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**FOLKLORE IN FASHION: A SYSTEMATIC DESIGN
LED APPROACH IN BRINGING LIFE TO FOLKLORE
OF KUWENI THROUGH FASHION PRODUCTS**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this thesis/dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any other University or Institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text. I retain the right to use this content in whole or part in future works (such as articles or books).

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Date: 01/09/2025

The above candidate has carried out research for the ~~PhD/MPhil/Masters~~ thesis/~~dissertation~~ under my supervision. I confirm that the declaration made above by the student is true and correct.

Name of Supervisor: Dr Sumith Gopura

Signature of the Supervisor:

Date: 02/09/2025

DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the Free Education of Sri Lanka. It stands as a profound investment in human potential and continues to transform lives across generations. To every citizen whose taxes quietly contribute to education, teaching materials, fund scholarships, and light-up the path for future generations—this is a heartfelt tribute to your unseen sacrifices and your devoted belief in the power of knowledge.

Secondly, I dedicate this thesis to the Sri Lankan villagers who have preserved folklore and folk knowledge through generations, often amid hardship. They are the roots of this land, the silent guardians of intangible cultural heritage, who nurtured and safeguarded the ancestral wisdom for the future of our motherland.

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ABSTRACT

Folklore, being an oral tradition, preserves cultural beliefs, values, and experiences across generations. It shapes historical consciousness and helps define emotions, identities, and lifestyles of communities. A striking example is the Sri Lankan folklore of Kuweni, a shape-shifting queen, whose role in Prince Vijaya's conquest is steeped in cultural and symbolic meaning. This study adopts a qualitative mixed-method approach grounded in Creative Practice-Led Research (PLR) to explore how folklore can inform contemporary fashion product development. Beginning with a literature review and analysis of Sri Lankan folklore, the research identifies symbolic themes within the Kuweni narrative. Deductive and inductive thematic analyses—drawing from scientific and social scientific frameworks—lead to the development of two key methodologies: the Thematic Metaphorical Approach (TMA) and the Folklore Characteristics Onion (FCO), which capture the layered dimensions of Kuweni's story. These frameworks guided the creative process, where global fashion trends intersected with local heritage to inform design development. “Thambapanni,” a significant location in the folklore of Kuweni, inspired natural dye techniques that use regional soil and plants, aligning with the theme of localism and responsible color practices.

Through PLR, the study translated intangible themes into tangible fashion artifacts. Techniques such as manual sketching, visual research, and digital prototyping were employed to create a narrative textile, with handloom weaving technique enriching the final outcome. The final textile artifact as well as the prototypes developed by merging tradition with innovation, have been shared via academic publications, international conferences and the *Folklore in Fashion* YouTube channel. This research offers a novel model for integrating folklore into fashion design through structured phases, namely, Concept Development, Design Development, and Realization, while emphasizing the preservation of intangible cultural heritage through creative fashion practice.

Keywords: Creative Practice-Led Research, Symbolism, Fashion Movements, Folklore of Kuweni, Sri Lanka

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LIST OF ABBRIVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
PLR	Practice Led Research
SAR	South Asian Region
GOTS	Global Organic Textile Standard
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SA	Scientific Approach
SSA	Social Scientific Approach
UERC	University Ethics Review Committee
CAQDAS	Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software
2D	Two Dimensional
3D	Three Dimensional
TMA	Thematic Metaphorical Approach
FCO	Folklore Characteristics Onion
WGSN	Worth Global Style Network
SLITA	Sri Lankan Institute of Textile and Apparel
AR	Augmented Reality
VR	Virtual Reality

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Project

Folklore plays a vital role in preserving historical knowledge, collective values, and narratives of communities. It serves as a living repository of intangible cultural heritage, often transmitted orally from generation to generation, preserving codes of belief, moral frameworks, rituals, and symbolic expressions specific to communities (Gomme, 1885). However, because of globalization, digitalization, and socio-cultural transformation, folklore traditions are increasingly marginalized or endangered (Gupta, 2007). This poses a threat to the preservation of cultural identities and their relevance in contemporary society, and Sri Lanka is no exception. As a result, Sri Lankan folklore risks being forgotten as traditional narratives, myths, and knowledge systems are often overlooked and not shared with the new generation. This is not merely a loss of stories but a disconnection from place-based cultural identities, ancestral wisdom, and communal worldviews (Amos, 1971). Despite this, folklore holds untapped potential as a dynamic resource for creative re-interpretation and innovation, particularly in visual and material practices such as fashion. In fact, being a culturally embedded and globally influential form of art, fashion offers a powerful medium for reviving and reimagining folklore.

Moreover, folklore can be identified as a cultural practice which is an Intangible Cultural Heritage as well as a source of literature. As such, oral transmission of stories from generation to generation is identified as a vital factor for preserving folklore. Thus, 'storytelling' is at the root of fashion concepts that enable the emotional connection between consumers and fashion brands or products. The recurring fashion lifecycle also demonstrates this dynamic of fashion and historical movements.

Through visual storytelling, symbolism, and material aesthetics, fashion can reinterpret traditional narratives, making them accessible and meaningful in modern contexts. This research investigates how folklore can be revived and re-contextualized through contemporary fashion design, using a Creative Practice-Led Research (PLR) methodology (McNamara, 2012) that bridges theory and practice. The central problem addressed in this study is the decline of the popularity and relevance of folklore in modern society and the lack of systematic, creative approaches to translate elements of intangible cultural heritage into contemporary design expressions. By examining the intersections of folklore and fashion, the study aims to propose innovative frameworks for narrating cultural identities through fashion practice. It will specifically explore how design methodologies can be developed to integrate folkloric themes into fashion products while honoring their cultural authenticity. This background sets the stage for the formulation of the research questions, outlines the scholarly and societal significance of the study, and presents the underlying motivation

to contribute to both cultural preservation and creative innovation in relation to fashion design.

1.2 Research question(s)

The overarching research question of this creative practice led study is,

How can folklore to be used in materializing new fashion product?

The sub-research questions supported to the above overarching research question are as follows.

- I. What is folklore of Kuweni and how it can be interpreted in a fashion concept?
- II. How can folklore of Kuweni be used in fashion product development?
- III. How can the folklore of Kuweni be used in fashion product realization and presentation?

1.3 Significance

Folklore as a rich source of information to facilitate extracting social and cultural identities of a generation, this study significantly discusses the methods of exploring folklore and decoding the above values in order to present them in a manner that contemporary society can appreciate. Oral transmission which is used as a communication medium to transcend the values embedded in folklore from generation to generation and the creative visual techniques such as performing arts have always been rooted with folklore to create productive outcomes as a visual realization (Gupta, 2007).

The character of “Kuweni” is still a significant personality as she personifies the ultra-modern woman who goes through diverse changes in her life with socio-cultural and emotional challenges throughout the entire life. Kuweni’s life has been subjected to many changes and accordingly her emotions have reshaped her up into divergent personalities which is an interesting scenario to study in the perspective of fashion practices. Folklore of Kuweni is also related to one of the significant craft sectors, ‘handloom weaving’ in Sri Lanka and the study expects bringing that perspective to the creative Practice Led Research (PLR) and has never been done through an academic study. Nonetheless, the mythologies and methodologies hibernated in this narrative can also be a rich source of information in new product development in fashion such as ancient weaving, dyeing, printing textile and apparel construction methods. The study expects connecting with relevant communities (indigenous people, historians, archeologists etc.) exploring this story in depth in order to review sensitive details on her lifestyle. The specific outcome of this study will lead to the recreation of emotional values of folklore (*Kuweni’s* lifestyle) through contemporary fashion products and investigate the rich social, cultural, symbolic values of folklore and diverse feelings and emotions of *Kuweni* can transcend to the contemporary fashion.

1.4 Motivation

“Heritage is a great source in establishing one’s own identity” is one of the inducements that the researcher inspired during the post graduate studies in Brand and Product Management in Milan, Italy. The rich inspirations of heritage behind Arts, Craft, Architecture and Design in Italian Design Culture encouraged the researcher to explore the sensitive details about Sri Lankan tradition and this research has been one of the interesting opportunities to practice above inducement to explore the rich cultural values of Sri Lanka. Folklore can be identified as a fading form of intangible cultural heritage that has to be preserved. Being specialized in Fashion and Lifestyle Designing from the bachelor’s degree, the researcher was influenced by local arts and crafts. Nonetheless, the upcoming sustainable and hyper localized trends due to the Covid-19 pandemic also significantly impacts on exploring the subject of folklore in bringing up its relationships towards the contemporary fashion that the researcher can reach through creative PLR.

1.5 The Positioning Statement

As a Sri Lankan designer-researcher, the researcher positions herself at the intersection of cultural heritage and contemporary fashion practice. Grounded in lived experience of Sri Lankan folklore and traditions, she engages with artisan communities as both a cultural insider and an academic practitioner. Through her bachelor’s degree in fashion and lifestyle design, she gained practical training as a designer, while her master’s degree equipped her with strong research skills. These combined experiences enable her to perform the dual roles of designer and researcher, aligning with the requirements of her PhD research.

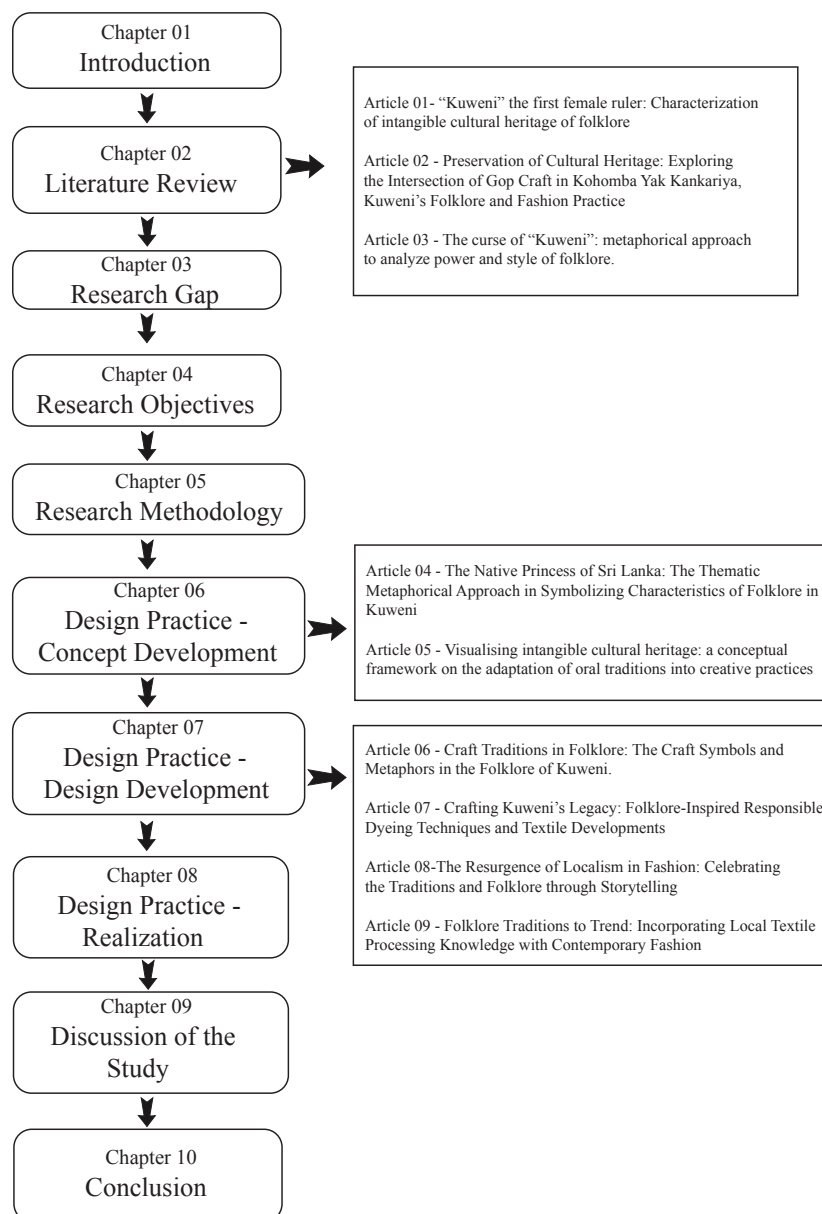
Furthermore, this dual perspective allows her to navigate the complexities of positionality with reflexivity, while remaining attentive to the ethical responsibilities of collaboration. Her familiarity with local language and cultural beliefs has helped her understand and respect social norms, especially the ethical concerns affecting socially engaged research. Moreover, her prior experience in working with local communities such as weaving artisans has given her the skills to respect traditional practices, develop a rapport with artisans, maintain transparency, and foster co-creation with reflexivity. This balance of experiences, knowledge, and design practices enables the candidate to effectively use the co-relationship between the researcher and artisan. By maintaining a reflexive awareness of her positionality, she seeks to direct the power dynamics responsibly, ensuring that designer–artisan collaborations remain fair and mutually empowering.

1.6 Thesis Flow Chart

The following illustration provides an overview of the thesis structure and highlights the journal articles and conference publications published during the candidature (See Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1

The Thesis Flow Chart



Note. Developed by author (2025).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature review of this study. The first few sections of the chapter discuss folklore, its significance, and folklore characteristics followed by an examination of how Kuweni has been described in ancient Sri Lankan literature and the application of different symbols and metaphors in the folklore related to Kuweni. The next section focuses on the craft practices related to the folklore of Kuweni since they are directly connected to creative fashion practices. Then, creative approaches in fashion product developments in the global context with specific reference to India and Sri Lanka are discussed along with other fashion trends and movements that are significant. The chapter concludes by exploring how Kuweni has become an inspiration for different visual and performing arts in Sri Lanka, and how the folklore related to Kuweni could lead to diverse possibilities in fashion and textile practices. Insights from these secondary sources were immensely helpful for the researcher to effectively plan and execute the conceptualization, product development, and product realization phases of the research. Moreover, it should be noted here that the findings of this chapter have been published and presented in reputed international conferences¹.

2.1 The Significance of Folklore and Its Characteristics

Folklore holds a significant position in characterizing and symbolizing concepts and passing the knowledge deep-rooted in folk cultures for over thousands of years from generation to generation as a code of belief or actions (Gomme, 1885; Gupta 2007).

¹Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Payne, A., & Wickramasinghe, A. (2021). "Kuweni" the first female ruler: Characterization of intangible cultural heritage of folklore. *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Humanities, Psychology and Social Sciences*, 64–77. <https://www.dpublication.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/15-1132.pdf>

Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Wickramasinghe, A., & Payne, A. (2023, December). Preservation of Cultural Heritage: Exploring the Intersection of Gop Craft in Kohomba Yak Kankariya, Kuweni's Folklore and Fashion Practice. *9th International Conference of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka and 4th China - Sri Lanka Communication and Cooperation Forum*. 9th International Conference of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Colombo, Sri Lanka https://www.icsusl.sab.ac.lk/ICSUSL_2023_Book_of_Abtracts.pdf

Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Wickramasinghe, A., & Payne, A. (2021). The curse of "Kuweni": metaphorical approach to analyze power and style of folklore. *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Culture Costume & Dress*, 50–56. <http://dl.lib.uom.lk/bitstream/handle/123/18860/The%20curse%20of%20%e2%80%9cKuweni.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Folklore basically has three important characteristics, namely, the body of knowledge, the mode of thought and the mind of art, which are considered reflections of culture (Gupta, 2007; Amos, 1971). Folk culture, on the other hand, includes all the knowledge, beliefs, customs, arts, crafts, morals, and laws (Gomme, 1885; Bennett, 1994) of a particular community. Folklore and folk culture have a strong intimacy where folklore cannot be expressed without culture or culture without folklore. Gomme (1885, p. 3) says that “[m]yth, folklore, fable, allegory all these are related terms, but terms should be carefully kept apart since they mean different interpretations”. Specifically, the practices, customs, and events which have a solid sociological background and survived over a long period of time cannot be overlooked as myths.

Moreover, folklore relates to different humanities such as ethnography, history, linguistics, and literature which cannot be defined without folklore (Gupta, 2007). Thus, folklore can be identified as a social science which contributes immensely to human knowledge through its relationships with other sociological subjects (Gomme, 1885). Notably, the connection between folklore and literature is often equated, but often, the authors of folklore remain unknown. As Gupta (2007) states, “[f]olk literature, on the contrary, never has an author, and this is one of their specific features” (pp. 08). The oral transmission of folklore from generation to generation can be identified as a vital factor in preserving the originality of folklore, and here, storytelling is an important aspect. Thus, the act of ‘storytelling’ can be converted to the root of fashion concepts that enables the emotional connection between consumers and fashion brands or products.

Folklore mainly depends on oral traditions and has an intimate relationship with culture. Therefore, the application of the knowledge component of folklore in a methodical manner can be identified as ‘folk-science’ (Gupta, 2007). Since, folklore is a cultural practice that has prevailed over a long period of time, it can be considered an intangible cultural heritage as well as a source of literature. With socio-cultural changes, oral folklore began to be considered as a form of literature, but over the time, more value has been ascribed to written documents than oral narratives.

Moreover, geography and history are part of folklore because many of those stories are connected to certain eras, historically important personnel, or a place legend. In fact, anthropology has a very close relationship with folklore as cultural, social, and human factors are often discussed within folklore.

Folklore plays an important role in illiterate societies as a mode of knowledge dissemination and as an indicator of accepted social patterns. The fairytales, hero legends, stories, and songs which were passed on from generation to generation that are heard in everyday life fall under the narrative category of folklore (Gupta, 2007). The older generation used to share life experiences and knowledge that have been gathered over generations through different songs, fables or narratives related to folklife, which helped to strengthen the social relationships in these societies. More specifically, folklore teaches young children how to act and live with the code of

beliefs, morals and values, traditions, and thinking patterns embedded in their folk culture. Hence, from one's childhood to adulthood folklore plays different roles in shaping up one's life and thinking patterns.

Although there is limited technical knowledge in folklore, it is enriched with, social learning and behaviors that a specific society accepts and admires (Bascom, 1954). The things which may appear primitive in folklore also have a history and a gradual development throughout a long period of time. Therefore, when comparing the past and the present of a particular community, it is evident that folklore has contributed heavily towards social development. Just as physical evidence contributes to the development of science, history, and geography, the explanations, legends, and narratives passed on from generation to generation explain the evolution of socio-cultural background, beliefs of people, and its contribution to the development of mankind. Therefore, folklore should be studied as a cluster of subjects which are interrelated (Burstein, 1957). Additionally, folklore can be identified as a bridge between cultures because when the members of a community move out of their native place, they disseminate their folklore and folk practices in the new environment as they continue to follow those practices. The changing patterns of folklore, therefore, is an integral component of society. Further, when considering the linguistics aspect of folklore, it is evident that folk-etymology is important to understand and learn about folklore (Gupta, 2007). Hence, language, similar values, beliefs, and background knowledge are vital to interact well with the audience (Amos, 1971).

Folklore can be categorized in scientific (Burstein, 1957; Gomme, 1885) and social scientific (Gupta, 2007; Islam, 1985) stances and there are main themes under each categorization. The scientific approach consists of four main themes, i.e., traditional narratives, traditional customs, superstitious beliefs, and folk speech. The social scientific approach mainly consists of ten themes, which can be defined as folk culture overall. Any folklore can be categorized under these main themes. It should also be noted that local knowledge, systems, and beliefs get merged into mainstream literature and evolve into a folkloric version.

Another important feature of folklore, which is common to folklore from all over the world, is the relationship among humans, animals, and plants. There are plenty of stories in the West as well as in the East that are bound with human-animal-plant relationships which are magical in nature. Most of these folk tales reflect the real relationship between humans and nature (Teverson & Naithani, 2019). Notably, animals are not considered as inferior creatures in these stories, which highlights that humans are not superior to animals or plants. In some stories, animals are the protagonists or heroes and human beings are portrayed as villains with cruel behavior. The proximity to nature and conserving the environment, in particular, were romanticized through these stories (Doster, 2002). Some of the most popular culmination points in folktales are marriage or lovers dying before marriage or consummation of marriage. Therefore, marriage can be identified as a main theme in folklore, and motherhood, birth of a child, giving birth to a male child, and strength of men are the other themes commonly highlighted in folk tales (Gupta, 2007).

