri Lankan cultural influences, demonstrating how cultural memory persists through everyday practice.

Historically rooted in Portuguese and Dutch colonial centuries, the community has navigated complex social positioning within Sri Lankan society. Frequently regarded as outsiders by both locals and non-natives (Roar Media, 2016), Afro Sri Lankans nonetheless have lived alongside Sri Lankan communities for generations and developed into a unique cultural group. Their distinctive fashion sense—rich in colour, motifs, and symbolic elements—sets them apart from other social groups and embodies a continual negotiation between past and present. These aesthetic practices carry cultural meaning, signal belonging, and demonstrate agency. However, the extent to which fashion operates as a conscious method of resistance—asserting identity, challenging marginalisation, and distinguishing the group from the wider population—remains insufficiently documented. Understanding how Afro Sri Lankans express cultural resilience through dress is essential to preserving their heritage and recognising the subtle strategies through which minority communities resist erasure.

This study therefore investigates the historical, cultural, and expressive dimensions of Afro Sri Lankan fashion, guided by three research questions: (1) How has the Afro Sri Lankan community been shaped by its historical experiences of slavery and colonialism within Sri Lanka's political, social, and cultural contexts? (2) What specific fashion and lifestyle behaviors characterise the community today? (3) In what ways do these fashion and lifestyle practices function as methods of resistance, enabling Afro Sri Lankans to retain and express their identity?

Correspondingly, the research aims (1) to explore the community's historical and contemporary involvement in Sri Lanka's social and cultural life, particularly during and after the era of slavery; (2) to examine the diverse cultural identities of Afro Sri Lankans through their practices, art forms, and traditions as expressed in fashion and lifestyle behaviors; and (3) to analyse how these behaviors operate as resistance strategies that articulate cultural identity, challenge marginalisation, and reinforce community belonging.

The significance of this study lies in its examination of fashion as a form of cultural resistance. For marginalised communities, fashion becomes more than aesthetic expression—it becomes a means

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of asserting distinctiveness, maintaining cultural memory, and countering assimilation pressures (Cultural Identity and Diaspora, 1997). By studying the Afro Sri Lankan community through this lens, the research highlights the dynamic nature of identity formation and cultural survival. It underscores the importance of documenting and valuing the fashion traditions of minority groups, offering insights that contribute to broader conversations on cultural resilience, representation, and the preservation of diversity within Sri Lankan society.

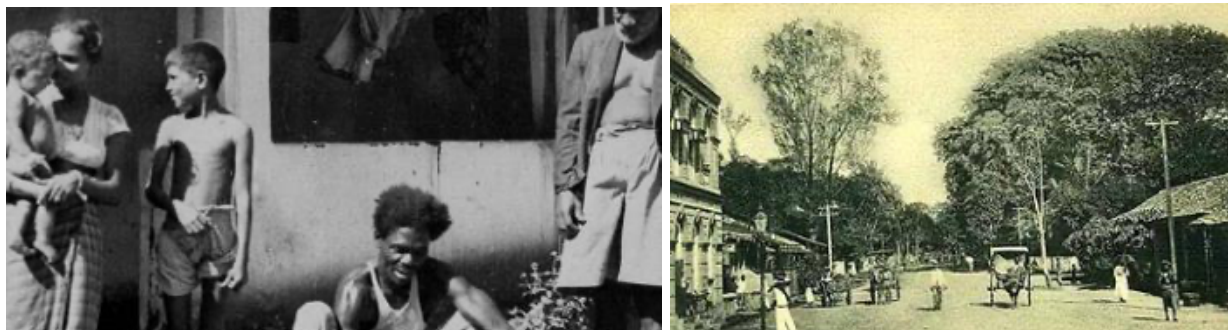
II. Literature Review

A. The Early History of Afro Sri Lankans

The Afro Sri Lankan identity is a significant part of Sri Lanka's diverse society, originating from East African countries, primarily Mozambique. Portuguese and Arab traders introduced this community to Sri Lanka in the 16th and 17th centuries, initially serving as domestic servants, navigational assistants, and soldiers (Arachchige, January 2017). Afro immigrants from Mozambique arrived in Asia as slaves and professionals, influenced by Dutch and English. The Afro Sri Lankan community shares similarities with the Zanj community in Iraq, Kuwait, Pakistan, and Iraq.