Religion is another factor that exerts a significant influence over folklore. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam are widespread in Asia, and these religions have highly influenced the narrative landscape of the South Asian Region (SAR), although they often struggle to survive and maintain cultural identity (Teverson & Naithani, 2019). The influence of the chief religions in the Indian sub-continent in particular can be seen in folklore.

As the main religion in Bhutan and Sri Lanka, Buddhism has been connecting the Asian region from the north to the south since ancient times. In Sri Lanka, after the introduction of Buddhism, monks began to use folktales to communicate the Buddhist teachings (Rathnapala, 1991). Buddhism is not folklore but there are stories within the Buddhist culture, that are integrated into the folk culture and have come to be considered as folklore. One such example is the *jataka* stories (stories from the past lives of Lord Buddha) in Buddhism (Temple, 1886). These *jataka* stories are sometimes considered folklore since they have been part of Buddhist communities and often passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. Further, *Jataka* stories contain mythical characters, animals, and incidents which are far away from reality or belonging to times immemorial. But they are symbolic expressions which advocate a code of moral values. In Sri Lanka, there were monks who were known as “*Jathaka Bhanaka*” because they had mastered the narration of *jataka* stories in an attractive manner (Parker, 2011).

According to Amos (1971) folklore is significant in characterizing and symbolizing concepts and unveiling historical knowledge. As a summary, folklore can be identified as a mirror of a certain society that depicts how it developed and transformed over the time.

2.1.1 Identifying the Folklore Character – “Kuweni”

It is believed that before the arrival of Prince Vijaya, the son of King Sinhabhahu from ‘*Lata Rata*’, North India, three main indigenous communities lived in Sri Lanka, namely *Yakka*, *Naga*, and *Dewa*. These communities are mentioned in both the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*. In the *Dipavamsa*, *Yakkas* are described as an undisciplined tribal community that consumed human flesh, which is very similar to the Indian folk tales where the *Raksasa* have been described. The *Dipavamsa* also states that Lord Buddha banished all the *Yakkas* to the *Giri* Island (this island is not defined and there are different interpretations about that) to make Sri Lanka a human habitat suitable for the Aryans (Kahadawaarachchi, 1997). However, the *Dipavamsa* is not a religious text, and so, it should not be confused or compared with Buddhist philosophy. Instead, this text can be identified as an attempt to document the *Atuwa* (definitions) and historical stories which penetrated the Sinhala Buddhist communities in Sri Lanka over years via oral transmission (Kahadawaarachchi, 1997).

The term “*Sinha*” means ‘Lion’ in Sinhalese language, and in folklore, the origin of Prince Vijaya’s bloodline goes back to the consummation between a lion and a princess called *Suppadevi*. The archeological evidence related to the story of Vijaya and Kuweni can be found from India as well as Sri Lanka. Ancient murals and paintings related to the Vijaya-Kuweni story can be seen in Ajanta Ellora Caves, and Cave No. 17 shows the mural named “Coming of *Sinhala*” and the coronation of King Vijaya (See Figure 2.1). These paintings belong to the second century BCE, and in Sri Lanka, the *Yakkas* and *Nagas* are depicted in *Kelani Vihara* paintings done by the famed Sri Lankan painter Solias Mendis in between 1930-1948.

Figure 2. 1

Ajanta Ellora Cave Paintings and Paintings in Kelani Viharaya



Note. Open-source images

According to the *Mahavamsa*, Kuweni, a *Yakka* lady, helped Vijaya who came to Sri Lanka with his 700 companions, to seize the power of the country. Therefore, the character of Kuweni is closely attached to the historical narrative of Vijaya and thus became an integral persona in Sri Lankan history. Apart from the *Mahavamsa*, she has been mentioned in other ancient literatures such as *Wansaththappakasini*, *Pujawaliya*, *Rajathnakaraya*, *Vijayaraja Katawa* and *Siyabasmaldama* (Suraweera, 1976). Since *Rajawaliya* (the line of kings) was made by combining old manuscripts found from old temple libraries, it has no proper author, but it is believed to have been written in the 17th Century during the reign of King Vimaladharmasuriya. *Rajawaliya* presents the brief history of Sri Lanka from the arrival of Prince Vijaya to the Portuguese era mainly up to King Vimaladharmasuriya’s reign (Suraweera, 1976). Considering the historical importance of this document, it is ranked next to the *Mahavamsa*. Next, she comes into sight in *Kuweni Asna*, poetic literature written during the reign of King Parakramabhahu VI of the Kotte period. Therefore, Kuweni is depicted in many forms and texts of historical literature albeit in different ways and forms.

There are similarities and slight changes in this historical literature, and the literature in the *Mahavamsa*, *Rajawaliya*, *Kuweni Asna* and *Sihaba Asna* have been profoundly studied to gather important knowledge related to this research. It was found that Kuweni has been referred to as Kuwanna and Kuweni in different ancient literary texts. However, in the present study, the term Kuweni is used in order to maintain consistency.

2.1.2 Characterization of Kuweni in Literature

The key documentation related to Kuweni is written in the seventh chapter of the *Mahavamsa*, the Great Chronicle of Ceylon (Geiger & Bode 1912). The story of Kuweni has become a well-known narrative in Sri Lankan history since it is deeply rooted in the narrative of the origin of the Sinhalese nation. According to the *Mahavamsa*, Prince Vijaya who was deported from his country with 700 of his companions came to Sri Lanka and established his kingdom in “*Thammenna Nuwara*” with the help of a native princess called *Kuwanna*. She became the spouse of Vijaya and had two children. Subsequently, King Vijaya wanted an enthrone according to the North Indian customs and his ministers brought a princess from *Madura Puraya*, South India. Since *Kuwanna* became an exile in this Aryan community, she had to run away with her two kids. Keeping the children outside of the *Yakka* village, she returned to her *Yakka* relatives, and she was assassinated by the *Yakkas* because of her initial betrayal. One of her uncles who saw the kids outside of the village advised them to run into the forest saying their mother was killed. Terrified, the kids ran to the forest eventually leading to the origin of the indigenous *Vedda* community (Geiger & Bode, 1912). This story was first recorded in the *Mahavamsa*, the great historical chronicle of Sri Lanka written in Pali language by a Buddhist monk named *Mahānāma* circa 5th century BCE. Kuweni’s story has been shared mainly by word of mouth though the main written evidence of the story is in the 7th chapter of the *Mahavamsa* which describes the arrival of Prince Vijaya in Sri Lanka (Weerasekara, 2016).

In another version of the story, Kuwanna cursed Vijaya and the Sinhalese nation when she committed suicide and that is known as the *Kuweni Sapaya* (curse of Kuweni). It is said that King Vijaya and all his successors started to experience a nightmare of a big leopard in their dreams. Since there were no descendants to Vijaya from the queen from *Madura puraya*, his nephew, Panduvasudeva became the heir to the throne. The new king also experienced the same dream and became ill. Subsequently, “*Kohombayak Kankariya*” was introduced as a cure (Seedaraman, 2016). This story can be found in *Kuweni Asna* and *Rajawaliya* as well. In the *Mahavamsa*, the curse of *Kuweni* is not mentioned, and the story has been written favoring King Vijaya and penalizing Kuweni in a subtle manner, whereas the authors of *Kuweni Asna* and *Rajawaliya* have perceived Kuweni’s emotions and depicted her as an ordinary woman victimized by Vijaya. According to *Kuweni Asna*, both Vijaya and Panduvasudeva experienced the curse of Kuweni in the form of a nightmare in which a big black

leopard pierced their heart with its sharp teeth. The nightmare had continued until they were cured from *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* (Gunawardene, 2008). According to the *Rajawaliya*, Lord Buddha gave the ownership of Sri Lanka to gods such as *Shakra*, *Bhakma*, *Maheshwara*, *Kihireli*, *Upulwan*, *Saman*, *Boksal*, and *Kataragama*, and when King Vijaya was affected by Kuweni’s curse all of those gods possessed King Vijaya because he was the king and protector of Sri Lanka. It is said that by possessing King Vijaya these gods broke the diamond/glass tongue of Kuweni (Leopard) and turned her into a stone (Gunasekara, 1900).

The *Yakka* narratives were first revealed in the *Deepavansa*, a historical documentation on which the *Mahavamsa* was based. Different authors later translated it into Sinhalese (the native language of the Sinhala community) and English. Being a *Yakka* princess, Kuweni had powers inherited from her ancestors. She had therianthropic powers, and when Vijaya landed on the island, she was seen in the form of a female hermit spinning cotton. According to the *Mahavamsa*, when Kuweni asked him to massacre all the *Yakkas* who were assembled at *siriwattupura* for the wedding ceremony of the *Yakka* king, Vijaya, who was an ordinary human asked from Kuweni, “[h]ow could I defeat the *Yakkas* who are invisible?” to which she responded “I will utter cries, and where thou shalt hear that sound, strike! and by my magic power shall thy weapon fall upon their bodies” (Geige & Bode 1912, p. 58). Thus, Vijaya slew all the *Yakka* leaders and was bestowed with all the garments of the *Yakka* king, and this symbolic act of passing of the garments shows the power-shifting from the *Yakkas* to Aryans. This can be identified as a very strong symbol to understand the concept of power and the power-shift from the *Yakka* and Kuweni to Aryans. At the same time, the shift of power from Kuweni to Vijaya connotes the replacement of the matriarchal social system with a patriarchal social system. The same scenario is described in *Kuweni Asna* with slight changes. Gunawardene (2008) shows the commitment, love, and sacrifices done by Kuweni in poetic literature (See Table 01).

Table 1

Kuweni’s Lament 1 in Kuweni Asna (Sinhala text and English Translation)

Sinhala Text	English Translation
--------------	---------------------

සුමිලා යකින්නී, නෙත් කදුලු එසින්නී, මෙලෙස සිට
කියන්නී. සිංහපුරවර සොඳා රජ ඉසුරු විද ඉදා
කරන නොපනත් සඳා නැව නගා හළ සඳා ලක්දිවට
බැස එදා නුග සෙවන වන මැදා තනිව අන් සඳ රඳා
බත් බුලත් දී සොඳා මවා විමනක් සොඳා රැ දෙදෙන
එහි නිදා වූ සඳෙහි රිවි අඳා වෙළෙම වෙස් ගෙන
යොඳා යකුන්ගෙ පුර වැදා මරා උන් ලුහු බැඳා රජ
සැපත නුම යොඳා දසරින කල එදා බිසො කර මා
සොඳා. (p. 38)

Sobbing and shedding tears, the *Yakkini* said to the king. Consuming all the luxury from *Sinhapura*, you came from a ship to this island because of your violent behavior. We met under the banyan tree alone in the forest and I welcomed you by giving rice and betel. I created a splendid bed for the two of us to sleep together that night. I transformed myself into a mare (female horse) and went to the *Yakka* kingdom to kill the *Yakkas* to bestow the kingship to you with all the wealth and luxury. You made me your queen on that day.

According to *Kuweni Asna*, Kuweni transformed herself into a mare and killed the *Yakkas* to bring Vijaya into power. But the *Mahavamsa* gives a different account as it states that Kuwanna cried loudly so that the *Yakkas*' weapons fell off from their bodies and they got killed. In *Rajawaliya* it is said that Kuweni carried Vijaya on her back after transforming herself into a mare and supported him to fight the *Yakkas*. Although these stories are different from one another, one common fact can be identified, i.e., Kuweni's power and influence were vital for Vijaya to capture the island. Kuweni's supernatural powers are thus highlighted in the literature. Geiger and Bode (1912, p. 60) observed that "Vijaya had one son and one daughter by the *Yakkhini*; when he now heard that the princess had arrived, he said to the *Yakkhini*: 'Go thou now, dear one, leaving the two children behind; men are ever in fear of superhuman beings'". The same idea is mentioned in a more rhythmic manner in *Kuweni Asna* which portrays the desperate emotions of Kuweni. The use of alliteration and poetic language used for creating visual imagery of the lamenting Kuweni are significant in *Kuweni Asna* (Gunawardene, 2008).

Representations of Kuweni are also linked to Sri Lankan cultural practices. Offering betel when welcoming guests, for instance, can be identified as a very important practice in the Sinhalese culture. In the *Mahavamsa* it is said that Vijaya and the seven hundred companions ate rice and curries given by Kuweni, which not only shows her hospitable nature but also implies that she had enough resources to feed seven hundred men. In *Kuweni Asna* it is said that she welcomed Vijaya by giving rice and betel which is practiced even in the contemporary society, when a bridegroom comes to see a bride for the first time. Moreover, the royal customs and luxurious lifestyle that befits a royal woman of Kuweni's stature is reflected by the story of Kuweni creating a splendid bed under a banyan tree. The consummation of their marriage is also mentioned in both sources and further, the support she extended to Vijaya for capturing the power is also confirmed by all the literature sources.

Kuweni’s appearance has been mentioned in different places to highlight her shapeshifting abilities. First, she appears as a female hermit spinning cotton yarns under a tree. Later, she uses her powers to capture the seven hundred men in a chasm. “Then the *Yakkhini* seized him and hurled him who cried aloud into a chasm. And there in like manner she hurled (all) the seven hundred one by one after him” (Geiger & Bode, 1912, p. 55). Eventually, Vijaya realized that Kuweni was a female devil with supernatural powers. She is also depicted as a female devil who devourers treasures from trade ships sailing near the coast shows Kuweni as an extremely powerful woman in her territory. The ability to captivate the prince on the very first day of their meeting and become his spouse after developing an intimate relationship clearly shows Kuweni as an agentive woman who was gifted with both charm and sensuality (Sturkenboom, 2014). In the literature, the clothing, adornments, and sensual pleasure of Kuweni are romanticized in a figurative language, “When the *Yakkhini* had taken the first portions (of the 26 meals) that Vijaya handed to her, she was well pleased, and assuming the lovely form of a sixteen-year-old maiden she approached the prince adorned with all the ornaments” (Geiger & Bode, 1912, p. 57). According to *Kuweni Asna* and *Rajawaliya*, Kuweni had three breasts, but the middle one disappeared when she found her husband, a sign by which she recognized Vijaya as her destined lover and husband to be.

Table 2

Kuweni’s lament 2 in Kuweni Asna (Sinhala text and English Translation)

Sinhala Text	English Translation
වෙන්වගොස් හිමි උතුම් කෙලෙස සනසමිද?	How can I get separated from you and comfort myself?
ලැම ලැමද කනතුනකිනේ එකක් ඉන් ඇති සෙනේ	There were three breasts and it was said that one will get disappeared when I see my husband.
හිමිතුමකු දුටු දිනේ මැකනකි බස් ගෙනේ	I was thinking about it in the forest, then I saw you, and because of your love, that breast disappeared.
සිත සිතා මෙම වනේ උන් සඳෙහි නුඹ සෙනේ	From that day onwards I am deeply attached to your love.
දුටු විගස එම තැනේ මැකී ගිය එම තැනේ	
එතැන් සිට හිමි සෙනේ තදව බැන්දෙමි...	

Future predictions of soothsayers are another important component that can be seen in folklore as well as folk literature (See Table 02). Here *Kuweni* recognizes Vijaya as her future husband because of the physical transformation that happened just as the soothsayers had predicted. It gives a logical reasoning for her to trust and love this stranger, believing him to be her future husband and assisting him to capture the power (Gunawardene, 2008). It is said in *Rajawaliya* that Prince Vijaya swore upon Kuweni’s middle breast, that he would never take another woman as his spouse if Kuweni helped

him to conquer *Yakkas* (Suraweera,1976). Gunasekara (1900) describes how Vijaya promised Kuweni that he would not take another woman as his spouse as follows:

The prince then swore, using these three imprecations: “The seed sown in this beautiful Lanka must be washed away — [the fields] turn to waste land and marsh —food stuffs, fruits, seed, and the like, become unfit to eat [ere I prove unfaithful].” Moreover, he promised that he would take her, and no other, for his queen consort (p. 19).

Thus, all the historical literature shows that Kuweni was a vital factor that enabled Vijaya to capture the power of the island although she has been depicted as *Yakkini* or a female demon.

When Vijaya asked Kuweni to leave the palace before the enthronement ceremony with a new queen from India, she lamented. That can be clearly seen in the *Mahavamsa* as well as in *Kuweni Asna*. She recalls their past and expresses her deep attachment towards him. But upon Vijaya’s insistence she had to leave the palace with her two children. Losing all hopes in life can lead anybody to desperation, and soon, her sorrow turned to rage. Out of hatred she cursed Vijaya and his successors upon her death (Seedaraman, 2016). That is known as the curse of Kuweni. In the Sri Lankan context, the practice of cursing can be identified as a means of keeping physical violence in control, but at the same time, cursing is considered more powerful because it addresses and affects the psychology of a person (Claus-Bachmann, 2004). The *Mahavamsa* also mentions that Vijaya did the enthronement in a festive manner with the Pandu King’s daughter, but Kuweni’s curse is not mentioned there. Gunawardene (2008) shows it in *Kuweni Asna* (See Table 03).

Table 3

The Curse of Kuweni in Kuweni Asna (Sinhala text and English translation)

Sinhala Text	English Translation
<p>විජය රජ කුමරවර සපිරිවර පෙරහරින් ගෙනැර පුරවටට සෙද පඩිබිසව අභිසෙක කරවමින් සහපෙමින් දවසරින කළ සැපත කළ විපත දැක රහුණ වූ ගිහිණි වූ යක්ගණි කෝප වූ දිවි වේසයක් රැගෙන දෙගවිදුර රුදුරු වූ විදුරුමය දිවක් දිගුකර මහත් දොර සතක් සිදුරු කර දැදුරු කොට විජය රජු හෘදය මධ්‍යයට පොවතා (p.55).</p>	<p>When King Vijaya accompanied the <i>Padi</i> queen in a beautiful procession, held the enthronement ceremony with great festivities, and lived happily with her, seeing the injustice that happened to the <i>Yakkini</i>, she was full of anger. She transformed herself into a leopard with a very long sharp tongue of diamond. The diamond tongue of this magical creature pierced seven sturdy doors and then pierced Vijaya’s heart right in the center.</p>

It is believed that King Vijaya used to see a leopard piercing his heart every night in his dreams, and this nightmare made the king fall ill. In all the historical literature on Kuweni, her emotions and feelings, and the disastrous situations that she underwent as a woman are thus expressed using figurative language. Though the chroniclers' viewpoints differ, the content is similar. The language in *Kuweni Asna* can be identified as a very rhythmic vocalization, which helps to generate visual, aural, and tactile imagery through the rhythms, metaphors, and similes (Gunawardena, 2008).

In literature, Kuweni has been defined as a *Yakkini*, hermit, a beautiful girl, a wife, a queen, a mother, and an abandoned woman. Nevertheless, she has been defined further in animal forms which are metaphorical. There are three main animals that can be identified in the narrative of Kuweni recorded in ancient literature. The first one is a friendly female dog that wags its tail and kisses Vijaya's feet when he first landed in Thambapanni. According to *Rajawaliya*, it is Kuweni who transformed herself into the form of a female canine of five colors in order to guide Vijaya and his crew. Next is the mare mentioned in *Rajawaliya* and *Kuweni Asna* which helped Vijaya to seize power. The final one is the leopard which appeared in Vijaya's nightmare and made him sick. All these animal metaphors are important in characterizing Kuweni since they symbolize feelings and emotions embedded in her life.

Notably, more metaphors have been produced to denote negative actions than positive ones in the narrative, which shows that metaphorical language makes it easier for people to convey what they find difficult, impossible or are reluctant to express. People use metaphors to describe their emotions in a figurative manner, and hence, metaphors cannot be merely defined as a linguistic decoration (Ortony & Fainsilber, 1987). Emotions are based on something or as a reaction to something, someone or some situation, and so, emotions cannot be expressed as something imaginary because there is always a cause or object to trigger that emotion. Solomon (1999) emphasizes that since every human being experience different emotions, it can be identified as a perpetual phenomenon common to all humans. The world can change and develop with new inventions but human emotions will never change from the beginning to the end of that process. Therefore, as described in Chapter 01, understanding the emotions and feelings embedded in this folklore character will help to understand the contemporary woman who is going through many challenges in life.

2.1.3 The Application of Symbols and Metaphors in Folklore

According to anthropologists it is difficult to give a stereotypical definition for symbols or metaphors since they change in different socio-cultural contexts (Darnton, 1986). Folklore experts believe that these symbols and metaphors play a vital role in folklife as they are used to denote subtle meanings embedded in folklife. The psychoanalytical approach, which has been developed by Sigmund Freud under folklore theories, highlights the importance of symbolically expressed emotional

values in folklore. In this approach, many incidents and objects symbolize meanings deeper than the surface value of the story. In the psychoanalytical approach, the reader derives different meanings from the story by analyzing the objects, people, animals and incidents in the narrative. As a result of that, forbidden topics or taboos like male and female genitals, sexual pleasure, and castration are metaphorically expressed using everyday objects or incidents (Dorson, 1963).

Early versions of fairytales popular among peasants were uncensored, but contents such as adultery, rape, violence, and sex were omitted when they became sources of literature, especially when they became children's fairytales (Doster, 2002). On that account, the surface meaning and the metaphorical meaning of most folk stories become totally different when they are subjected to an in-depth psychoanalytical study. Animals also play a vital role in conveying symbolic meanings, and "writers use animals which help them to write about subjects that are controversial and sensitive social issues which strengthen and emphasize their points and fulfil the purpose of their work" (Thambi & Preethi, 2020, p. 3120). Therefore, animals are used to express hidden messages especially related to the socio-cultural and political situation of the country.

In folklife animals are considered as prognosticators as well. This also changes from country to country. In Sri Lankan society, geckos and woodpeckers are considered as animals who get direct messages from gods, and therefore, special consideration and attention is paid to the signals given by these two animals in daily life. For instance, some folk people follow the signals given by animals when they start any important work (Parker, 2011). Generally, certain characteristics or qualities are attributed to some animals. Tigers, for example, are considered unintelligent but ferocious and foxes are considered cunning in almost all the folklore in the world. In African and 'Nigro American' stories, the tortoise and rabbit are known as more talented animals compared to others. Such features can be identified in Sri Lankan folklore as well (Parker, 2011). These stories can be identified as the replications or proof of the folklife experienced by folk people. Thus, the social and cultural value of these stories is immense (Parker, 2011).

Moreover, cultural schemas can be used to effectively make meaning of symbolism because some animals are associated with certain cultural values and beliefs. Some of these animal symbols are universal whereas others are related to the cultural values and beliefs of specific countries or regions. These cultural schemas have been welded to our subconscious mind, so that we instinctively know the different attributes given to specific animals (Lloyd & Woodside, 2013). These cultural schemas are highly affected by socio-cultural beliefs, religion, cultural practices, and norms. The mare is a commonly used animal in Hindu mythology, particularly in relation to a sacrificial horse in the sea. It is used as a symbol that denotes fertility as well as sexual desires. The horse, on the other hand, is a symbol of strength. In fact, according to Vedic Indians, the horse is an emblem of war (O'Flaherty, 1971).

There are many stories related to the mare in Hindu literature. According to *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* the Vedic Creator, Prajapati's daughter assumed the form of a mare and fled. Then, to pursue the daughter, Prajapati transformed himself into a stallion. In other stories, the sun's wife Samjna also turns herself into a mare to do *tapas* (a form of a celibate life of meditation in Hinduism) because she could not bear the *thejo* (heat) of the sun; and Goddess Lakshmi also turned herself into a mare and went to do *tapas* in order to bear a son. The mare and stallion are considered as sexual symbols according to Hinduism and worshiped along with the *Shiva Lingam*, especially in South India. "Mare is considered a particularly apt metaphor for the insatiable appetites of a flirtatious woman" (O'Flaherty, 1971, p.16) There is a direct relationship between horses and the Hindu ritual *asvamedha yagaya* where a horse is sacrificed. In ancient rituals the sacrifice's wife had been asked to perform consummation with the consecrated stallion. This is clear evidence to prove that horses are directly linked with the concepts of sexuality and fertility. It is believed that this could be an Indo-European tradition because an Irish king also used to have matrimonial relations with a mare (O'Flaherty, 1971).

O'Flaherty (1971, p.16) mentioned that "another Buddhist *Yaksini*, a beautiful mare named *Valavamukhi*, with a white body and red feet, was pursued by King Pandukabhaya and plunged into a pond; he grasped her mane, subdued her, and rode her into battle". This is very similar to the story in *Rajawaliya* and *Kuweni Asna* where Kuweni transformed herself to a mare to ensure Vijaya's victory. *Valahassa Jatakaya* mentions some *Yakkinis* in Lanka and some traders who come to the island after shipwreck which is similar to the *Mahavamsa* story. *Valahassa Jatakaya* further mentions that a flying horse came to help the traders to escape from this demon island. The horse mentioned in this story is similar to the one mentioned in *Rajawaliya* (Peris, 1982). A horse-faced *Yakkini* is mentioned in *Padakusalamanava Jatakaya* as well (Peris, 1982). There is another folklore which is popularly known as 'glass-princess' in Sri Lanka. According to the story, the glass princess could transform herself into any form, and she transformed herself into a mare and escaped from *Veddas* while carrying a prince on her back (Parker, 2011). O'Flaherty (1971, p. 16) mentioned that, "The horse-headed female [*Yaksa*] is a familiar Indian nighttime bogey, who carries men off for sexual purposes".

Therefore, it is evident that the horse and its appearance are directly connected with the *Yakka* community, especially with *Yakkinis*. Therefore, the mare and its connection to the *Yakkinis* or *Yaksas* can be identified as a common relationship which is applicable to *Kuweni* as well. These symbolic interpretations help to identify the mare as a symbol of fertility, erotism, and feminine strength.

There are plenty of folktales which, though they are not the same, share many similarities. One such example is the stories related to lions. It is believed that stories related to lions were popular in the Ganges valley or Panjabi, and these were later brought to Sri Lanka by the *Kalinga*, *Magada* or *Bengal* people who visited this island. As evidenced by the *Dambulla* and *Galapotha* stone inscriptions, kings like *Nishashanka Malla* and *Sahassa Malla* of Sri Lanka used to identify themselves as the

descendants of King Vijaya, who is considered to be a descendent of a lion. The *Deepvamsa* and *Mahavamsa* clearly mention the union of Princess *Suppadevi* and the lion, and the birth of their children *Sinhabahu* (son) and *Sinhaseevali* (daughter). Defying his father's restrictions, *Sinhabahu* took his mother and sister out of their cave in the forest to his maternal grandfather's kingdom, where he claimed the throne. Infuriated by the loss of his family, the lion wreaked havoc on the kingdom, and *Sinhabahu* had to kill the lion to stop the devastation he was causing. Later, *Sinhabahu* married his sister, *Sinhaseevali*, and produced many children including Prince *Vijaya*. Thus, one of the most popular origin stories of the Sinhalese nation starts from the relationship between the lion and a royal princess (See Table 04 from the *Dipavamsa*).

Table 4

Sinhabhahu in Dipavamsa (Pali and Sinhala Texts, and English Translation)

Pali Text	Sinhala Text	English Translation
සිහබාහු නරින්දොසො	සිංහබාහු නරේන්ද්‍රයා	King <i>Sinhabhahu</i> , as strong as a Lion!
සිහ මාදින්තවා ඉති	අයෙකි	His descendants are
සිහලොතෙන සම්බන්ධො	ඔහුගෙන් පැවතෙන්නන්ට	known as the Sinhalese
ආහු සබ්බපි සිහලා	සිංහලයෝ යැයි කියති	

Therefore, kingship, strength, and power are symbolized by the lion and the same qualities have been passed on to *Vijaya*'s. Furthermore, the dog and the leopard also symbolize different emotions and feelings embedded in the character of *Kuweni*. In *Kuweni Asna* and *Rajawaliya* it is said that *Kuweni* appeared as a leopard in King *Vijaya*'s dreams and tried to kill him by piercing his heart with a diamond tongue (Gunawardene, 2008). In a psychoanalytical approach, this leopard can be interpreted as a symbol of rage as well as personification of *Vijaya*'s sense of guilt arising from his betrayal of *Kuweni*. Therefore, symbols and metaphorical language can be identified as a successful medium that has effectively conveyed subtle meanings and deep human emotions.

2.2 Craft Practices in the Folklore of *Kuweni*

The ancient literature on craft traditions of Sri Lanka is found in the *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa*. In the fifth year of the Buddhahood, Lord Buddha arrived in *Nagadeepa*

(the Jaffna peninsula) in Lankadeepa (Sri Lanka) to settle a problem over a jeweled throne between two powerful *Naga*² kings, namely, *Chulodara* and *Mahodara* (Geiger & Bode, 1912). In the story, it is said that both kings were very powerful and were ready to wage a war to determine who gets the jeweled throne. Having sensed that thousands of lives were going to be lost in this war, Lord Buddha decided to visit Nagadeepa to make peace between the *Naga* kings. After listening to the preaching of Lord Buddha, the kings gave up their desire for the throne, offered it to Lord Buddha, and became his followers. In the eighth year of Buddhahood, Lord Buddha arrived at Kelaniya in Sri Lanka accepting the invitation of the *Naga* King, *Maniakkika*. According to the *Dipavamsa*, the *Nagas* decorated the area for the Buddha and his disciples with golden chairs which were covered with celestial cloth. A canopy was made with beautiful flags and the area was overlaid with different types of cloths (Kahadawaarachchi, 1997). The Kelani Vihara paintings (See Figure 2.2) provide archeological evidence for these narratives. The jeweled throne and valuable cloths depicted in the paintings give an idea about the rich craft practices which could have existed in ancient Sri Lanka.

Figure 2. 2

Lord Buddha's Visit to Naga Deepa in Kelani Vihara Painting



Note. Open-source images

Apart from the ancient literature from Sri Lanka, the craft practices of the country's original inhabitants are mentioned even in Indian literature. Deraniyagala (1955) highlights references to crafts related to Sri Lankan metal work, architecture, art, and sculpture can be found in the great Hindu epic, *Ramayana*. Similarly, the narrative of Kuweni also provides significant insights into the craft traditions that existed in Sri Lanka way before the arrival of Aryans. As folklore highlights, Kuweni was spinning cotton when Vijaya arrived on the island. Both the *Mahavamsa* and *Kuweni Asna* highlight that a splendid bed was created by Kuweni which indicates the furniture manufacturing skills of the craftsmen at that time. In all the folklore narratives of Kuweni, it is said that she nourished Vijaya and his crew of seven hundred with rice and condiments, by which we can deduce that the locals must have had the skill to

² One of the indigenous communities of Sri Lanka at the time.

make pottery or cooking utensils. It stands to reason that there should have been enough pots and pans to cook and serve rice and curries for such a large number of men. Moreover, using jewelry and adornments is highlighted when Kuweni shapeshifts from a hermit to an extremely beautiful maiden (Geiger & Bode, 1912). This indicates the jewelry craftsmanship which existed before the arrival of Aryans in Sri Lanka.

In the same story, it is said that the *Pandu* king from Madhura kingdom of South India sent elephants, horses, wagons, a thousand families belonging to the 18 guilds of craftsmen, and maidens along with his daughter to Sri Lanka when she was given in marriage to King Vijaya. Moreover, it is believed that eighteen guilds including eight each of herdsmen, goldsmiths, and “Kalinga” caste people, handloom weavers, and potters came to Sri Lanka with *Sangamitta thero*, the daughter of the great emperor Ashoka of India, who arrived in Sri Lanka with the sacred Bo-plant, Sri Maha Bodhi sapling. All these literatures affirm there was an indigenous craft tradition in the country prior to the arrival of Aryans, which was further enhanced by Indian craftsmen who came to Sri Lanka from time to time.

Further, ancient Sri Lankan society was built upon the *Rajakari* system (Feudal system) and there were specific castes assigned to fulfil different duties and responsibilities such as farming, pottery, weaving etc. As a result of that, the production of clothes was done by one specific caste. According to *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art* book, the indigenous craftsmen are believed to be makers of plainer and essential articles for everyday life, while the expatriate craftsmen were splendid artists from large cities who belonged to crafts guilds from South India. This difference can be seen among weavers too. The indigenous *berawayo* caste used to do fine weaving, yet the expatriate *salagama* caste people used to make gold woven muslins which were used by the aristocracy and royals. Further, dyeing, embroidery, tailoring, and shoemaking craftsmanship related to royalty were practiced by these expatriate craftsmen (Coomaraswamy, 1907). Absorbing these skills from the expatriate artisans, the clever Sinhalese craftsmen soon learned to incorporate new features and techniques into their traditional craft and perfectly transform it into a distinct Sinhalese style.

One of the most important insights about handloom weaving industry can be seen in the 7th chapter of Mahavamsa. It says that Kuweni was spinning cotton in the form of a hermit when Prince Vijaya arrived at the island (Geiger & Bode, 1912). In the story itself it is said that she used to be in the form of a hermit as well as a princess which indicates that she used to wear different kinds of clothes. From the 5th century onwards, this industry can be seen in Sri Lanka as well as in other countries of the South Asian region including India and Bangladesh. According to Export Development Board reports of 2020, in the year 2018 the revenue from the handloom sector in Sri Lanka was 1.096 million USD. Further, handloom weaving can be identified as a rich craft which can highlight the deeper human emotions with colors, textures and patterns with socio emotional identities (Gopura & Wickramasinghe, 2022). Thus, handloom weaving can be identified as a key craft that emerges through the folklore of Kuweni.

Crafting and customs of craft traditions can also be identified as a key feature of folklife since they are passed on from generation to generation via practice and oral traditions. Coomaraswamy (1907) highlights that in the 18th century, Kandyan period, the *Udarata Sinhalese* society (Upcountry Sinhalese society) consisted of different castes in a hierarchical order under the feudal social system. According to a document called *Janavamsa*, initially written in the *Pali* language, which gives interesting accounts of the origin of different castes, the highest-ranking caste in the hierarchy was *Goviyo* or the cultivators. They were followed by weavers, carpenters, tailors, embroiderers, shoemakers, potters, musicians, mat weavers, rattan workers, and iron smelters. Altogether there were mainly 26 caste categories, and the mat weavers, rattan workers, and iron smelters can be identified as the lowest ranking castes in the caste system in the 18th century. This feudal structure (also called the *rajakari* system) was important for the smooth functioning of the society, and each caste had their own practice and lifestyle related to their own livelihood. For example, there are folk songs, narratives, and rituals related to all of the craft practices and old livelihoods. Songs related to the *Kinnara caste* (mat weavers) are known as *Kinnara* songs which express their emotions while weaving mats (Coomaraswamy, 1907). *Pannan Kutura*, for instance, is a dialogic narrative between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law during a weaving rivalry, which exemplifies the folk songs and narratives that existed among the folk community. Moreover, there is a direct relationship with the emotions and materials that they used and the intricate patterns of textile and mat weaving (Gopura & Wickramasinghe, 2022).

The impact of emotions on the craft practices can be seen in the story of Kuweni as well. When King Vijaya abandoned Kuweni and escorted another Queen from India, Kuweni died after cursing Vijaya and his successors. As a result of this, Vijaya began to see a leopard in his dreams and became ill. This curse is known as “*Divi Doshaya*” or the curse of Kuweni (Suraweera, 1976). Vijaya’s successor, King Panduvasudeva was also affected by this curse and to cure him, *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* was introduced to Sri Lanka (Gunawardene, 2008). *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* has its unique rituals and practices that include dancing, music, and decorations to invoke blessings on the patient (Seedaraman, 2016).

Further, color, silhouette, material, shape, and balance can be identified as the most important elements in fashion designing (Volpintesta, 2014). The decorations are made with natural materials such as grains, leaves, fruits, and flowers that can be found in the surrounding environment. The decorations that are made using tender coconut leaves are known as *Gop* art. To enhance the color balance, the tender leaves are mixed with mature coconut leaves, and dry coconut leaves in complex designs such as *Thorana*, *Poruwa* (ritual podium) and *Pirith Mandappa*. *Habarala* (*Alocasia macrorrhizos*) leaves and banana (*Musa*) trunks are also used in this craft. Banana trunks are useful in form and structure development, and the peelings of the banana trunk are used to cut shapes, while *Habarala* is used for complex design crafting (Bentara, 2000). The practice of seeing, hearing, and engaging with natural materials motivates the villages to practice and come up with innovative designs (Bentara,

2000). The colors, smells, textures, and shapes of these leaves have been beneficial to create balanced designs for different purposes. Simple decorations such as *Devathodu*, *Kapagasa*, *Mal pela*, and *Gop rehen* can be seen in the *Kap Situweema* (ceremonial pole placement) of *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* (Bentarage, 2000).

Figure 2. 3

Gop Craft Creations by Tender Coconut Leaves and Banana Trunk



Note. Photographed by Author (2023)

The construction techniques, flexibility of the materials, and the color combination of *Gop* craft can be identified as key features of the craft as shown in figure 2.3 Using natural colors that are found in nature and blending them with appropriate materials help to make a very pleasing setting for ritualistic ceremonies. The use of fresh light green colored leaves helps to soothe the patient's (*athuraya*) mind by creating a physiologically pleasing environment since green is considered as a color that invokes happiness.

The ability to use the surface as well as the underside of the tender coconut leaf with the same color and texture has enhanced the structure development in creating 3D illusions. Converting a two-dimension leaf into a 3D form with the help of limited materials is an interesting technique to study. *Kapagasa*, *mal pela*, *gop gedi*, *biso kapa*, and *punkalas* are some of the best examples for 3D shapes (Bentarage, 2000). *Mal Pela* and *kapa gasa* can be seen figure 2.4

Figure 2. 4

Gop Craft Decorations used in Kohombayak Kankariya



Note. Developed by author using open-source images.

Other than the 3D outcomes, beautiful shapes can be achieved through *Gop* art via traditional crafting techniques. *Gop* art can be basically divided into two main areas as simple *Gop* decorations and special *Gop* decorations. The initial decorations in the *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* associated with the ceremonial pole are simple *Gop* decorations that can be simply created by tender coconut frond or tender coconut leaves. Even the ekle of the coconut leaf is used for some designs. These simple designs are highly used in the initial practices of *Kohomba Yak Kankariya*, and the special *Gop* decorations are a more elaborative form of *Gop* art where techniques such as weaving and crafting are used with supportive materials such as banana trunks. These complex designs are used for performing rituals as well as ceremonies. Coconut leaf craft are seen in most Asian countries with their own unique customs and lifestyle practices. In Sri Lanka, *Gop* art has its own identity as an endemic folk tradition that is embedded into its socio-cultural setting.

All the above-mentioned crafts can be identified as products and techniques that have been developed by humans using handcrafting skills to produce something creative (Gopura & Wickramasinghe, 2022). All the crafts have its own uniqueness which can

be used to display the socio emotional values of a specific community that can be used successfully for the contemporary creative approaches as well.

The following paragraph will explore the creative practices associated with the visual and performing arts of the folklore of Kuweni. These visual and performing arts are useful to understand different socio emotional values embedded to the story of Kuweni which can be used for creative fashion practices.

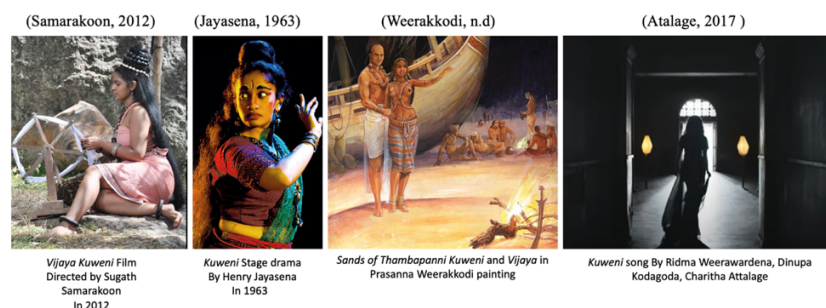
2.3 Kuweni in Visual and Performing Arts

Traditional theatre performances usually combine acting, singing, dance, music, dialogue, and narration or recitation but some also include puppetry or pantomime. These arts, however, are more than simple ‘performances’ for an audience; they may also play crucial roles in culture and society. Songs sung while carrying out day-to-day work like harvesting; music that is part of a ritual; and lullabies sung when taking care of babies (UNESCO, 2018) are some examples of such arts. In these, a tremendous amount of intangible cultural heritage is blended with tangible tokens of heritage such as costumes, makeup, masks, instruments, and performance locations. Hence performing arts can be identified as a cultural expression as well as a universal concept common to all of humanity which reflects human creativity and knowledge that can be appreciated and enjoyed (UNESCO, 2018). Performing arts usually take the form of music, dance, and drama, genres that are strikingly different from each other, but they share the common root of entertainment.