Figure 01

Left : The community dispersed throughout the island (Karunaratne, 2020), Right : Ancient Slave Island (Fernando, 2012)



Colonial encounters are significant in Sri Lankan history, as they served the country and its colonizers. European powers, including Arab traders, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, brought Afro Sri Lankans to the island, with 20,000 entering the island from ships (Arachchige, Kaffirs of Sri Lanka, 2017). After slavery was abolished in 1845, Slave Island in Colombo became a transoceanic slave-trading center (Nahallage, 2012, p. 9). Colonialism in Afro Sri Lankan religious customs was complex, with Portuguese colonizers converting the local population to Christianity, leading to a Christian community (Jayasuriya, 2003).

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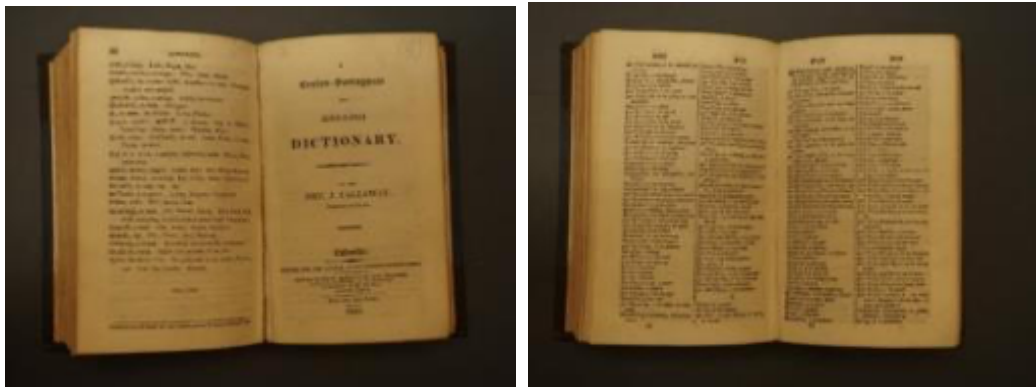
B. Subcultural Diversity within the Afro Sri Lankans

1. "Creole Culture" Among Community

Sri Lankan Creole culture, a blend of Portuguese, Sinhalese, and Tamil traditions, originated during the Portuguese colonial period. It served as a communication tool between Portuguese and Afro Sri Lankans and later as a bridge language between colonialists (Creole culture in Sri Lanka, 2014). Creole was popular until English became the link language. A unique form of song and dance, 'Afro Sri Lankans Inha', emerged from Creole. Creole culture in Afro Sri Lanka is dying due to lack of community and government support, requiring more efforts to increase awareness and preserve it.

Figure 2:

A Ceylon-Portuguese and English Dictionary in 1823. (Daniel, 2017)



2. Manja Performance

Manja is a traditional dance that combines African and Portuguese elements, celebrating the community's African history and resistance against societal hardship (Participant 3., 2023). It features energetic dancing, vivid costumes, and heartfelt music, fostering a sense of belonging and reminiscing about the community's African heritage. Performances are unique to Puttalam district, combining songs, unchoreographed dances, and music created with Dholak, coconut shells, and metal spoons (Goonatilleke 1983; de Silva Jayasuriya 2006; Ariyaratne 1999; Fernando 1894).

Figure 3:

Manja Performance (Kaffirs of Sri Lanka, 2023)



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3. Vibrant Fashion of the Afro Sri Lankans

The Afro Sri Lankans with a rich history and culture, celebrates their vibrant fashion style, blending East and West, tradition and modernism (Kerr, 2009). Their unique blend of African, Portuguese, and Dutch styles, such as redda, hatta and sarong reflects their composite identity and diasporic experiences (Kaffirs of Sri Lanka, 2023).

Figure 4:

Contemporary and cultural attire of the community (Nahallage, Bio- Cultural Aspect of Kaffir People Living in Sirambiadiya, 2012)



The attire of Afro slaves and their colonizers has diminished due to power dynamics, lack of access to their own cultures, and the urge to fit in. Women's short hair is traditionally brushed backward, while men's attire is dark colors (Arachchige, 2017). Afro Sri Lankan performers often wear vibrant dresses, jewelry and makeup, reflecting their rich culture and history. However, its traditions are dwindling in the contemporary climate, making it crucial to preserve and pass on this unique and beautiful fashion.