The relationship between fashion and performing arts, however, was emphasized quite recently by fashion filming which has already become a new trend in fashion communication. Being connected with fashion, many other disciplines including photography, animation, social media, and filming have transcended the conventional boundaries, and are interconnected at present (Bugg, 2009). In Sri Lanka, the folklore of *Kuweni* has been an inspiration to diverse creative industries such as stage drama, movies, paintings, and songs (See Figure 2.5).

Figure 2. 5

Representations of Kuweni in Visual and Creative Industries



Kuweni stage drama was produced by Henry Jayasena in 1963, which continues to be performed from time to time, and its new production is done by Prasannajith Abeysuriya. *Sands of Thambapanni*, is a painting of Vijaya and Kuweni done by the Sri Lankan painter Prasanna Weerakkody, who is a popular artist specialized in historical paintings. The movie *Vijaya Kuweni* was directed by Sugath Samarakoon in 2012, and The *Kuweni* song, which became very popular recently, was done by Charitha Attalage and Ridma Weerawardane in 2017 (Attalage, 2019). Furthermore, *Kuweni Live in Concert*, which was a successful cinematic experience for the Sri Lankan audience, was performed in 2020 and 2024 at The Nelum Pokuna- Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre, and it was a synergetic and unique team effort with 3D visuals, sounds, and musicality.

Folklore has been a great source of inspiration for Sri Lankan stage dramas, and there are many stage drama productions inspired by folktales such as *Kuweni*, *Sinhabhahu*, *Maname*, and *Nari Bena*. Consequently, there is a strong relationship between folklore and stage drama. Since costumes play a vital role in any drama, most of these dramas need costumes to suit the descriptions in the folktales and different time periods. Hence, the costume designing and fashion are strongly linked. Nevertheless, dramatic aspects are also considered while producing costumes for stage drama. The job role of a costume designer of theatrical performances is different from that of a fashion designer since the costume designer has to prioritize the script, consider the scene, and highlight the narrative through clothing (Bugg, 2001). Therefore, the real attributes of a specific folklore character might not be emphasized in a stage drama through costumes. But it is evident that a symbiotic relationship among folklore, fashion, and performing arts.

Kuweni stage drama can be identified as a productive application which tries to highlight Kuweni as a human being with compassionate feelings and emotions (Jayasena, 1964). In this stage drama, Kuweni symbolizes the whole of womankind who has been victimized by men. *Kuweni Asna* was one of the inspirations for the *Kuweni* stage drama, and its concept is the “eternal woman” (Jayasena, 1964). In the drama, Kuweni’s character symbolizes women from the past as well as the women in contemporary society. In *Kuweni* stage drama, Kuweni is identified as an eternal woman from the past, present and future, who has been misinterpreted by the society. Therefore, the drama argues that women like Kuweni were in history and there will be more such women in the present and future societies as well (Jayasena, 1964).

The lamenting of Kuweni or the *Kuweni vilapaya* was also another inspiration for the *Kuweni* stage drama. The musical, textural, and kinetic construction of this curse is considered as a combination which is unique to the Sri Lankan cultural repertoire as a medium to keep the physical violence in control. It is considered as a more powerful technique where human psychology is addressed (Claus-Bachmann, 2004). The English translation of the curse was done by Lylie Godridge who was a famous singer and a vocal teacher, and an excerpt is given below:

May each step sear thy feet in fire -May every drop of rain run dry
May thunderbolts crash on each head -Each body burns in scorching flames

Each youth born untimely die -Earth and water rise in fire
Sickness and eternal pain -Rack their bones till each one is born (Claus-Bachmann, 2004, p. 30).

The speed, volume and kinetic expressions in the lament increase gradually, which recreates the mood of a cursing woman filled with rage and frustration. Rendered helpless by Vijaya's betrayal, she resorts to cursing to vent her bitterness, which is successfully captured by the dramatist.

Considering these literatures, the present study sets a new avenue of investigations to characterize the personality and emotions highlighted in the folklore of Kuweni, which is an interesting narrative to be studied because of its historical value and the range of emotions it encapsulates.

These emotions can be presented via expressive performing arts in which the performer is emotionally prepared to feel the sentiments of different life incidents faced by Kuweni. This also requires obtaining of colors, materials, and silhouettes to create costume designs that capture the moods and emotions of the character of Kuweni, because the attire worn by the actor is instrumental for delivering an impactful performance. Therefore, this approach of study enables the researcher to shed light on Kuweni's emotional journey through different stages of life and convert it to a fashion collection using creative PLR.

In a historical performing art aspect, the folklore of Kuweni is a significant narrative to traditional Sri Lankan dancing and music practices. *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* was also introduced to Sri Lanka as a cure for King Panduvasudeva who suffered from a recurring nightmare of a leopard. It is considered as a practice or a dance which is used to cure someone mentally and physically from a sickness caused by an evil spirit (*Shanthikarma*). *Udarata wes anduma* or the traditional Kandyan dancing costume is an outcome of Kuweni's curse, because the traditional Kandyan dancing originated as a result of Kuweni's curse (*Diwi doshaya*) (Seedaraman, 2016).

In the performing art aspect, the narrative of Kuweni is important considering the origin of rich dancing techniques, rhythm, music, instruments, decorations, and traditional costumes of *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* and *traditional wes anduma* (Seedaraman, 2016). The use of dancing and singing to cure deeper human emotional afflictions and soothing the mind with mental relief can be identified as a feature that shows how advanced and refined a society is, and the emotional application of such performing art techniques can be utilized in contemporary practices as well.

Most of the research related to the fashion product development also emphasizes the use of emotions and storytelling to develop a strong customer relationship with a specific product or fashion brand. Therefore, the use of different emotions in diverse visual and performing arts can be used as an inspiration for the textile and fashion product development. Socio- emotional identities can be used for apparel concept developments by using different textures, colors and patterns specially through handcrafted fashion products (Gopura & Wickramasinghe, 2022). The approaches used in visual and performing arts are expected to be experimented and used in fashion product development in this research.

The above sections examine the intersection of folklore and fashion practice, two fields that traditionally belong to distinct disciplines. Folklore, rooted in folklore studies and anthropology, primarily engages with intangible cultural narratives, whereas fashion practices, situated within the creative arts and design, focus on producing tangible outcomes. Yet, the existing literature reveals only limited examples where folklore has been systematically applied to fashion or textile practices, with most cases emerging from Western designers. Even in the work of designers such as Issey Miyake, Alexander McQueen, and Jean Paul Gaultier, inspirations are often drawn from historical narratives or emotions embedded within them. Sri Lankan folklore, however, has not been explored as a sustained narrative in fashion practice, nor developed into structured, practice-based research at the doctoral level. For instance, the story of Kuweni has been interpreted through music, drama, and painting, yet remains largely unaddressed in fashion design. This study, therefore, attempts to bridge that gap by proposing a systematic model that integrates folklore and fashion practices to generate tangible fashion outcomes grounded in a clear and rigorous rationale.

2.4 Contemporary Approach to Fashion Product Development

In fashion and textile design, many designers have used different creative practices for fashion product development. Designers such as Hussein Chalayan, Rei Kawakubo, and Junya Watanabe have applied creative practices in different perspectives such as fashion with technology, and fashion with art and philosophy to explore their own creativity. Moreover, prominent fashion designers like Miyake have used creative PLR to merge traditional knowledge with contemporary fashion through innovative designs which are highly compatible with modern fashion and manufacturing processes (Bugg, 2001). It is observed that “Miyake, perhaps the most revered designer in Japan today, has consistently propagated new ideas, new material and new design directions which accommodate the modern lifestyle of the contemporary women” (English, 2011, p. 6). For instance, *Origami*, a traditional Japanese art, was successfully used by Miyake to experiment with innovative materials and his whole design process can be identified as a systematic process, which he has been developing throughout his design career.

Figure 2. 6

Inspirations from Origami Techniques



Curved Pleats for Issey Miyake Spring 2016



Pli.e Project in Montreal in 2018

Note. Open-source images.

Blending the Japanese heritage and cultural values with modern fashion and absorbing the concept behind *kimono* (a traditional Japanese dress) into the contemporary fashion world can be identified as one of the innovative design approaches that has been utilized. Other than the silhouette experiments, Miyake has used the traditional Japanese tie and dye techniques (Shibori) in his designs and enlivened them with his creativity and branding.

Following Miyake, other fashion designers have also utilized origami techniques (See Figure 2.6). One such example is the PLI.E project, which is an amalgamation of dance, architecture, movement, design, travel, and paper material. In this specific project, the designers Pauline Loctin and Melika Dez used a series of different paper materials to come up with origami design ideas, and the photoshoots were done in famous city locations with selected dancers and their movements (Montmorency, 2019). The project outcome was to integrate fashion, architecture, design, and body movements to create relationships with each other and to communicate the unique antique feel of the Japanese culture through Origami Fashion (Legion, 2018).

The application of technology to fashion is another creative practice that is used by designers like Hussein Chalayan, Iris Van Herpen, and Jean Paul Gaultier. Testing new materials other than fabrics, developing futuristic or geometric or transformable designs with techno-based fashion concepts are the main features of these designers. Consequently, their design framework is structured to show how technology can be creatively used in fashion to generate new fashion concepts and ideas (Artspace, 2016). Further, designers such as Rei Kawakubo, Yohji Yamamoto, Rick Owens, and Junya Watanabe have amalgamated fashion practices with philosophy and arts as a new creative fashion approach. Kawakubo's *Comme des Garçons* (1969) was based on the Zen Buddhist philosophy which highlights simplicity and imperfection (English, 2011). Breaking away from social constraints and conventions, breaking the stereotypical western image of the body, and promoting imperfect body silhouettes are some of the main characteristics of the fashion designers who incorporate abstract arts and philosophy into their design practices. Making use of drapery, knotting, body wrapping over tailoring, using different materials to break the norms, and deconstruction are important features of these designers (Watanabe, 2015).

McQueen and Gaultier drew inspiration from historically significant events and cultural traditions, weaving them into their creative journeys. Through their collections, they not only reinterpreted heritage but also highlighted the depth of human emotions, resulting in fashion narratives that are both intellectually engaging and aesthetically fascinating. McQueen's most of the collections explored themes of inner human emotions producing runway presentations that were simultaneously shocking and profoundly creative. His "*Widows of Culloden*" collection, presented for Fall 2006, exemplifies this approach. It drew inspiration from the Battle of Culloden in 1746, a historical moment that dismantled the Scottish clan system and left many women widowed (McCaffrey, 2020). This collection can be understood as a fusion of Celtic mythology, Scottish heritage, and British history, where emotion and melancholy were central themes. McQueen employed models, staging, music, and theatrical illusions to construct a gloomy atmosphere that emphasized the grief and emotional weight carried by the widows (McCaffrey, 2020).

Figure 2.7

Alexander McQueen's "Widows of Culloden", Fall 2006 and Jean Paul Gaultier's Fall 2005 Ready to Wear Collection.



Note. Open source images.

Similarly, Jean Paul Gaultier's Fall 2005 Ready-to-Wear collection, showcased in Paris, celebrated folklore and tribal traditions through his distinctive design lens. Drawing on cultural references from Eastern European folk dress, North African nomadic attire, and Indigenous-inspired textiles, Gaultier reinterpreted these traditions within the framework of Parisian couture. The runway presentation, including the styling of models, the integration of folkloric headpieces, and other adornments, illustrated how folklore can be transformed into innovative and visually striking fashion outcomes (Bowles, 2005).

As such high-end designers have inspired from multiple and tangible inspiration sources, yet there are lack of information usage of intangible sources developing their collections. That can be identified as a gap in literature.

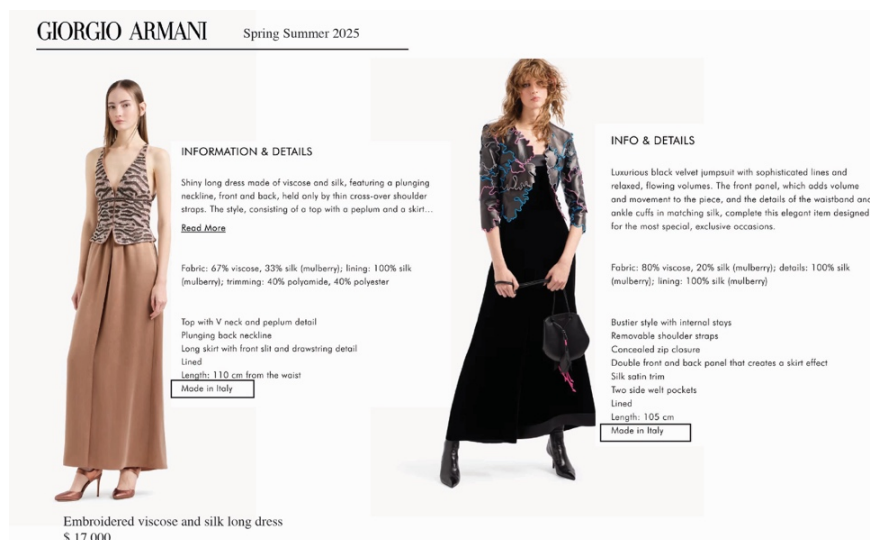
2.2.2 Europe and the USA

In the western hemisphere, the USA and Europe stand out as hubs of fashion. Among them, Milan is one of the leading fashion capitals in the world, where many fashion designers apply the creative PLR approach to their design practices. Famous Italian luxury brands, including the major fashion houses, highlight the Italian craftsmanship featuring “*fatto a mano*” or handmade craftsmanship (Paulicelli, 2014). Different areas of Italy are famous for different craft industries such as Lake Como for fine silk, and Vicenza for goldsmiths and jewelry. The exceptional craftsmanship and the finest quality of the products made in Italy can be identified as an important feature unique to all the Italian luxury fashion brands (Hass, 2020). Being a fashion capital, Milan is famous all over the world for luxury ready-to-wear apparel (Khaire, 2011).

Italian designers’ creative practice approach especially is unique in the branding and marketing aspect because all luxury brands from Italy highlight the phenomena called Italian identity (See Figure 2.8) and Italianicity (Dallabona, 2014).

Figure 2. 8

Giorgio Armani Spring Summer 2025



Note. Developed by author (2025) by referring <https://www.armani.com/>

To highlight the heritage and made-in-Italy concept, these luxury fashion brands make use of creative videos that emphasize their production process. A specialized hand investing their skill to a product has given the impression of luxury and uniqueness to the Italian design culture (Dallabona, 2014). Although they use cutting-edge technology in their production, Italian luxury brands strategically emphasize the craftsmanship of their artisans who make products by hand. Although craftsmanship and advanced technology equally contribute to product development in the Italian fashion industry, Italian brands are deeply attached to their heritage and craftsmanship. In fact, they have made a powerful image of their brand in their customers' mind, which emphasizes the view that hand skills create the “luxury” of the product (Dallabona, 2014). For this purpose, they have fabricated narratives around their brands. Figure 2.9 shows some images taken from a video by Dolce and Gabbana focusing on the different phases of handmade production of their Sicily Crochet bag and images from a video by Gucci highlighting the handmade production process of their Bamboo bag.

Figure 2. 9

Production of Dolce & Gabbana’s Sicily Crochet Bag (2009) and Gucci’s Bamboo Bag (1947)



However, Italy is not the only European country that incorporates traditional crafts in their fashion products. La blouse roumaine is a traditional costume of Romania, which is a symbol of Romanian culture and its authenticity. Traditionally, it is a white color blouse made of flax, hemp, cotton or silk, over which geometric or floral motifs are embroidered in colored threads (Gheorghiuță, 2018). French painter Henri Matisse did a painting named “La blouse roumaine,” which drew the attention of many famous fashion designers towards this traditional costume (See figure 2.10). In 1981 and 1999, Yves Saint-Laurent did two collections inspired by this costume, and later, famous designers like Gaultier, Tom Ford, and Carolina Herrer incorporated the motifs and style into their design collections (Gheorghiuță, 2018).

Figure 2. 10

La Blouse Roumaine Painting by Henri Matisse Private Collection (1940) and Yves Laurent’s Autumn Winter 1999 Haute Couture Fashion Collection



Natural dyeing can be identified as another age-old creative fashion approach that has been revitalized as a new trend in the modern world. Currently, the synthetic dyeing processes are deeply investigated by eco-conscious brands, which has led to the identification of toxic substances that are harmful for both skin and environment. Considering this factor, brands now focus on utilizing natural dyes for their products. Consequently, brands like All Nations, Olderbrother, Toast, and YOGA KONGA have explored the potential of applying natural indigo to their garments (Clark, 2021). Further, other colors are also experimented by famous fashion brands such as Ganni and Levi's (US) in their denim collections and the US brand KENT. KENT uses GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standards) certified dyes for core colors, and natural, plant-based dyes for small batches (Smith, 2023). All colors are free from toxic materials, naturally biodegradable, and compostable. These brands are collaborating with dye manufacturing companies and key standard or certification authorities to ensure the quality (Smith, 2023). This, therefore, can be identified as an upcoming trend, and many famous brands are now interested in this practice considering the sustainability of their brand.

Figure 2. 11

YOGAKONGA and OLDERBROTHER Collections from Natural Dye (2021)



Not only the industry brands but also small capsule collections and small-scale designers, too, practice this natural dyeing technique. Most of these small-scale

designers practice dyeing and experimenting on their own. Christi Johnson, the founder of Mixed Colors is a designer who has worked in the fashion industry for seven years and experienced adverse outcomes of Rit dye (Drakeford, 2018). It can cause skin irritations and mild burns if contacted with the skin. This made her think of creating her own brand under her own design philosophy using natural colors and organic fabric materials. According to Christi, natural dyeing was not an easy practice since she had to do plenty of experiments to achieve the best colors (Johnson, 2015), and her favorite colors are madder root, cutch, Osage orange and indigo with silk fabrics. Further, she has experimented with Indian dyeing experiments such as “Cutch” which produce permanent colors that are skin-friendly (Drakeford, 2018). While purchasing some dyes from the suppliers, she grows her own dyes in her home garden which can be identified as a closed-loop design practice. Christi is excited to conduct experiments like their ancestors used to, and incorporate those into her designs. Hence, her design practice can be identified as a contemporary creative practice led approach where she contributes to the creative experimentation as well as production phrases. Figure 2.12 shows some of Christi’s design outcomes from her studio Mixed Colors.

Figure 2. 12

Design Outcomes of Christi Johnson from Natural Dye (2018)



Mia Sylvia, on the other hand, is an eco-conscious bridal designer, who is passionate about regenerative decorating and recycling. Mia started her journey as a botanical dye specialist and that motivated her to do lots of experiments on different natural materials, food waste, and metals (Settle, 2019). Mia’s design practice is not only associated with natural dyeing, but also with upcycling and repurposing them. Therefore, her entire design philosophy is based on sustainability, and she is practicing her creative practice led approach with different perspectives. Her custom-made designs have a unique vintage or retro look (Sylvia, 2018). This can be identified as an eco-friendly approach since she motivates the customers to change their bridal attire to a different form. Her designs resemble watercolor paintings and she believes that the fabric is a canvas to create a story (Settle, 2019). Using cloths

subjected to natural dyeing and upcycling them from daily wear to a high-end purpose such as bridal wear can be identified as a successful initiative. Some of her natural dyed bridal designs can be seen in Figure 2.13.