4. Religious Diversity of the Community

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Figure 5:

St. Thrithvaye Church (Nahallage, Bio- Cultural Aspect of Kaffir People Living in Sirambiadiya, 2012)



C. Contemporary Profile of the Community

The Afro Sri Lankans with mixed African descent, has unique cultural traditions. Education is crucial for their lives, with government-subsidized options since the 1950s. Afro Sri Lankan children attend Puttalama Maha Vidyalaya, where they learn in Sinhalese (A slice of Africa in Puttalam, 2021). Despite past discrimination, the seventh generation attends school without fear. Economically, community women face financial difficulties due to discrimination (Joseph, 2021) , Peter Lewis, a community leader, advocates for addressing prejudice and investing in education and career opportunities for women to improve their economic position.

The Afro Sri Lankan population, influenced by their African heritage and Sri Lankan culture, possesses physical traits such as courage, strength, and resilience (Selkirk, 1993, p 75.) However, not all Afro Sri Lankans exhibit these traits, with mixed personalities among first and second-generation children and pale complexions in third and fourth-generation offspring.

Figure 6:

Generation four, Right : Generation five (Nahallage, Bio- Cultural Aspect of Kaffir People Living in Sirambiadiya, 2012)



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C. Fashion as a Means of Identity Persistence: Cross-Cultural Perspectives

1. Discovering IsiShweshwe: The Fabric, Fashion, and Identity Connection

IsiShweshwe, a unique South African cotton fabric with geometric designs, was brought to South Africa by European immigrants in the 19th century and embraced by local indigenous groups like the Xhosa and Sotho (Greef, 2016). The fabric's unique sound when rustled earned it the nickname "the sound of South Africa." It has gained international recognition and is now used in fashion designs worldwide. During apartheid, IsiShweshwe was seen as an icon of resistance, worn by anti-apartheid campaigners. Designers use it in apparel, accessories, and home décor.

The fabric remained relevant, with designer Laduma Ngxokolo winning the African Luxury Heritage Brand of the Year award for his IsiShweshwe-inspired clothes, including his Maxhosa SS21 collection at New York Fashion Week (Valentine, 2019).

Figure 7:

Themes identified



The study examines isiShweshwe, a semiotic fabric used to transmit African culture's meaning, patterns, and colors. It highlights its significance in transmitting identity and cultural tradition, particularly among the Xhosa. Shweshwe outfits represent cultural tradition and identity, serving as a means of self-expression and pride (Mahmoud, 2023). The fabric has distinct fragrance, touch, and taste attributes, and has been widely adopted as a political statement against apartheid in South Africa (Armitage, 2019).

III. Methodology

The research uses a qualitative and ethnographic approach to study the Afro Sri Lankan community in the Sirambiadiya region, primarily found in four to five districts in Sri Lanka.

A. Research Philosophy

The study uses an interpretivist paradigm to explore how individuals interpret reality (Nguyen Cao Thanh and Tran Thi Le Thanh, 2015), utilizing a pragmatic approach based on prior experiences and

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interactions, viewing it as a provisional reality that may change over time (Uma Sekaran and Satit Niyomyaht, 2014).

B. The Location of the Research Region

Sirambiadiya village in Puttalam District, Northwestern Province, has a population of 9,000 people, with 62 Afro Sri Lankans (3%). The research location was chosen due to the presence of the Ceylon Manja group and strong cultural values of the Afro Sri Lankan community. The village has fifteen families, including children, and is more engaged than other Afro Sri Lankan communities in the country.

C. Sample Size Determination

The research utilized purposive sampling, specifically expert sampling, to ensure a precise and specific sample (Barendregt, 2005), especially for the small Manja group with only twelve members. This method allowed for greater control over the sample composition, ensuring only those who met the research criteria were included (Yin, 2016). The study utilized six members of the Manja group to gain expert insights into the community.

D. Primary and Secondary Data Collection Methods

The study analyzed the cultural practices and economic position of the Ceylon African Manja group using a semi-structured questionnaire and observations. Six members were interviewed to gain insights into their language and practices (Yin, 2016). Secondary data from academic research, media sources, and social media content was used to understand the community's historical and demographic aspects.

E. Method

The research used interviews to gather information about the historical background, traditional attire of the Afro Sri Lankan community and their resistance methods. Qualitative data was used to identify associations and provide explanations (Henderson, 2005). The narrative approach allowed participants to discuss personal experiences and challenges (Kirkpatrick, 2015), while open-ended questions allowed for rich data collection. Face-to-face interviews were chosen for their personal and relatable nature (Jennings, 2005).

F. Method of analysis

The study was not predetermined; the analysis was structured using the evidence with an inductive approach. Robert K. Yin (Qualitative Research from start to finish, 2016) mentions, thematic analysis for qualitative research was used to analyses the data gathered from the interviews. Thematic analysis offered an understanding of the aspect of facts, which was complementary to the nature of the research. The research used verbatim transcripts of interviews for the first and second round of coding, focusing on the subject's opinions and voice (Yin, 2016). This manual procedure helped identify possible codes and themes from the data corpus. (Yin, 2016).

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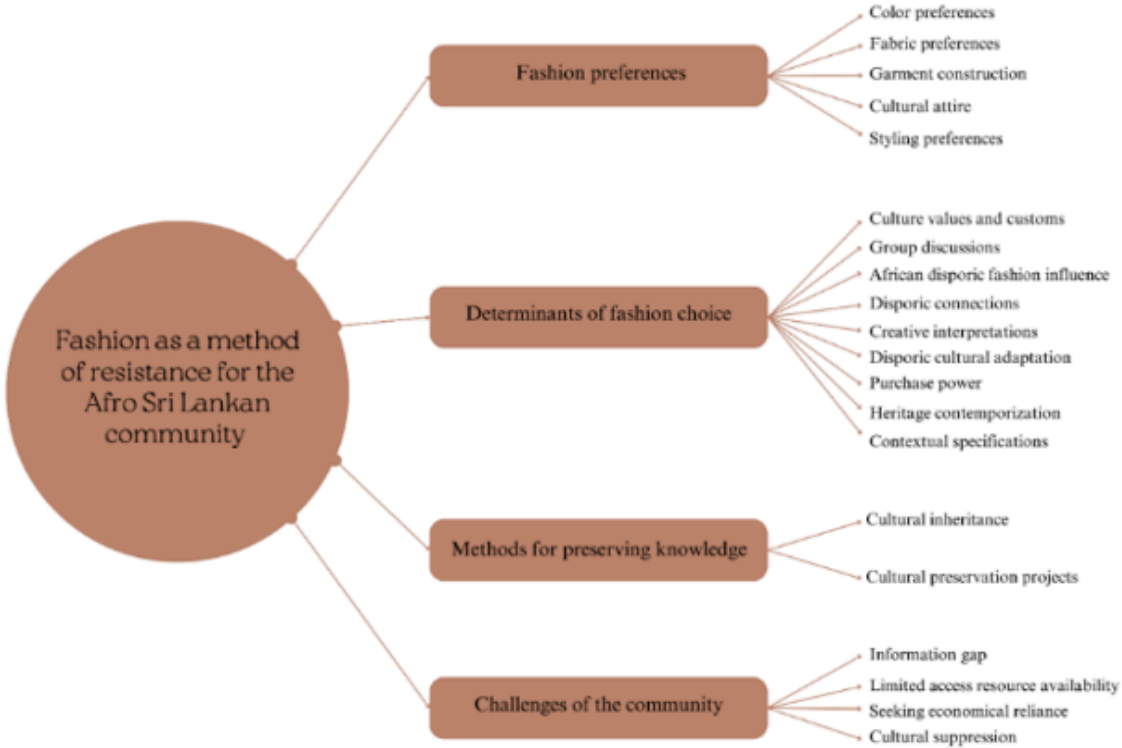
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Research Question	Type of Data	Method	Analysis method
1 - How has the Afro Sri Lankan community been involved through history and experiences of slavery and colonialism through the political, social, and cultural life of Sri Lanka?	Primary and Secondary data	- Semi Structured interviews - Academic research - Journal referring - Life history Visual ethnography	Literature review
2 - What are the specific fashion and lifestyle behaviors of the Afro Sri Lankan community?	Primary data and Secondary data	- Participant observation - Semi structured interviews - Academic research - Journal referring	- Thematic analysis - Literature review
3 - How are the identified fashion and lifestyle behaviors employed as a method of resistance to express and retain Afro Sri Lankan identity and culture?	Primary data	- Semi structured interviews - Participant observations	-Thematic analysis - Literature review