Figure 2. 13

Mia Sylvia Bridal Designs from Natural Dye (2018)



2.4.2 India

Apart from the above-mentioned approaches, there are plenty of creative practices in the world. From Europe to America to Asia, there are plenty of examples to understand how creative fashion practices are considered in modern society. Among South Asian countries, India can be identified as a country with a great variety of crafts that are unique to certain communities as well as to some areas of the country. There are three main factors that have directly influenced the revival of Indian crafts in the modern world. The first one is the rich and diverse hand-weaving techniques and craftsmanship of Indians; secondly, the limited western type garments that are suitable for formal or festive occasions; and thirdly, the easy access to custom made affordable tailoring (Khaire, 2011). Before the British colonization, India was a country rich in their own weaving techniques and crafts. Further, India has strong craft traditions (involving diverse communities) related to hand weaving, embroidery, dyeing, printing, and jewelry related crafts (Khaire, 2011).

There are plenty of embroidery techniques practiced in India, and among these, the “Kantha embroidery technique” has originated as a domestic craft (prior to 1500 BCE) that was practiced by East Indian women. Initially started as a functional style of embroidery, it is believed that this technique dates to the pre-Vedic era. A new life was given to old clothes through this technique, which is currently popular as upcycling. On the other hand, this technique enabled women to express their emotions (Sunder, 2022). Some of these pieces are inter-generational collaborations as their creation is passed on from mother to daughter. In the beginning, this technique was used when creating quilts for babies using old sarees and dhotis. In this process, several layers are made and stitched together to make a single piece, and the cloth is then elaborated with

natural motifs such as the sun or lotuses or characters from Indian folklore, mythologies, and everyday objects or objects from nature. Each Kantha embroidery is unique since they are inspired by emotions and stories unique to its creators. In fact, the individual's creativity, compositions, and patience were portrayed by each design. Currently, this embellished craft tradition is taken up as a creative design practice by many Indian designers as well as international brands (Sunder, 2022).

In contemporary fashion, Kantha embroidery can be seen in stoles and all kinds of dresses such as sarees, shalwar, handbags, and scarves. This technique is also utilized in homeware such as bed linen and quilts. It has a global demand right now and international designers use this craft in their design practices (Tahiliani, 2023). A famous Indian designer, Tarun Tahliani, for instance, did a fashion collection in 2013 with designs featuring Kantha embroidery. Further, the famous bridal couturier Sabyasachi Mukherjee, too, has incorporated Kantha embroidery in his collections. Apart from such leading Indian designers, a famous British luxury fashion brand, Burberry, merged Kantha embroidery into their Fall 2015 collection named 'Burberry Prorsum' (Blanks, 2015). With the high demand for this craft, many designers include Kantha in their creative fashion practices nowadays, and over 30,000 artisans are engaged in Kantha embroidery in rural Bengal. More than used fabrics, designers now use expensive fabric materials such as silk for Kantha embroidery (See Figure 2.14), and such lavish raw materials have added extra value to these clothing items (Sunder, 2022).

Figure 2. 14

Kantha Embroidery in Contemporary Fashion Practices



Note. Retrieved from open-sources

The embroidery from Kutch is also another unique embroidery technique from India which has been revitalized in the modern fashion platform. This was initially practiced by nomadic (ex: Ahir, Jat, Mutwa, Rajput, Rabari, Meghwal, and Mochi) communities, and women used to do it as a utility craft (Raniwala, 2020). This embroidery is known as “Bharat”, which literally means ‘filled in’. Traditionally, a pattern was never traced

on the fabric as patterns were created spontaneously from needle and thread. This process which creates the aesthetics is the uniqueness of this folk embroidery technique, and the independence given by this technique has enhanced the creativity of this craft community (Raniwala, 2020). However, since this is a time-consuming craft, it takes months and sometimes years to complete one piece though the design outcomes are one of a kind. Therefore, in order to preserve this technique, brands like Tilla (located in Ahmedabad) have begun collaborations with local artisans, promoting this as a luxury and precious craft technique through their brand (Raniwala, 2020).

Figure 2. 15

Kutch Embroidery Clothes by Tilla



When Indian design became established in India after 1980, most designers recognized traditional textiles and crafts as a heritage of Indian culture, which can be preserved as well as celebrated through fashion. Moreover, the value of Indian crafts has been recognized by western designers such as John Galliano, Alexander McQueen, and Jean-Paul Gaultier, who merged Indian embroidery and colors with their collections. When Indian designs and Indian inspirations transcended the geographical boundaries of India, it encouraged many local designers to upgrade their designs with Indian essence. Designers such as Suneet Varma and Rahul Mishra can be identified as modern Indian designers who have mastered the art of mixing western fashion with Indian traditional crafts (Ahuja, 2019) (See Figure 2.16).

Figure 2. 16

Designs of Suneet Varma and Rahul Mishra



Thus, it is evident that unique crafts from India have made their mark in both local and international fashion markets.

2.4.3 Sri Lanka

In the Sri Lankan context, there are emerging designers as well as established brands that are practicing creative fashion practices in their design practice. ARTROOM CEYLON is an emerging brand that experiments with and combines Sri Lankan crafts to their designs in close alignment with responsible fashion designing and social sustainability (Wickramasinghe, 2019). Textile communities, craft knowledge management, and heritage craft innovation are the key components of ART ROOM design practices (See Figure 2.17). Further, WAX KNIT is an experimental design collection that showcases knitting techniques unique for coastal areas of Sri Lanka together with batik craft.

Figure 2. 17

Design Collection by ARTROOM CEYLON (2022)



Himashi- Official is a Sri Lanka luxury bridal brand that focuses on authentic handmade bridal lace by the beeralu artisans in southern Sri Lanka. Designer, Himashi Wijeweera collaborates with local beeralu artisans to invent modern beeralu lace with innovative materials (Wijeweera, 2023). This was a successful initiative to revitalize the Sri Lankan handmade beeralu craft which has been superseded by machine lace that were exported. The combination of modern fabrics together with handmade beeralu has created authentic fashion silhouettes with a traditional outlook (See Figure 2.18).

Figure 2. 18

Designs by Himashi- Official Using Sri Lankan Traditional Beeralu Lace (2021)



Most of the upcoming brands showcase their designs that have been developed with a solid creative fashion practice at the Emerging Designer - Colombo Fashion Week (CFW) Sri Lanka. This has become a competitive as well as a creative platform that exhibits Sri Lankan design talents and local craftsmanship. In Emerging Designer, each garment is scored based on responsibility, accountability, and transparency. Each emerging designer who takes part in the CFW is mentored through a creative process and guided in different aspects such as design thinking, marketing, branding as well as fashion trends such as responsible fashion and sustainability (Singh, 2003). From 2003 onwards, this has been held in Sri Lanka with famous fashion brands and local and international designers.

Figure 2. 19

Colombo Fashion Week (CFW) 2022



2.5 Contemporary Fashion Trends

Fashion can be identified as a popular mode of expression and a set of trends at a time when people in the society mimic a specific clothing style or a process. A fashion trend, on the other hand, is an action or drift related to fashion and lifestyle that exists for a short period of time. In early 1960s fashion only meant emulating the clothing style of a popular character or group of people. Socio-cultural changes certainly affected fashion trends such as pop, hippie, punk, and disco styles (Giyasovna & Kholmurzaevich, 2024). Further, these trends can be identified as a reflection of socio-political and economic changes. Some trends were only limited to specific countries or regions while others were widespread globally (Brassfield, 2017). In this research, identifying fashion trends is vital to understanding the direction of the contemporary fashion world and coming up with a creative, innovative, and commercially viable fashion idea or product. There are many upcoming trends and applications, but considering the relevance and significance to this research, only the following have been studied in depth: Collaborations of Different Value Chain Members; Outdoor wellness; Caring economy; Planet Provocation and Hyper Localization and Direct to Essentials.

2.5.1 Outdoor Wellness

Outdoor wellness is another trend that has emerged with the Covid-19 pandemic as many people decided to return to nature, and the Worth Global Style Network (WGSN) Future Drivers report predicted that this trend would last for 3 to 5 years leading people to spend more time outdoors. Therefore, brands paid more attention to boost this trend and introduce product ranges that could attract more and more people to outdoor life. This can be identified as a positive trend which strengthens the relationship between nature and mental health of people. The extreme sport economy, too, has become a key trend which is very popular right now especially because of

social media applications like Tik-Tok which promote this trend and attract many people (Rees & Tan, 2022).

Moreover, climatic adaptation and conservation are key trends to which brands pay a great attention. If more people are into outdoor activities, they all have the risk of being exposed to extreme weather conditions and adverse climatic effects. Therefore, brands must employ a forward-thinking approach to create new gear and clothing that provide extra protection and comfort to the users when they spend more time outdoors. The outdoor boom is also an outcome of the pandemic because many people have found new hobbies and prefer to engage in social and physical outdoor activities in the post pandemic context. Therefore, this trend resulted in expanding the existing product categories and brands. Walking, slacking, paddle boarding, racket sports, and winter sports can be identified as the sports that became popular with this trend. Running brands in particular have invested a lot since running has now become a part of the daily routine of many people. Rees and Tan (2022, p. 5) motioned that “In China, the market continues to expand. According to consulting firm AT Kearney, the mainland’s outdoor sports market will grow to \$90bn by 2025, focused on young consumers”.

Road trips and other ways of travelling are another key trend that will last for the next few years. Despite the inflation, campervan-for-hire companies have boomed internationally. For instance, Germany’s GoBoony, Switzerland’s Nomady and Australia’s Camplify, which went public in 2021, have doubled their revenue by 2022 and attracted an unprecedented number of customers. Social media such as Instagram and Tik-Tok have made this trend popular via social media marketing.

According to WGSN trend forecasting, gear swapping is another key trend, which can be identified as a sustainable approach as well. On Facebook, a symbiotic relationship has evolved and groups such as Outdoor Gear Exchange UK, which has 126.1k members, and Outdoor Kit Exchange with 18.1k members, allow their members to exchange their clothing through Facebook posts. This can be identified as a successful online platform to get new members and to sell and buy the products they want for a reasonable price which is a good solution for the landfilling as well. Patagonia and The North Face have offered consumer repair and resale services that encourage gear swapping (Rees & Tan, 2022).

The use of smart devices to get connected during outdoor activities can be identified as another key trend that is likely to become increasingly popular in upcoming years. Smart technology has become more popular for tracking outdoor activities, recording the routes, and measuring the heart rates. Consequently, there is much potential for smart tech devices to get into this trend and further develop their product ranges to give an authentic experience to the customers.

2.5.2 Caring Economy and Everything Net

According to the WGSN Future Drivers 2024 report, there are six global drivers that will lead the next few years. The caring economy is the first one among them that aims

to introduce a care culture individually, socially, and globally. This includes childcare, elder care, education, healthcare, and personal social and domestic services. Thinking about overall health gives many potential advantages to many lifestyle brands. Having recognized this, “in 2020, Unilever Australia offered staff a Friday off, encouraging them to do whatever they needed for their mental health” (Bell et al., 2021, p. 5).

“Everything Net” is another key trend where the Internet will provide multiple services beyond social media and shopping. There will be healthcare services plus community prayers where people can join their religious leaders through livestream worship services. Therefore, consumers will be drawn more into the Internet where they can be entertained, educated, and facilitated with all the services that they expect through this virtual platform. This gives the opportunity to brands to create a unique and new experience for their consumers with the help of meta verse, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR).

The wider embrace of e-commerce and social media became a vital fact during pandemic. Online fashion became the mostly influential selling technique during Lockdown period due to the social distancing. Being closely in touch with internet, zoom and “working from home” concept enhanced the technological expertise of people. This concept enhanced the online shopping experience. Design for Digital became a new fashion application, where many people used to buy more makeup, accessories for their zoom calls or Instagram posts (Tschorn, 2020). The combination of Digital advertising platform, technological expertise and revolution of ideas of selling and buying from physical stores to e commerce with the social distancing influenced the entire landscape of fashion and beauty market.

2.5.3 Planet Provocation and Hyper Localization

The third trend is the planet provocation which focuses on saving the planet, and it focuses more on sustainability in the whole production chain to logistics and finally to waste management. “New narratives” is the fourth trend where new value systems become a key trend in future. Hyper localized brands and new voices will be the outcome of this trend as more opportunity will be given to new stories rather than the ones which are existing and popular right now. More attention will be given to local values, and this has been practiced by high-end brands such as Prada, Nike and Stella McCartney that allow local brands to pop up inside their store areas, which encourages local arts and crafts.

2.5.4 Direct to Essentials

The fifth trend is paying attention only to the essential needs. This is a trend which began after the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. During the pandemic, many people had to juggle work deadlines, household activities, and childcare responsibilities to maintain their work-life balance. This led them to rethink rest and relaxation as an

essential self-care ritual. Therefore, more attention is now given to relaxation time including sleep. This will create new opportunities for lifestyle products to rethink their branding and create products to attract their customer base. The sixth key trend is about creativity where creative outputs will be reappreciated and creative problem solving will become a key trend in 2024 (Bell et al., 2021).

Overall, the impact of the pandemic and the social changes ensuing from it can be considered a key influence over almost all the current trends. These trends are predicted to influence the fashion, consumer and market trends for at least two to three years. The preceding chapter detailed major sustainability-related fashion movements. Particular emphasis was placed on responsible color practices, hyper-localized fashion, and socially responsible fashion movements, as these are key considerations in this project.

2.6 Fashion Movements

A fashion movement refers to the long-term existence and dissemination of fashion and related content, and this differs from a trend. When fashion trends are upgraded into fashion development processes, they create long-term consumer trends and manufacturing techniques, which can be identified as fashion movements. Sustainability, for instance, can be identified as a major fashion movement which has spread into diverse areas.

2.6.1 Sustainability in Fashion

Sustainability is a key fashion trend that began a few years ago and still continues as an ongoing trend. It has been gradually transformed into a fashion movement because of its impact on the environment and diverse possibilities for fashion and textile production and practices. Therefore, many fashion designers as well as brands have taken this movement into consideration. These fashion brands promote environmental, social and human sustainability related to their own brand values and models. Brands such as Adidas, G-Star-RAW and Stella McCartney, for instance, have made partnerships with Ocean Recycling Projects such as “Parley for the Oceans” to use recycled raw materials (Frearson, 2018) (See Figure 2.20). It is observed that circular fashion motivates sustainable consumption patterns, high quality, and timeless designs. These include upcycling and recycling of fashion products, which is also a very important trend which minimizes cradle-to-grave use by promoting new beginning to used garments (Goodwin, 2020).

Figure 2. 20

Parley for the Oceans Campaign (2015)



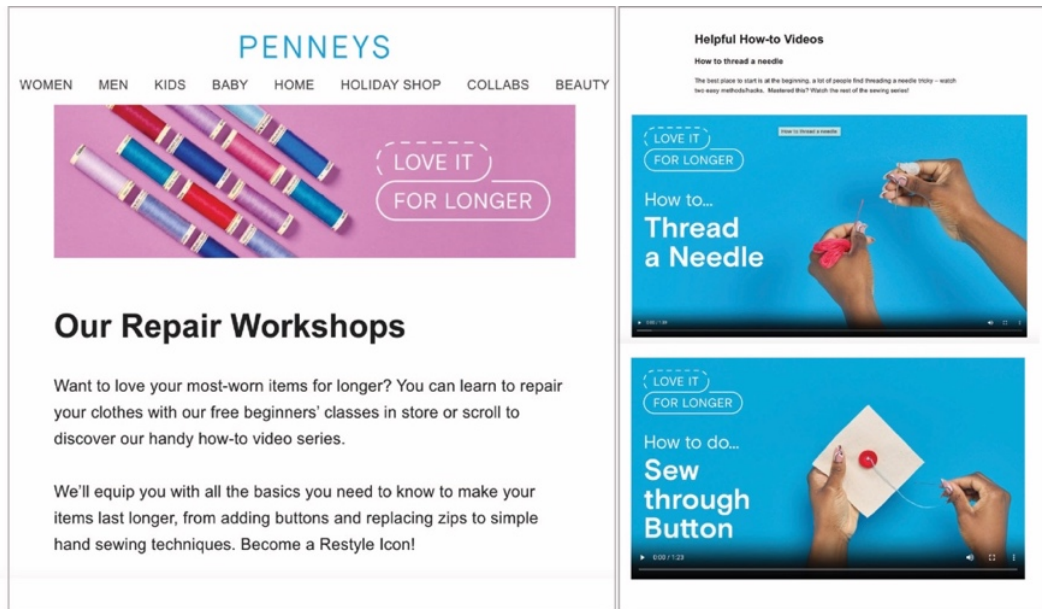
Socially responsible companies embrace their responsibility to have a positive impact on the society that they benefit from and make it a brand value of their business. This specific business model established a very strong connection between the consumers and producers. Brands such as Patagonia, Bombas, and Columbia are a few examples of this (Bright, 2020). Certification and transparency of the production process are often highlighted as important features of socially responsible business models. Further, fair trade and ethical concerns are also important values under social and human sustainability. This can be identified as a new trend in the fashion industry as it encourages brands to create a brand story highlighting their brand values. In contemporary society fashion has expanded its arena to a great extent including different disciplines, technology, creative industries, and current socio-cultural and environmental issues. Thus, fashion can be identified as a very powerful medium to address different socio-cultural as well as technological phenomena in a more artistic and creative approach.

In the contemporary society, the Covid 19 pandemic has considerably influenced people's design interests and clothing behaviors. People used to buy fewer garments including more casual clothes such as pajamas, sweatpants, and loungewear since they used to wear comfortable clothes during the lock down period. Here, many designers focused on "Backlash Vs The everlasting effect", when females began to wear more masculine dresses including pants and denim jeans after World War II (Segran, 2020). Although this was subjected to changes with the introduction of a new look by Dior, still the effect of masculine garments can be seen in fashion, and it has become an everlasting fashion trend among females (Segran, 2020). Even though people may deny the ultra-relax lockdown garments, qualities like comfortability may last for a long period of time in the world of fashion, which is another result of the pandemic. On the other hand, the pandemic heavily influenced fast fashion and slowed down the fast fashion trend while encouraging more sustainable approaches.

Product durability can be identified as another important aspect of sustainability. Durability of products can be ensured by increasing the fabric strength, color, and light fastness as well as by using durable finishes. It can be further enhanced by educating the consumers via garment labelling, online advice and tutorials, and via social media platforms (Palmer, 2024) because consumer care and repair also directly affect the durability of clothing items. Primark Ireland, for example, conducts free repair workshop programs for their customers which ensures confidence in their purchases (See Figure 2.21).

Figure 2. 21

Primark Free Repair Workshop Programs and Videos in Their Website (2025)



Note. Developed by author by referring <https://www.primark.com/en-ie/love-it-for-longer>

“Fashion Clinic Hong Kong” is another brand which offers repairs, alterations, and redesign programs according to customer needs which enhances the product lifecycle as well as the durability of the product. Further, the durability of an item can be enhanced by creating designs which are adjustable, restyled, or layered for multi-functional occasions as modular designs. Personalization and pre-designed fashion products also help to create an emotional durability (Palmer, 2024).

Another challenge to fashion sustainability is the artificial dyes used worldwide. Dyeing is a complex process that is interconnected with many factors related to environmental sustainability. Factors such as carbon emission, water usage, energy use, waste management, and usage of toxic materials determine how responsible the dyeing process is. There are three main water efficient conventional dyes as water efficient dye, water free dyeing, and spin dyeing (Smith, 2023). Water efficiency can be identified as a major concern since dyeing and finishes contribute to 20% of industrial water pollution (Ajimal et al., 2022). Currently, many brands pay attention to those techniques, and these are explained in detail under the following section on responsible colors, a sub sector of sustainable fashion practices since color plays a major role in fashion product developments.

2.6.2 Responsible Colors

The pandemic affected the fashion trends of 2023/2024 in different ways, and colors and emotions are another important aspect which became an upcoming trend. Many people were depressed when they were isolated during the pandemic, and so, happiness and mental care became a key feature in the upcoming trends. Therefore, most of the brands used colors as an effective medium to boost mental care and happiness. “Dopamine dressing” is a concept where you dress to boost your mood. Wearing a certain color, texture or a style increases the dopamine level in the body, which boosts the positive feelings of the wearer. Therefore, after the pandemic, bright colors became more popular, and green became the most popular color among the youth. Medeiros (2022, p. 03) highlights that color is an important tool; it can be used as a visual form of communication, evoke a physical or emotional response or powerfully engage consumers. Understanding how to navigate color and tap into its emotional power is vital to add meaning and value to your brand and marketing strategy”. Most social media influencers also highlight individualism, which encourages brands to design colorful accessories and socks.

According to a WGSN insight survey, 90% of respondents said color impacts their mood. There are some colors directly related to human emotions and moods (Ex: red with anger; yellow with joy; black with fear; sadness with grey; love with red and pink; light blue with calmness; and pastel green with the fight against fatigue). Considering this factor, some brands have successfully made use of color to create a healthy relationship between the consumer’s mentality and brand. Amore pacific (South Korea), for example, created a perfume that suits the mood of the consumer and BMW in Germany designed a vehicle which changes its color according to the mood of the driver. Further, US fitness accessories - Bala designs have deviated drastically from their usual color pallet and used more engaging and peaceful colors. Bala designs, established in 2018, used Instagram and other social media for attracting their initial customers and brand promotion (Spruch-Feiner, 2021) (See figure 2.22). Their decision to change the color palette helped them to increase their sales from 2 million dollars to 20 million dollars during the pandemic (Klich, 2021). This was influenced by the fact that customers’ purchasing decisions had been influenced by color positivity. Considering this factor, famous brands such as Valentino, Tiffany & Co., Italian luxury brand Bottega Venetta, and Apple iPhone also changed their contemporary colors into more optimistic colors, which could uplift the customers’ mood.

Figure 2. 22

Bala Designs - Fitness Equipment with Pastel Colors



Note. Taken from WGSN trend reports (Spruch-Feiner, 2021)

Considering the wellbeing trend, the Italian eyewear brand Loving Victories Beings introduced lenses in pink to reduce stress, orange to enhance focus, and purple to enhance creativity and joy. On the other hand, there was a great boost for this trend from social media platforms and influencers from TikTok. The TikToker, That Sad Beige Lady, has mocked the growing trend of beige color toys and clothes for children, and those ideas have influenced people to rethink using colorful colors.

Since blue colour is universally accepted as a colour inducing calmness, indigo has long been famous as a blue pigment. In fact, indigo is one of the world's most recognised dye colours which dates to the prehistoric era. This colour has been used by the inhabitants of Peru 6200 years ago and it has been widely used in Egypt, China, and India. In 1870, indigo was synthesized for industrial purposes, but some parts of India, Japan, China, and Nigeria continued the traditional indigo dyeing process (Clark, 2021). Natural indigo dye has been taken into consideration by Industry of All Nations, Olderbrother, and Toast. Arket, Sunspel, and Yoga Konga are some of the other brands which explore the potential of applying natural indigo dye. Furthermore, sustainable brands like Patagonia, Hiut Denim, and Nudie are collaborating with Stony Creek Colors, a US-based manufacturer that produces natural indigo dye powders and paste.

The emerging demand for natural indigo dye has upscaled the potential of exploring new sustainable approaches of extracting dye including the traditional techniques. In the last decade, sustainability and reducing the use of toxic chemicals in the industrial process became a key area of concern. The denim industry is a textile product which consumes the highest amount of water as well as toxic dyes (Clark, 2021). Thus, the potential of using indigo dye for jeans has been taken into consideration. Both Wrangler and Gap Inc have invested in dry indigo foam technology in partnership with the Spanish mill Tejidos Royo. According to the Wrangler advertisement for Fall Winter 2021 (See Figure 2.23) with the slogan "keep water where it belongs", Indigo fabrics use 90% less water compared to synthetic dye. Currently, many studies are being conducted to see the potential of creating indigo dye for industrial production as a mass scale product (Clark, 2021).

Figure 2. 23

Advertisement on Indigo Dyed Denim Collection by Wrangler



Environmental responsibility and sustainability are two main approaches that promote the extraction of natural indigo dye. So, indigo inspired blues are now trending, and Atlantic Blue is a popular shade inspired by Indigo (Clark, 2021). Brands such as Stony Creek Colors are focusing on nature-based solutions and they have initiated a partnership with family farms to plant indigo plants as a profitable cash crop. Further, instead of PH modifiers, they have introduced water and electricity as a reducing agent (Ajimal et al., 2022). To produce less toxic indigo dyes for industrial purposes, the fashion industry has collaborated with leading mills and dye houses, and the denim industry in particular has made partnerships with industrial giants to reduce the use of toxic dyes.

Moreover, a range of naturally enriched colors that can be used for all seasons have been identified as an evolving sustainable aesthetics. These colors are bone– the raw porcelain color; khaki which is an ideal color for heavy wear; cement color; silver sage greenish gray color; adobe – reddish rusted color; indigo which is a blooming trend with natural dye extraction; and charcoal. Drawing inspirations from nature and exploring traditional yarn and dye extraction techniques that are eco-friendly have made these colors trendy. These colors are significant because they can be used across all seasons, which motivates slow fashion.

The responsible use of color can be identified as a main topic of discussion under sustainability since the key to responsible color precedes the choice of dyes. Factors such as CO₂ output, water usage, pollution, energy use, waste management, and toxic materials in a dye help to determine whether a dye is a responsible one or not. There are three main conventional water efficient dyes, namely, water efficient dye, water free dye or spin dye. Currently, many brands are collaborating with producers of water efficient dyes. Ralph Lauren (US), for instance, is working with Dow and H&M. Moreover, France-based Decathlon, Sweden's Peak Performance, and Nike (US) are currently using water free dyeing methods such as Dye Coo Dye Ox technology. H&M, Quiksilver (US), and Sweden-based Gina Tricot and Arket are using the spin

dyeing technique for their brands because it reduces water consumption and emission of CO₂ to the environment (Smith, 2023).

Since dyeing is a complicated process where many factors should be considered, undyed clothing has become a new trend. This helps to preserve the water, energy, and time used for the dyeing process. The North Face's Undyed Collection which uses waterproof Gore-Tex material for its white jackets; Japanese sportswear label Mizuno's sustainable sneakers; and Undyed Pack which uses materials in their natural state are some examples of items that promote raw, undyed colors. Moreover, London-based Sheep Inc. has launched a white hoodie as part of its Zero Dye collection, which is made from 100% non-dyed and ultra-fine merino wool (Smith, 2023). Avoiding bleaching and using a minimum amount of water throughout the value chain promoted this trend as a highly effective sustainable approach. This motivates promotion of the natural colors of the fabrics and raw materials and highlights the Gore-Tex philosophy—“Doing more with less” (Smith, 2023).

According to WGSN reports, more than 15kg of textile waste is generated per person in Europe alone, and most of this waste is from discarded clothes and home textiles. As a solution for this, Pangaia (UK) has launched its Re-Color Capsule collection colored with Recycrom which can recycle fabrics by giving them unique colors by pulverizing the material offcuts into fine pigment powders. Each color has a new formula for dyeing, and it mitigates water-intensive processes. Dye Recycle also extracts dye from waste fibers and transfers them into new fabrics (Smith, 2023). This technique can be identified as a productive solution for landfilling and textile based environmental pollution. Although this seems difficult for industry productions, capsule collections and designer brands which promote environmental sustainability can make use of this trend.

Microbial color is another trend where dyes are created via a fermentation process or by bacteria. Bacteria can be used in standard dye machines with no chemicals and natural fixing agents (Smith, 2023). Bacteria-based dyes have a low CO₂ impact and do not need chemicals, excessive water, or any mordant fixatives. Unlike natural dyes, these ingredients are not seasonally dependent and do not need harvesting. However, having limited color variations is the drawback of this process.

Natural dyes are the dyes that are produced from natural materials such as fruits, flowers or leaves that can be seasonally found. Natural dyes are non-toxic but good for capsule collections since they cannot be produced on a large scale. Famous brands such as brand KENT (US) and Ganni (Denmark), and Levi's (US) denim collection have used natural dyes for their products, and the UK-based clothing brand Vollebak has created black color t-shirts by using algae (Smith, 2023). These dyes are eco-friendly and since they are free from synthetic or toxic materials, they are skin friendly as well.

Botanical and food dyes are another eco-friendly dyeing technique which is becoming popular as a new dyeing trend. Pangaia is an eco-friendly brand which utilized this technique in collaboration with the Japanese company Toyoshima & Co. They extract ingredients from waste disposed by food companies and farms including blueberries, matcha and rooibos. This process uses less amount of water and chemicals and is a

good solution for landfilling and food waste as well. When sourcing the materials, however, attention should be given for raw materials which can regenerate and are not prioritized over food consumption (Smith, 2023).

Another upcoming natural dye technique is mineral dyeing where sand and clay are used according to traditional processes (Ajimal et al., 2022). Terra Denim by Meritas Denim, for example, has used antibacterial and organic mineral dye for their collection which uses 80% less water and no toxic chemicals. Also, Star Fades International (SFI) has designed a capsule collection called Natural Selection using 100% natural dyes from colorful soils. According to Ajimal et al. (2022) all these mineral dyes are biodegradable and use less water and energy. All of these colors are GOTS (Global Organic Textile Standard) certified and the mordants are HDHZ/ Green Screen Certified (Ajimal et al., 2022). Although they are not suitable for large scale productions, these mineral dyes can be successfully used for capsule collections.

Figure 2. 24

Meritas Denim Collection by Antibacterial and Organic Mineral Dye and SFI Capsule Collection by Natural Dye (2022)



To preserve knowledge, exploring the traditional dyeing techniques and using indigenous knowledge are important. The soil or mud from different locations in the world have different qualities, and humans have long used the soil or mud of a specific location as a dyeing material. Malian mud cloth, for instance, is a cloth with geometric black and white designs done using mud (Toerien, 2003). This style is called bogolanfini or bokolanfini, which is unique to Africa. However, it won its place in the modern fashion landscape when it became a fashion icon in the United States. The knowledge is traditionally transmitted from mother to daughter, and the raw materials and skills are inherent to Mali and the African society (Toerien, 2003).

Mud dyeing technique is also practiced in Amami Oshima island in Japan. Dorozome, mud dyeing, technique is commonly used to make Amamian Kimono cloth (Linton, 2019), and apart from that, textile artisans use different shibori (tie and dye) techniques and indigo dyeing as well. The slow production, utilization of natural materials, sustainable approaches used when manufacturing the cloth highlights the localism movement which is celebrated in the contemporary fashion world (Linton 2019).

The history of mud silk produced in the Pearl River Delta area in Guangdong, China dates back to the fifth century (Blair, 2013), and Xiang-yun-sh" and Jiao-chou are best examples for mud coated dyeing. These are significant because of their two-tone colour, i.e., the shiny black colour applied to one side of the fabric and the reddish brown colour applied to the other side. Compared to normal silk, mud silk is considered more comfortable, light weight, durable and water resistant, which is why Chinese mud silk has become one of the high-end textiles in the contemporary fashion world (Lillethun, 2008).

Sustainability, circular fashion, fashion localism and fashion storytelling can be identified as some of the fashion movements that have been taken into consideration in the modern fashion industry. There are many subtopics that can be discussed under sustainability, and considering the scope of the present research, fashion localism is described in the following section.

2.6.3 Fashion Localism

The folklore associated with a community serves as the cultural foundation of its people's way of life, fostering social bonds among community members by facilitating the sharing of their collective experiences. This phenomenon is closely intertwined with the rise of hyper-localized fashion, which has gained prominence in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. While localism is rooted in a politically centered philosophy, its principles can be directly applied to the development of fashion products. This approach consistently advocates for local sourcing and local purchasing to support local livelihoods, and the preservation of local identity (Perera & Ranaweera , 2022). As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, localism, which had been evolving as a social movement over the past five decades, reached its zenith, positioning itself as a growing international trend. This trend is viewed as a potential solution to the issues associated with the fast fashion movement, primarily due to the following factors. Localism consistently promotes local livelihoods and identities by utilizing locally available raw materials, craftsmen or workforce, and local sources of inspiration. In achieving this hyper-localized touch, indigenous techniques and culturally rich handcrafting methods play a vital role as they foster a socially sustainable approach, imbuing products with a strong sense of originality. Consequently, this level of authenticity is difficult to attain within the fast fashion paradigm, given its time constraints and limited focus on environmental sustainability. In contrast, localism places a strong emphasis on land ethics, ensuring that harmful practices are avoided, and waste reduction is prioritized. Hence, localism is considered a central pillar of sustainability (Fletcher, 2018), which ensures the rapid development of economic justice, environmental responsibility, and social equity. Localism is a practice that links communities with their environment by encouraging ethical behavior. It promotes viewing land not just as soil but an energy source. Localism-based clothing -evokes emotions and sentiments specific to a particular place, as those who create it possess an intimate understanding of the local

weather, available raw materials, and environmental conditions. This deep connection enables the wearer to become a part of that place (Fletcher & Tham, 2019). Ultimately, fashion has the power to reveal the unseen intricacies of a culture. Through localism-based fashion practices, the inherent identity of a community and its tacit knowledge tied to a specific land can be brought to the forefront.

Having a comprehensive literature review, the Research Gap has been identified and discussed in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH GAP

As discussed in the literature review, folklore is a rich source of cultural heritage, encompassing narratives, symbols, values, and practices that reflect the socio-cultural identity of a community. The folklore of Kuweni, in particular, presents a compelling case for such cultural depth as it offers a narrative that is emotionally charged, historically significant, and symbolically complex. While various art forms such as visual arts, literature, theatre, and performance have attempted to reimagine Kuweni's story, there remains a considerable gap in exploring folklore—especially her narrative—through the lens of fashion and textile design.

Despite the growing academic interest in interdisciplinary research that merges fashion with culture, history, and storytelling, few systematic studies have examined how folklore can inform contemporary fashion practices. Moreover, the integration of folklore into fashion often remains superficial, relying on aesthetic mimicry rather than a deep, thematic, and metaphorical interpretation of the cultural narratives. This gap is more evident in the context of Sri Lanka, where many indigenous and oral traditions are at risk of being forgotten. Hence, there is an urgent need to preserve and reinterpret them in ways that resonate with modern audiences.

The research gap identified in this study is the limited application of Creative PLR in translating folkloric narratives—specifically the story of Kuweni—into innovative fashion and textile outcomes given the lack of application of folklore and practice together, and conversion of intangible inspirations into tangible fashion/textile outcomes. Therefore, it can be identified as an evidence gap, knowledge gap as well as a methodological gap. It highlights the absence of robust, academically grounded methods for using fashion as a medium to reinterpret and communicate folklore in meaningful, culturally responsible, and aesthetically relevant ways. By addressing this overall gap, the study contributes to both knowledge and practice by proposing and testing creative methodologies that enable the transformation of intangible cultural heritage into tangible fashion products. This approach not only fosters innovation in design but also plays a vital role in preserving and recontextualizing the fading socio-cultural values embedded in folklore for future generations.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Aligned to the overarching research questions of this study, the main objective is,

- to investigate how the rich social, cultural, symbolic values of folklore and diverse feelings and emotions of Kuweni can transcend to the contemporary fashion.

This study employs interdisciplinary approach in merging folklore with fashion products through supporting mediums such as performing arts or choreography with a special interest to the Sri Lankan folklore.

The below are the sub-objectives satisfying the above,

- to identify the rich social, cultural and symbolic values of folklore of Kuweni through an investigative approach.
- to identify an appropriate creative technique in transcending folklore into fashion concept.
- to formulate a process that can be used in transferring folklore of Kuweni into tangible design elements of fashion concept.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

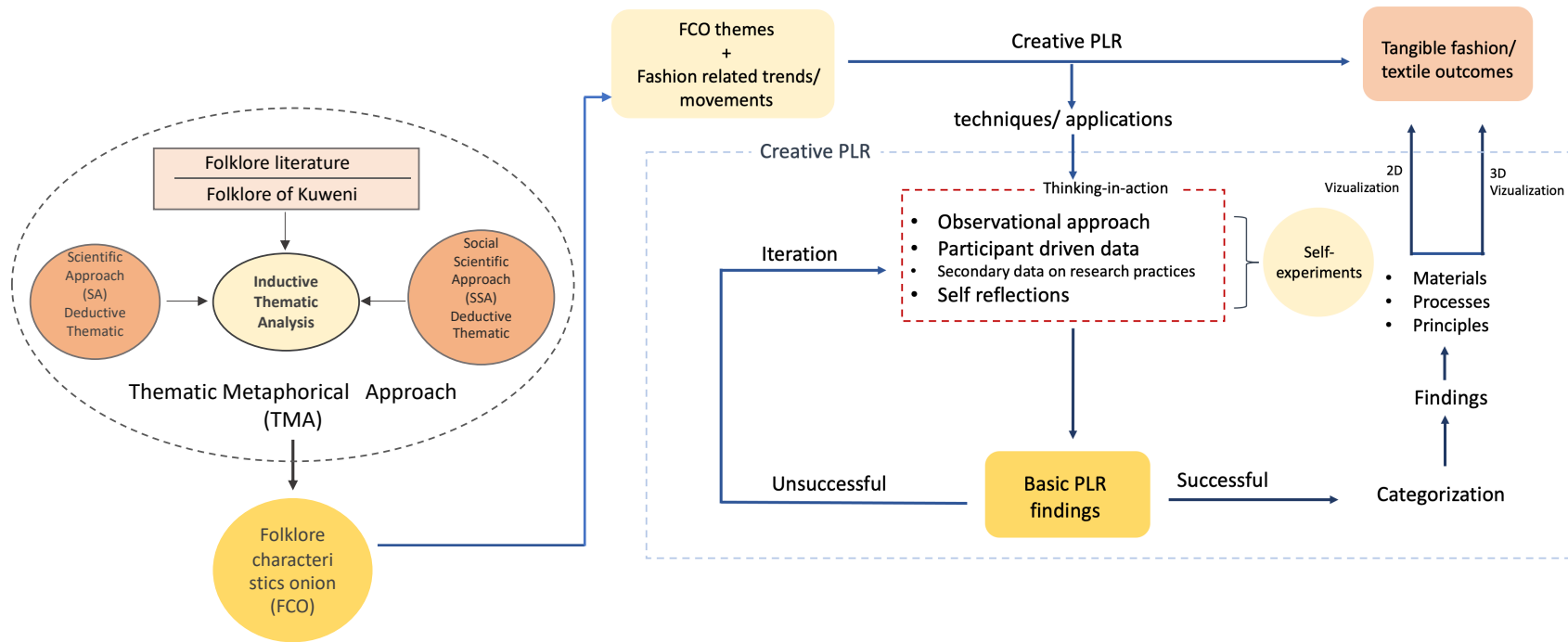
5.1 The Overall Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology employed for conducting the study. In order to investigate the significance of folklore and how it may be applied to fashion design practice, this study follows a pragmatic approach that integrates methods from both social scientific inquiry and creative PLR. These methods are employed in the study over three main phases: concept development, design development, and design realization.

Because there are three phases in the methodology, the design philosophy, research approaches, and techniques applied in each stage differ from one another, and each phase builds upon the findings of the previous phase. Phase 01 of the research is the concept development which follows a pragmatic research philosophy, employing qualitative methods such as interviews, with inductive as well as deductive approaches of analysis (See Figure 5.1). This is primarily because pragmatism enables the researcher to explore dynamic pathways to find a viable solution to research problems since the ontology of pragmatism can be either subjective or objective (Dudovskiy, 2012). The initial stage of this research, the design, and the conduct of the study have therefore taken a qualitative approach to investigate the symbolic values of a prominent and ancient folklore from Sri Lanka through a contextual understanding of the story. According to Miles and Heberman (1994), qualitative data are considered as a source of grounded and rich description of an identifiable local context which helps to maintain the sequential flow and derive insightful explanations. Further, good qualitative data facilitates integration of audio, visual and observation data into a one phenomenon. This organizes all the contributing factors into forming one entity, which helps the researcher to transcend their initial conception and revise the conceptual framework as and when needed during the conceptual phase of the study.