IV. Findings and Analysis

Figure 8:
Identification of the key themes from the interview data



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A. Fashion Preferences

1. Colour Preference

The Afro Sri Lankan community, a diasporic group, has a strong sense of color in their culture. They use vibrant and colorful silhouettes and fabrics to convey their identity and set them apart from other ethnic communities (Participant 1., 2023). The community adheres to a specific color palette for performance outfits, using red, yellow and bright variations of these colors (Participant-5, 2023).

Figure 9

Colour preferences of traditional attire. Right - Female attire, Left - Male attire



Men and women have distinct color preferences, with women preferring brighter tones and men lighter ones. The Afro Sri Lankan community shares these preferences but is unaware of the cultural significance of color and its symbolic meanings.

2. Fabric Preferences

The Afro Sri Lankan community's vibrant fabric sense characterized by bright colors, complex patterns, and flowing silhouettes, is rooted in their African ancestors and the abstract aesthetic potential of African textile arts. Cotton is the most preferred fabric choice due to the community's long history of using it. (Participant-4, 2023).

The Manja performers, another subset of the Afro Sri Lankan community, strive to establish a collective fabric identity, despite economic barriers and limited resource availability (Participant-2, 2023).

Collective textile identity expresses a shared sense of belonging to a specific ethnic group or culture, as seen in the traditional dress of African ethnic groups. This enhances social cohesiveness and cultural preservation, allowing people to connect with similar individuals and express pride in their background.

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Figure 10

Men wearing tweed suit. Left- Historical context, Right- Current context (Herath, 2014)



Figure 11

Community attempting to have a collective fabric identity: Left: Cotton fabric in Sri Lanka (Perera, 2023), Right : Fabric donated by the South African ambassador (Perera, 2023)



3. Garment Construction

The community's garment construction has evolved over time, with a focus on third party tailoring and self-construction during the colonial period (Participant 1. , 2023). Influenced by British and Sinhalese cultures, the Sirambiadiya Afro community adopted Sinhalese elements.

Figure 12

The printed borders attached and the use of the top stitch. (Perera, 2023)



Garment embellishments added elegance to colonial attire. Today, the fifth and sixth generation's commission tailors to sew their desired attire (Participant-4, 2023) with minor enhancements to

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enhance aesthetic appeal. This shift is due to the current generation's desire for unique designs and lack of training.

4. Cultural Attire

The Afro Sri Lankan community, influenced by Europe, African and Sri Lanka, displays their rich tradition and identity through their vibrant attire. These attires symbolize pride and culture, used for daily wear and cultural performances. Women wear skirts and blouses, etc. While men wear pants, sarongs, and shirts.

The community considers purposeful and inclusive design choices when designing their attire, often incorporating elements that are both meaningful and accessible to all members of the community. Men have a separate cultural attire consisting of a colored sarong and shirt with some incorporating African tribal fashion features. These creative design choices can be seen in other parts of the world, such as West Africa's Agbadas and Korean clothing like the Hanbok.

Figure 13

Casual wear of 6th, 5th and 4th generations and Manja attire (Perera, 2023)



5. Styling Preferences

The Afro Sri Lankan community, influenced by local and British cultures, has unintentionally incorporated considered styling preferences throughout their history (Participant 1., 2023). Women often wrap their hair with cloth, while men wear necklaces and wristwatches for performances. The current generation of Afro Sri Lankans is reclaiming their African cultural heritage, motivated by a desire to connect with their roots, pride in their heritage, and the importance of cultural diversity.

The current generation is reclaiming their African cultural heritage, expressing their individuality through clothing, hairstyles, and makeup (Participant 3., 2023). They are motivated by a desire to connect with their roots and heritage, the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion.