Figure 5.1

The Overall Methodology



The second and third phases of the research are design development and design realization. The findings of the concept development phase form the basis for the creative PLR approach (See Figure 5.1) followed in the design development phase. In this study, PLR employs methods of fashion design practice that follow a creative process from the initial concept, through to experimentation with color and fabrication, iterative design, and the development of the final outcome. In a realistic approach, the design development and design realization follow specific techniques to explore new knowledge through creative practices that challenge the prevailing, technically defined knowledge (Candy, 2019). As mentioned earlier, the initial phase of the design development includes the analysis of data gathered during the conceptualization phase. These data are then cross-referenced with the extant secondary data sources related to fashion movements, trends, and fashion product theories.

In this second phase of the research, i.e., design development, the outcomes of the conceptualization directed the study towards crafting a handloom textile. Therefore, a phenomenological research approach, which takes into consideration the experiences of different craftsmen and artists related to PLR, is followed. This helped to understand and gain deeper insights into how people perceive different experiences. In the initial stage of the design development phase, participant observations and conversations were carried out to gather insights from various artisans about their experiences and ongoing work. After analyzing these data, experiments and creative activities related to textile development were conducted as the next phase of the design development. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2009), which serves as an international standard for defining research and development, declared creative research a systematic process. This process increases the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humankind, culture, and society, and it is advocated to use this stock of knowledge to devise new applications (Sullivan, 2009). Therefore, creative PLR leads to a unique contribution of knowledge through observations, experiments, sample developments, and final design outcomes using creative design. At this stage of the study, new knowledge is built upon continuous practices through an approach that is already known, but the ultimate finding remains unknown (Sullivan, 2009). Moreover, creative PLR can lead to multiple possibilities, and hence, it can be identified as an open-ended and exploratory research approach.

However, design realization is different in the PLR approach, and so, the research findings can be clearly exhibited either through creative work or a written document such as an exegesis. It should be noted that the outcomes of the design realization phase may be unpredictable and often different than what was expected in the beginning of the research, and sometimes, the outcome could be completely new since the practical outcome can give different outcomes at the end (Sullivan, 2009). The method and language of PLR are also different from traditional social scientific methods. Therefore, the research culture of PLR is different from a theoretical one. The design development process and the techniques followed during PLR can be used

by other researchers as well. At the same time, the different parts of the creative PLR can be subjected to changes based on the interaction level of the researcher. This clearly emphasizes that PLR is a research technique that is more challenging and inquiry-driven by nature but offers more opportunities for the researcher to conduct an in-depth study. Therefore, the researcher should be careful to reap the maximum benefits of PLR while taking precautionary measures to avoid the pitfalls during the research journey.

As a research paradigm, pragmatism offers researchers the opportunity to combine strategies and processes that can be connected to its research principles, the overall research philosophy of this study can be identified as a pragmatic, hybrid approach (Ramanadhan et al., 2021). Thus, this research methodology can be defined as a collaboration of qualitative as well as creative PLR. Consequently, it can be elucidated as a qualitative mixed method with multiple approaches that attempts to achieve an innovative creative outcome through a systematic design process with a solid research background.

5.2 Concept Development

Following a qualitative approach, the concept development phase started by gathering both secondary and empirical data related to the Sri Lankan folklore of Kuweni. Miles and Heberman (1994) emphasize that social interactions and deep conversations are helpful to understand the human experiences along with their socio-cultural background. This requires researchers to spend more time and establish effective interrelations with the sample group to identify their experiences.

In the qualitative approach, there are three main steps namely, data reduction, data display, and drawing of conclusions. Further, the qualitative approach is not a step-by-step, linear process, but rather a continuous and iterative process which helps to get the maximum output of the research as needed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). That is one of the prominent advantages of using a qualitative approach in this study to investigate folklore along with naturally occurring data that are gathered during the research. By doing so, rich qualitative data can be generated which enables the researcher to transcend the initial conception and revise the conceptual framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this study, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to capture the “essence” of folklore through background stories and socio-cultural interactions in order to identify the participants’ perspectives of the narrative of Kuweni. This signifies the evolution of folklore as a concoction of human experiences and emotions (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This phase of the study followed a thematic analysis together with scientific and social scientific approaches to study folklore.

Accordingly, this section further discusses the methods implemented in the study to achieve the expected outcomes. As mentioned before, folk narratives on Kuweni are used in the study, which are affirmed by the literature specific to Sri Lankan folklore. The analysis of the study has primarily followed a thematic approach which is supported by the Scientific Approach (SA) and Social Scientific Approach (SSA). As highlighted above, the narratives were studied to identify the symbolic values through the literature and mythical folklore related to Kuweni in the SL context. The symbols and elements related to the feelings and emotions in the folklore were the final outcome of the conceptualization phase. The outcomes of the concept development, along with fashion trend research, were then used for the design development and design realization in a creative PLR approach to achieve the creative outcomes.

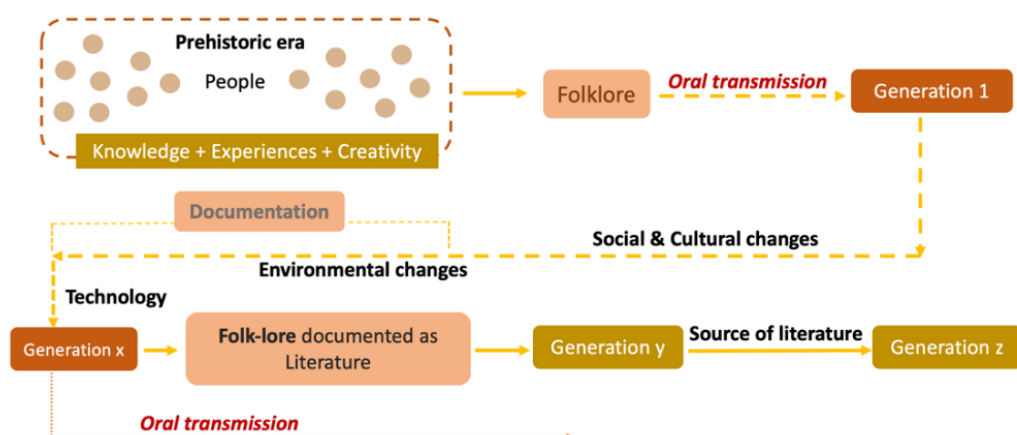
The main activities of this phase, namely, data collection, participant selection, validation, analysis, and limitations are discussed in the sections below.

5.2.1 Data Collection in Concept Development

Gupta (2007) defines folklore as a knowledge, experience, and creativity driven practice that has been prevalent among people in the society for a long period of time and transmitted through oral communication from generation to generation. However, as shown in Figure 5.2, it gradually becomes a source of literature. Accordingly, in the Sri Lankan context, literature related to the folklore of Kuweni can be found in meticulously written historical chronicles like *Mahavamsa*, *Wansaththappakasini*, *Pujawaliya*, *Rajarathnakaraya*, *Vijayaraja Katawa*, *Rajawaliya*, *Kuweni Asna* and *Siyabasmaldama* which can also be identified as archival writings of Sri Lankan culture and heritage. Among these chronicles, *Mahavamsa* is the most significant chronicle since it is considered as the oldest methodical historical documentation of the country.

Figure 5.2

The Origin of Folklore and its Transmission



Note. Developed by author (2024) by adapting Islam, 1985; Doster, 2002; Gupta, 2007; and Teverson & Lothspeich, 2019

While the secondary data were collected from literary sources, the primary data were sourced from two corresponding samples, i.e., professionals from disciplines such as history and archaeology and local community from Sri Lanka (individuals from indigenous community and local villages) who are aware of narratives specific to the folklore of Kuweni. Semi-structured interviews with open ended questions, discussions and observations were used to gather data from these participants which led them to share their experiences and express their own perspectives on folklore (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Semi-structured interviews helped to establish a friendly relationship between the participants and the researcher, where the participants did not feel that they were bound to answer a set of questions, which minimized any anxiety in them (Clarke & Braun, 2019). There were two semi-structured questionnaires for the selected sample of respondents (See Appendix B). Questions for the professionals were more focused on archeology and history of Sri Lanka vis-à-vis folklore more specifically, the narrative of Kuweni. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were limitations in reaching the participants. Based on the availability of time and lift off of travel restrictions, some face-to-face interviews were conducted, but most of the interviews with the participants, particularly the professionals, were done virtually. Skype and Zoom platforms were highly useful to contact the participants who were living away from Colombo and suburbs. After contacting the participants via telephone or an email explaining the research requirement, a Zoom or a Skype interview was arranged with the respondents from the professional category at a time convenient for them. The interview followed a semi-structured questionnaire to facilitate flexible data collection.

Due to the digital divide prevalent in the country, using technology such as Zoom or Skype was not practical when collecting data from the local communities. In fact, most of these local communities did not have smart devices or technological knowledge to operate Zoom or Skype. Therefore, in-person interviews, observations, and discussions were used to build a close rapport with the respondents to discover the grassroots level knowledge on folklore. However, the lack of technical knowledge among these participants was not a limitation as it enabled the researcher to visit them and observe their lifestyle, facial expressions, and body language as the interviews, discussion and observations went on, and ask for further clarifications when required.

Accordingly, in-person semi-structured interviews were held for collecting data from local communities, including the Sri Lankan indigenous community, also known as *Vedda* people. The interviews were scheduled based on their convenience and were always in alignment with their socio-cultural norms. Since the interview location can significantly impact the quality of data, especially when engaging with local communities like the *Vedda* people, a setting comfortable for the interviewee was chosen to conduct the face-to-face interviews (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). These local

communities had a sound knowledge about folklore or areas in which the places mentioned in legends related to the folklore of Kuweni could be found. Since most of these folklores have been transmitted from generation to generation through word of mouth, the majority of the local communities are aware about those narratives. In order to identify these place legends, secondary data from historical literature were also used.

Semi-structured interview questions focused on participants' lifestyle, day-to-day activities, local customs and beliefs related to their community, and especially, the narrative of Kuweni. The background stories they shared, and their lifestyle and culture were pivotal in understanding their perspectives (Creswell, 2014).

Ethical guidelines were practiced in the design and conduct of the study, including the identification, selection, and recruitment of participants, collection, organization and analysis of data, and representation, and dissemination of the findings. Following the Ethical Clearance (EDN/2021/01) granted by the University Ethics Review Committee (UERC) of University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka, the initial data collection was conducted amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions imposed by the government to control the pandemic (See Appendix A). The study population was considered as a low risk, yet culturally sensitive group, and factors such as respecting the participants' cultural values, norms and beliefs were highly considered during the research. Guidelines of the Ethical clearance were practiced in the design and conduct of the study including selection of participants, collection of data, analysis of data, organization, representation, and dissemination of the findings.

Semi-structured interviews were useful due to the flexibility in designing and refining the interview structure (Husband, 2020). Moreover, semi-structured interviews enabled the interviewer to question the respondents in-depth by asking follow-up questions on the answers provided by the participants, which helped the researcher to get more accurate data with ease. In fact, the semi-structured interview structure guided the interviewer and the participants, and at the same time, created the opportunity to collect rich empirical data via a flowing conversation (Evans, 2017). Based on this data, field notes, sketches and analytical memos were developed. During the face-to-face interviews, it was observed that the data shared by the participants were deeply connected to their emotional values, which had a significant impact on the data that they provided (Saldaña, 2009). Once the interviews were done, all interviews were methodically transcribed because when oral data is converted to written data, it can be effectively and easily sorted and analyzed in the course of the study (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The researcher used a combination of naturalized and denaturalized transcription techniques considering the interviewee, their gestures, body language, breaks in speech, and the context in which they live in order to capture the complete picture of the study. In order to ensure the quality of the data collection and transcription processes, the researcher assumed multiple roles, including those of the interviewer and the transcriber (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). In the following section, the identification, selection, contacting and recruiting of the participants are discussed.

5.2.2 Identification, Selection, Contacting, and Recruiting of the Participants

As discussed above, under the qualitative research technique, data were collected from two corresponding participants, however, one intermediate sample of participants were emerged during the discussion with the participants from the first two categories. Accordingly, the sample included five professional scholars, six local individuals from the regions where Kuweni’s story is well-known, and four intermediate participants identified as “folklore enthusiasts” from the local communities with expert knowledge of folklore (See Table 5).

Table 5

The Participants Identification

Participant	Category	Face to face/ Online
Participant 01	Professional Scholar	Online
Participant 02	Professional Scholar	Online
Participant 03	Folklore enthusiast	Face to face
Participant 04	Folklore enthusiast	Online
Participant 05	Folklore enthusiast	Face to face
Participant 06	Professional Scholar	Online
Participant 07	Professional Scholar	Face to face
Participant 08	Local community	Face to face
Participant 09	Local community	Face to face
Participant 10	Local community	Face to face
Participant 11	Folklore enthusiast	Face to face
Participant 12	Local community	Face to face
Participant 13	Local community	Face to face
Participant 14	Local community	Face to face
Participant 15	Professional Scholar	Face to face

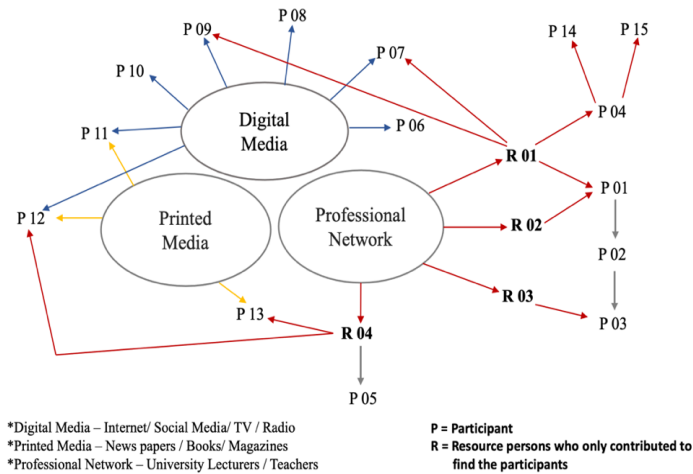
Since the narrative of Kuweni is related to the local culture, all the participants used a local language (Sinhala) to communicate, allowing them to easily and effectively share their culturally rich ideas with the interviewer. The interview data were then translated into English and transcribed under the guidance of the research team. During this process, great care was taken to preserve the original nuances and meaning of the data.

Initially, the participants were identified through purposive sampling using digital media, print media and the researcher’s professional network. Some professional scholars who are working on folklore were contacted via the university professional network including lecturers. The members of this network can be identified as external resource persons who did not engage in the research as participants, but helped the researcher to identify the most appropriate professional scholars for the research. Therefore, this professional network can be identified as a category similar to the

digital and print media which were useful for identifying the participants shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3

Selection and Recruitment of the Participants



Note. Developed by author (2021).

Further, works of historical literature such as *Mahavamsa*, *Rajawaliya*, and *Dipavamsa* were helpful to get unmediated insights about place legends, and those places were used by the researcher as markers to initiate the folklore-related discussions with the respondents. Thus, extant literature and snowballing technique were used simultaneously for the selection of the sample for the data collection. The snowballing technique was highly effective since the third category of respondents, i.e., folklore enthusiasts, emerged during the data collection process. Evidently, the snowball sampling method is ideal for finding special populations and reaching the hard-to-find individuals (Johnson, 2005).

The data collection sample one, i.e., the professional category, consisted of Sri Lankan scholars from the fields of folklore, history, anthropology and archaeology and most of them were aware of the narrative of Kuweni as well as her community. The data collected from these professionals were useful to ensure the reliability of the findings in the literature and data from the local community. This was helpful to compare and contrast the data and conduct a cross analysis between the samples.

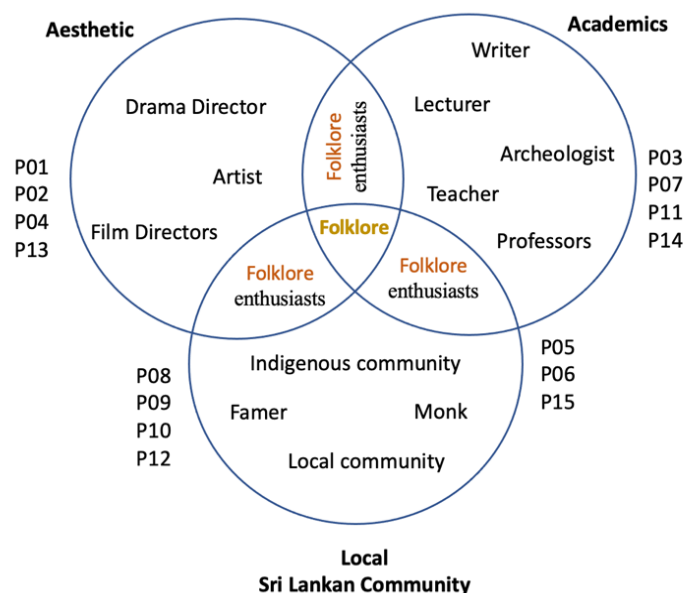
The data collection sample two of the study consists of different local communities including the indigenous community of Sri Lanka. As indicated by UNESCO (2018), “in particular indigenous communities, groups and in some cases, individuals play an important role in producing, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity.” Therefore, it was expected that different local and indigenous communities

were a suitable source of data in this study. The researcher had to observe the social anthropology of these participants to understand their behavioral patterns, language use, rituals, and holistic values embedded in their lifestyle that help to obtain valuable insights into folklore (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In other words, these observations helped the researcher to understand the inner core values of a specific community (Yin, 2011). Respecting the indigenous people as holders of cultural knowledge was critical in understanding those values. The data provided by the professionals (Sample 01 of the study) was useful for identifying and selecting the participants of the second sample. Moreover, the place legends identified in folklores and literature were useful to recognize different communities living in those areas. In literature, for instance, there were several examples that show the relationship between Kuweni and the indigenous community of Sri Lanka, which helped the researcher to understand the indigenous community as an important group to be taken into consideration in this study (Seedaraman, 2016; Weerasekara, 2016).

The intermediate category that emerged during the interviews was different from the indigenous community and the professionals. Yet, they can be identified as a rich source to collect folklore-related data since they were referred and recommended by the professionals. However, since they were from Sri Lanka, they are considered as part of the local community (See Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4

Relationship among the Sample Categories



Note. Source: Author (2021)

The intermediate category uses literature to affirm some of the folklore but sometimes they show awareness of the contradictions between the literature and folklore.

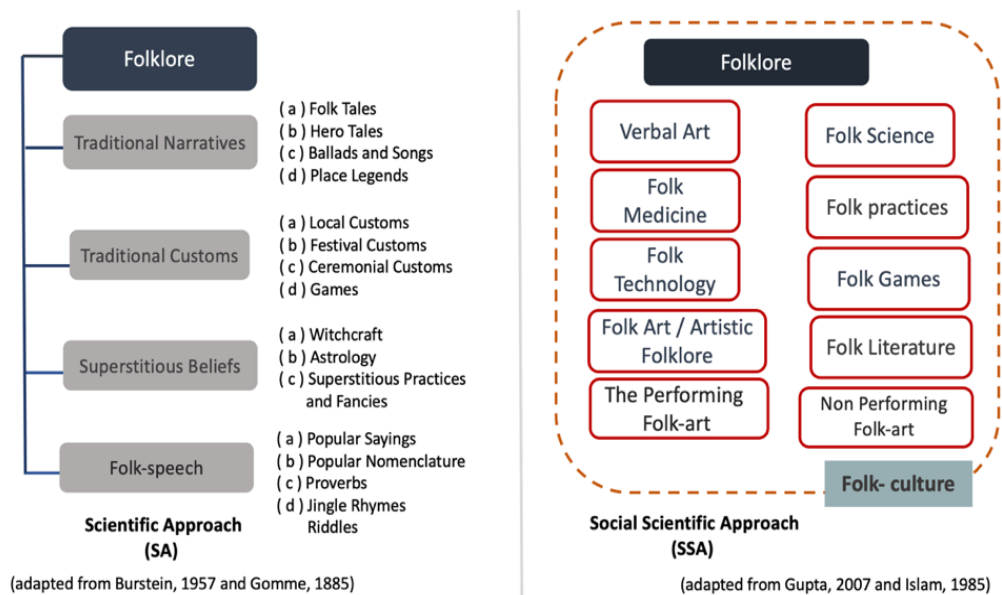
Therefore, these folklore enthusiasts can be identified as a merge of professional scholars and local community members. In the next section, the data analysis and concept development are discussed.