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Figure 14

Adornments donated by the Former South African ambassador Ms. Ruby Mark and handcrafted Matalu adornments (Perera, 2023)



Figure 14: Adornments donated by the Former South African ambassador Ms. Ruby Mark and handcrafted Matalu adornments (Perera, 2023)

B. Determinants of Fashion Choices

1. Cultural Values and Customs

The community has a rich cultural heritage and practices passed down through generations (Participant-4, 2023) , (Participant 3. , 2023) . They value their Manja performance tradition, which is non-commercial and not solely based on income (Participant 3. , 2023). They also unintentionally carry down their ancestral clothing style in their performances. Learning about their attire through observation of their grandparents and incorporate elements from the past into their designs, demonstrating their resilience and commitment to cultural preservation.

2. Group Discussions

The traditional attire worn by the Manja group in the Sirambiadiya Afro community is a shared identity among its members. Group discussions are crucial in making decisions about attire, performances, and songs (Participant-6, 2023). The community values consensus building and collective decision-making, reflecting their commitment to democracy and participation.

3. African Diasporic Fashion Influence

The community's identity is shaped by their cultural attire and diasporic fashion influences. They engage with African-inspired fashion, challenging the traditional dichotomy between "diaspora" and "host country". Their cultural outlook is influenced by diasporic fashion, such as tribal face and body art during Manja performances (Participant-6, 2023). These fashion choices are seen as a form of cultural reclamation, asserting their ownership of their heritage and contributing to Sri Lankan culture and society.

4. Diasporic Connection

A small ethnic group in Sri Lanka, have a rich cultural heritage rooted in African origins. They are celebrated for their dark skin, curly hair, and strong facial features, and share a connection with Africa (Participant-6, 2023). The Ambassadorial diaspora and engagement benefit the community by providing fabrics and adornments, and strengthening their advocacy and representation, ultimately leading to a stronger and healthier community (Participant-2, 2023).

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Figure 15

Large hoops earrings and head wrap which is inspiration from the Africans (Google maps , 2023)



Figure 16

Diplomatic visiting the community (Cultural center for Kaffir community in Puttalam, 2023)



5. Creative interpretations

The Afro community in Sirambiadiya shows a vibrant culture through creative interpretations of traditional attire. They draw inspiration from stories and imaginations, rather than copying exact designs (Participant 3., 2023). The sixth generation, now familiar with smartphones, uses websites and web images to create African-looking attire while maintaining traditional elements (Participant 3., 2023). Their commitment to creativity and transformation demonstrates their innovation.

6. Diasporic Cultural Adaptation

The Afro Sri Lankan community, despite being geographically dispersed, has maintained its cultural identity through creative expressions in diaspora culture. They have contextualized their culture while preserving core values and traditions. Cultural adaptability is evident in attire, clothing and food preferences, blending in with others and embracing local traditions like holidays and festivals (Participant-5, 2023). This adaptability enhances community integration and social cohesion among other ethnic groups.

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7. Purchase Power

The community despite their vibrant traditional attire face challenges in purchasing high-quality products due to their limited purchasing power. Many in the members are laborers and housewives operate home-based businesses, such as palm leaf production. The high cost of raw materials and tailoring adds to the challenges, but the community remains committed to preserving their cultural heritage through ways that are more compatible with their situation.

8. Heritage Contemporization

Afro Sri Lankans are incorporating modern elements into their heritage through fashion, music, and art, connecting with their culture in a relevant way. The internet has significantly affected traditional attire, with the fifth and sixth generations using it to find inspiration and details (Participant 3., 2023). The younger generation is also incorporating global trends into their designs (Participant-4, 2023), while the older generation relies on handcrafted adornments. The contemporization of traditional attire is not a one-way street, with younger generations incorporating elements of their own culture into their designs through group discussions with elders.

9. Contextual Specifications

Afro Sri Lankan attire is diverse and varies based on the occasion and performance. Dancers wear multiple sets of attire, adornments, makeup, and overall presentation (Participant 3., 2023), reflecting their understanding of the symbolic and cultural significance of traditional attire. The performance duration also determines attire, reflecting the community's identity and social and cultural setting.

C. Preservation Methods

1. Cultural Inheritance

The community's cultural heritage is a blend of African diaspora culture, passed down through oral tradition, community-specific rules, storytelling, mentoring, and observations (Participant 3. , 2023). Elders enforce the preservation of Creole language, while Manja traditions are taught through demonstrations and traditional attire. Cultural inheritance can strengthen community bonds, promote understanding, and bridge cultural divides, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity.

2. Cultural Preservation Projects

Scholars, activists and diplomats are gaining interest in cultural preservation projects for the Afro Sri Lankan community (Participant 3., 2023). One notable initiative is the proposed Afro Sri Lankan Cultural Centre, which will promote research and education, raise awareness, and challenge stereotypes (Cultural Centre for Kaffir community in Puttalam, 2023). These projects are crucial for preserving heritage and building a more inclusive society.

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Figure 17

Old photos of the community (Perera, 2023).



D. Challenges of the Community

1. Information gap

Oral tradition is vital for preserving Afro Sri Lankan culture, but it faces challenges in information sharing, including lack of detailed history, inconsistent sharing, and vulnerability to loss (Participant-2, 2023). Multiple versions of the same story complicate accurate account determination (What is history, 2021). Limited scope and reach exist within close-knit groups like the Sirambiadiya community.

2. Limited Access Resource Availability

The community faces challenges in preserving their cultural heritage, especially in finding accurate fabric and trim for traditional attire. They rely on Puttalam for fabric due to its proximity, purchasing power, and transportation costs (Participant-4, 2023). To overcome this, they could create their own fabrics and prints using diverse textile art.

3. Seeking Economic Reliance

The community faces economic challenges, with many working as laborers or housewives. Inflation has made it difficult for them to afford materials for traditional attire, leading to a decline in show bookings and a decrease in Manja performances (Participant 3., 2023). Community members are advocating training in handicrafts, textiles, and garment construction techniques to empower themselves and provide income. If these training is provided, they may stay in their villages and work to improve their lives and the Afro Sri Lankan community.

4. Cultural Suppression

The Afro Sri Lankan community faces cultural suppression, discrimination, and hardships since its inception. Misinterpretations persist, and the Creole language faces attrition (Participant-2, 2023).

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Barriers in dressing and peer pressure exacerbate these issues. Economic challenges and assimilation into local cultures contribute to cultural erosion. Addressing these requires a comprehensive approach.

V. Implications, Limitations and Recommendations

The research has raised awareness of the community's unique cultural identity and fashion traditions, empowering them to use fashion as a tool for self-expression and resistance to cultural treasures. The findings could inspire designers, artists, and practitioners to develop innovative ways to use fashion for resistance and social change in the local context. This could help address the invisibility of many ethnic groups in Sri Lankan society and promote fashion as a tool for social change.

Upon reflection, certain limitations of the research were identified. The research was limited to the Afro Sri Lankan community in Sirambiadiya as this community retains a significant amount of its cultural practices, even today. Additionally, the number of participants was limited to six due to time constraints and the fact that many members of the village had left for work and would not be returning for several months. As a result, participants were recruited based on their availability in the village at the time of the research period.

The research could be extended to other Afro diasporic communities around the world, such as the *Siddis* in India and the *Sheedis* in Pakistan, as mentioned in the literature review. Another recommendation is to provide the Afro Sri Lankan community with appropriate guidelines and information access to help them shape their knowledge of their existence and develop a better understanding of their belonging, with fewer loopholes. Finally, it is important to trace the community's roots to help guide them in interpreting their cultural identity through fashion correctly and presenting it to the world, as they currently gather inspiration from many sources without knowing their exact roots, which could lead to misinterpretations.

VI. Conclusion

This study explores how Afro Sri Lankans embrace their lifestyle and sense of style as a form of resistance. Even throughout the era of slavery, dress has historically been a means of expressing one's identity and culture. The community's many styles now reflect a fusion of modern trends, faith, and tradition. Manja dance performances are an exceptional instance of how fashion empowers the community because of their detailed attire. The study looks at a number of fashion-related topics whilst each of these components supports the resistance and cultural identity of the community. When choosing their clothes, community members consider personal interpretations, group discussions, cultural values, and connections to the diaspora. Limited resources can influence the choice of fabric, although adaptability and ingenuity are more common. The main ways that cultural knowledge is transmitted orally. The community is resilient in the face of economic and cultural adversities. Their lifestyle and fashion choices are an effective means of maintaining their culture and identity.

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