5.2.3 Data Analysis of the Concept Development

The folklore-related literature and data on folklore narratives collected from the participants were considered as the main data set related to the concept development stage. These data were analyzed under the SA and SSA following deductive thematic and inductive thematic approaches. Since SA and SSA have already existing themes (See figure 5.5), the same themes were used to analyze the folklore and literature related to the story of Kuweni. SA and SSA having their own themes defined, it was convenient to relate SA and SSA with literature to define suitable themes for the story of Kuweni.

Figure 5.5

Data Analysis by SA and SSA



Note. Developed by author (2023) by adapting Scientific Approach (SA) and Social Scientific Approach (SSA) proposed by Gomme (1885); Islam (1985); and Gupta (2007).

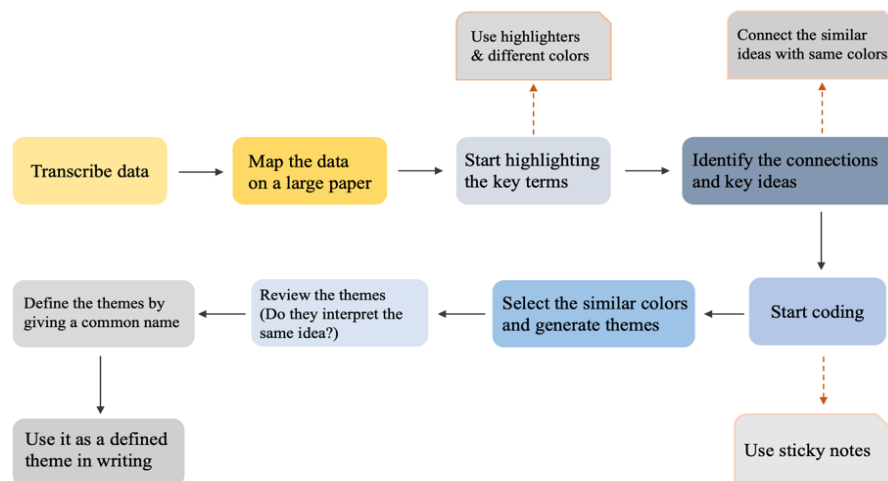
As shown in Figure 5.5, the folk literature can be categorized into four main themes under SA and ten main themes under SSA on folk culture. SA and SSA can be used in thematic categorization of the literature as well as the primary data in a deductive approach. When analyzing the secondary data using SA and SSA, there were more

similarities and less contradictions compared to the primary data related to folklore. However, it was noticed that the diverse narratives related to the folklore data collected from the scholars and communities are difficult to be embedded within either SA or SSA. Therefore, inductive thematic analysis was used to classify these stories. Inductive thematic analysis, in particular, was useful to identify new themes from folklore. Thematic analysis of data is a crucial step in some qualitative research, and it should be done rigorously in order to avoid pitfalls such as the difficulty to find clear themes and subjectivity of the themes because it is a flexible technique (Saldaña, 2009).

Thematic analysis is a highly appropriate and powerful method to understand a set of experiences, thoughts, and behaviors which are the main data inputs in this research (Braun, 2018). Creating patterns or developing themes which are independent yet coherent is a crucial factor in thematic analysis. Thus, the themes can be recognized as the ending point of the analysis. This research followed the six steps of thematic analysis proposed by Kiger and Varpio (2020), i.e., familiarization; coding; generating themes; reviewing the themes; defining and naming the themes; and writing. Since the researcher followed the manual coding technique, the steps of the coding process are illustrated in Figure 5.6. Because coding helps to make raw data sortable, coding can be identified as the “theoretical term” that can be used to connect raw data with each other in a meaningful manner (Busetto et al., 2020).

Figure 5.6

Manual Coding for Theme Identification



Note. Developed by author (2021) adapting Saldaña, 2009

The data collected can be categorized as field notes, visual materials and audio. Thus, all the data collected from the semi-structured interviews, observations, and discussions (along with the notes, sketches, photographs and analytical memos) were taken through the six steps and coding was done accordingly (Creswell, 2014). Since

this narrative is related to local culture, all the participants used a local language (Sinhala) to communicate which enabled them to express their ideas freely with the interviewer. All the interview data were later translated into English and transcribed. Manual coding was more effective than the Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) usage in this context because of the flow of the interview, and the use of local languages and terms. Manual coding also supported to preserve the sentimental values embedded in the local language and expressions, and the rituals that the community referred to during the discussions. As such, the coding helped identify new themes related to the folklore of Kuweni.

A comparison of the themes was done to identify the commonality, coherence, and separation of each theme from others which emphasizes how this folklore has been defined in different narratives in Sri Lanka. Rose (2001) emphasizes that much meaning is conveyed by visual images like different sorts of visual technologies such as photography, video, digital graphics, acrylics, images from television programs, advertisements, movies, newspaper pictures, and paintings. Therefore, visuals can be understood as a fundamental sense as seeing comes before words, where images are also equally important as the written texts.

The depth of engagement, open-ended, flexible, and exploratory of the present research enabled an in-depth study of the narratives from the folklife, professional scholars, and literature. It opened up different paradigmatic orientations to explore the narrative in different viewpoints. Understanding the socio-cultural essence of the local communities while experiencing their socio-cultural life was helpful in being aware of the emotions and feelings that the researcher underwent while doing the research. These can be identified as socio-cultural emotions embedded in a specific culture or community that is experienced while associating the community for a considerable period of time (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). For this specific experience, the knowledge related to their lifestyle acquired from the extant literature as well as the casual discussions while doing the research were considered. The validation of data is discussed in the following section.

5.2.4 Validation of Data in Concept Development

Qualitative validity refers to the accuracy of the findings ensured by employing certain procedures, and validity is vital since qualitative data occurs in natural settings with human behaviors (Creswell, 2014). There are several techniques that can be followed for the validation of data gathered through interviews, persistent observations, discussions, and member check to ensure the trustworthiness (Morse et al., 2002). Since qualitative data verification is an iterative process, the refining and affirming of the primary data can be done with secondary data such as literature to ensure the reliability and validity (Morse et al., 2002). When data specific to a place or location in Sri Lanka found in literature was cross checked with the folklore data in that location, there were many similarities, and those data could be affirmed. This helped to create rigor in the study. The study also practiced triangulation of data by using

multiple sources such as interviews, observations and document analysis. This helped to develop a coherent justification for the data, and validity could be checked. Sometimes the observations made by the researcher in the site justify and validate the data provided by the participants.

Regular and repeated observations on similar phenomena also helped to validate the data provided by the participants, especially the local communities including the indigenous communities. Since qualitative data analysis is an iterative process, the transcribed data can be taken back to the participants and give them the opportunity to reflect on the data. Through this, the meaning of the data that they provided can be affirmed, and if the meaning has been changed, those data can be collected and analyzed again (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). The same technique can be used for the data collected through discussions as well. Taking the final transcription draft back to the participants gives them the opportunity to comment on the findings. If there are any contradictions between the oral data and transcription draft, the participants can amend those. This may minimize the misinterpretations or miss-understandings among the member checking (The University of Auckland et al., 2019). Finally, peer debriefing enhances the validity of the information which helps generation of interpretations beyond a single researcher and encourages collaborating with another person with similar experiences. The secondary data related to the narrative of Kuweni in journal articles and books are already validated by other scholars, and the empirical data validation can be done through the above techniques.

5.2.5 Limitations in Concept Development

Generally, ethnographic research on local communities including indigenous communities needs a minimum of 30-35 interviews, and for qualitative research, 15 is the minimum acceptable number of interviews (Mason, 2010). Moreover, increasing the sample size helps to reduce the margin of error and improves the confidence level of the research outcomes. Despite that, the lack of local communities and resource persons with adequate knowledge on this specific folklore limited the sample size of the present research. The sample size was determined based on the research objectives, the amount of variability in the population when the semi-structured interviews were conducted, the size of population, and time constraints (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). When the same data were recurring during the interviews with the local community as well as the professionals, the data collection was stopped. Nonetheless, there were difficulties in finding individuals from local communities who had solid knowledge on folklore and folk culture related to the story of Kuweni as oral transmission was the main characteristic of folklore. Therefore, the point of data saturation was considered as the point where the number of interviews could stop. Reliability issues of a data set is natural in a qualitative study; however, this study was designed to minimize those with the application of data validation processes.

The Covid-19 pandemic set immediate limitations to the research, as travel and in-person meeting restrictions made it difficult to reach the participants and conduct face-

to-face interviews and discussions. Moreover, accessing historical and culturally rich data from museums, galleries, and libraries was also limited due to mobility restrictions during the pandemic. The lack of knowledge in Pali, Sanskrit and old varieties of the Sinhala language, and difficulty to find accurate historical literature related to folklore were the challenges faced while reading the literature related to the folklore of Kuweni. Culturally sensitive details and beliefs can be identified as another limitation faced by the researcher. Forbidding of observing certain places and some culturally preserved objects or rituals related to the research due to the participants' code of beliefs, specifically among certain groups of local communities also impacted this study. For example, the researcher was not able to witness the *Kiri Koraha Shanthi Karmaya* which is performed by the *Vedda* community since it is performed only once a year and in alignment with their own time frames. Therefore, such data could not be gathered because they did not tally with the researcher's time frame. In other instances, too, the researcher had to respect the participants' cultural boundaries in order to observe some rituals and practices.

The initial conception of this research was subjected to slight changes in the course of the research. Since the study followed a qualitative research methodology, collection of first-hand data was helpful to acquire original and sensitive details that cannot be extracted from literature or typical narratives, especially data related to the core of Kuweni's narrative. The findings of the empirical data were helpful to build credibility during the analysis. Thus, slight changes were made to the initial conceptualization based on the data gathered from participants. The data gathered at the concept development stage was helpful to identify the socio-cultural symbols and elements related to folklore. Those data were taken into effective action in the design development and design realization as explained in the section below.

5.3 Design Development

Design development is the second phase of this research which follows a systematic creative PLR where fashion/textile product development principles are followed to develop a creative design outcome. In this research, priority has been given to textile development.

Different terminologies such as practice-based research, practice as research, practice-led research or research through practice are used for research based on a creative discipline. If the researcher follows a creative practice and comes up with a creative outcome, they can be identified by any of the terminologies described above (Harper, 2011). In most of the extant literature, the term practice led research is the most used term (Skains, 2018). Therefore, in this research, practice led research is used as the terminology to describe the creative process and outcomes. Skains (2018) observed that practice related research is an accepted methodology in many fields including medicine, engineering, and designing as it motivates field-based research and

participatory experiments. According to this research, the practice refers to the professional practice in arts and design where the tacit knowledge held by a practitioner can be made visible (Choi, 2016). Through active participation in the creative practices, the researchers generate new knowledge of using techniques as well as materials (Choi, 2016). The objective is to come up with a body of creative work in addition to scholarly writing which is a compulsory component of a creative discipline (Vella, 2005).

In academia, PLR provides methodology for creative research within the practitioner's specialization, using the methods of practice (Bugg, 2009; Morley, 2013). Considering that fact, a body of creative work and the philosophical content behind the process of development are considered as the final output of the research (Haseman & Mafe, 2009). Creative PLR critically engages with experimental work. The practice led design research method was initially described by Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes at the 2007 International Association of Societies of Design Research Conference (Choi, 2016). The research culture of PLR is different from the theoretical one. The process followed during a PLR becomes part of following the creative PLR and that can be subjected to changes with the interaction level.

However, there are both opportunities and challenges when conducting creative PLR. In general, identifying the exact questions or the problems at the outset of the research, defining the techniques and methodology, and developing the final design outcome are quite problematic for PLR, because more than on a theoretical basis, the researchers work in a practical context.

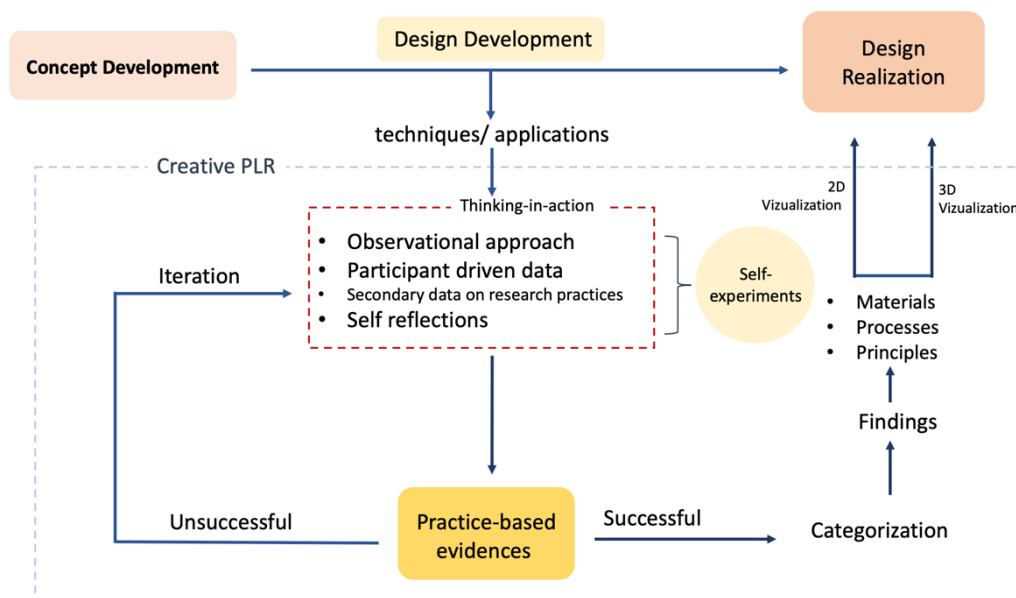
According to Graeme Sullivan's 2009 model, there are four key areas, i.e., theoretical, conceptual, dialectical, and contextual areas, where PLR can be applied. This specific research can be identified under theoretical and conceptual approaches since it encourages the development of a methodology as well as an artifact to understand the research process (Skains, 2018). In certain occasions, the researcher has to play the practitioner's as well as designer's role. Further, in PLR, textural interpretations alone are not sufficient to explain the true significance of the research. Hence, it is crucial to come up with a novel design outcome as the final product of the research using a systematic methodology (Candy, 2011). Therefore, in this research, new techniques as well as processes related to PLR were created as novel outcomes. In creative PLR, there are no smooth boundaries such as data collection, participants, or data analysis since it is different from the scientific method. In science disciplines there are tested methods, so that reliable outcomes can be achieved. In PLR, such established disciplines or comparable research methodologies cannot be found since one research is totally different from another. Consequently, in many cases, practitioners mix different approaches and customize existing methods to best suit their research (Candy, 2019). In that sense, most PLR with more than one discipline are known as "transdisciplinary" since it is difficult to define their boundaries (Candy, 2019).

In this research, the folklore related data were collected and analyzed in the conceptualization phase and those data were transformed into meaningful outcomes by using creative PLR techniques. As this is PhD research, a systematic framework

has been developed for that purpose. Although the findings may not have been tested through a scientific method, they can be proven useful and credible for a wider community in PLR through a systematic and principled research process (Candy, 2019). According to Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes (2007) in PLR, knowledge is generated in multiple ways. Firstly, “novel knowledge” is generated through practice, and secondly, it can be produced as a research outcome which embodies knowledge. Therefore, the systematic process followed in design development can be identified as a novel outcome. When it is produced as a written document with a proper methodology detailing the methods and techniques, such knowledge can be disseminated to other researchers or designers, enabling them to come up with a new design outcome. This is identified as a special requirement of a doctoral level PLR which can claim originality and novelty of the methodology including its techniques and methods (Candy, 2019). The fashion or textile outcome that is generated through creative PLR can be identified as a significant contribution to creative knowledge. In design development, the intangible findings which were found at the conceptualization stage were converted into tangible fashion outcomes through creative practices as shown in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7

Design Development and Design Realization



Note. Developed by author (2024).

5.3.1 Application of Creative PLR Techniques – Phase 01

It is challenging to directly adopt one methodology into a new creative product development since PLR is unique. In fact, any design or artwork can have its own interpretations, and they are subjective (Candy, 2011).

In the present study, a textile development approach was considered as the final design development of the research. Considering the above facts, the researcher employed techniques and applications that can be used as, “thinking in action”. In creative PLR, reflecting on both the process and the outcome to identify the pathway taken is known as 'thinking in action' or 'reflection in action' (Candy, 2011). There are two reflective techniques as “thinking-in-action” and “thinking-on-action”. “Thinking-in-action” can be applied to situations that are unique or uncertain, since it is not based on established theories or techniques (Candy, 2019). By following this technique, the researcher also becomes a part of the practice context and generates new knowledge by doing experiments. Thinking or the reflections can happen in two different ways: first, the thinking that happens without any proper evidence; and second, the thinking that happens as a result of evidential background. The second one is more educative and supportive of further reflection, which can be identified as the fundamental element of strategic thinking (Candy, 2019). The practice of iterative experiments until a successful outcome is achieved is seen in the present research under thinking-in-action.

In addition to using the outcomes of the conceptualization as the data for this phase, data related to global fashion movements, trends, and fashion product theories were also gathered in relation to the folklore of Kuweni to identify the most important data for the design development process. This data was useful to identify the upcoming trends, materials, and processes that are used in contemporary fashion. This was important as this research is based on textile design that narrates the story of Kuweni with a proper rationale.

Textile design development required tangible design ideas and elements. However, all the data in the conceptualization phase of the study were intangible in nature. Thus, converting the intangible data to tangible findings was essential for textile development. This was done as a self-reflective activity, combining the conceptualization outcomes with the secondary data related to upcoming trends, processes, and techniques since the researcher had an idea about the most appropriate themes that should be taken for the design development. It helped the researcher to explore the selected themes from conceptualization with textile design experiments using related colors, materials, and processes. As shown in Figure 5.8, the outcome expected from the design development was to create a systematic creative PLR framework that converts the intangible data into tangible creative textile outcomes. As a result of that, the following creative PLR techniques were used to identify tangible elements for the textile development.

Figure 5.8

Conversion of the Intangible Findings to Tangible Findings



- Experiments and Observation Techniques

There are different techniques and applications that can be used for “thinking-in-action”. According to Schön (1984), when practicing thinking-in-action, the researcher should not solely rely on established theories or techniques. The researcher can develop new theories which can contribute to knowledge-in-practice, which creates many benefits such as unexpected discoveries and stimulate new ways of thinking (Candy, 2019). In this research, the researcher selected one theme from concept development that is closely related to the fashion trends and movements, namely, “localism related to place legends”. In this context, a place legend is a location-related narrative related to the story of *Kuweni*. The place legends were identified and verified during the concept development phase. These location visits were required because the researcher herself could observe and get a clear idea of the locations rather than depending on the narrations in the folklore. Hence, “observation” was identified as a key technique required in the design development process of this research. During the visits, some important fashion related design elements such as color and material were observed with a view to use them in the design development.

Anthropologists use observation as a first-hand data collection technique. In fact, the father of Sociology, Auguste Comte has identified “observation” as one of the four core research methods (Baker, 2006). The observation technique allows the researcher to get an insider’s view and reveal the reality as a member of the setting. In this specific research, the researcher had to assume the role of an observer as it helped her to assimilate to the research context and identify specific details that can be useful for the designing process (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In creative PLR, observation techniques are used as a creative PLR application since it is extremely helpful for thinking-in-action. As an example, when the researcher observed the copper color sand in Thambapanni beach, it was not merely identified as qualitative data because the experiential learning of the environment, the colors, the touch and feel of the material brought the researcher into another creative spectrum. According to Candy (2019), when a practitioner lives in a cultural context for a long period of time, they naturally understand the ideas and feelings of that society. Similarly, in the present research, by being an observer as well as a practitioner, the researcher reflected on how the materials and colors in the location could be utilized for fashion outcomes. Therefore,

collecting photographs, videos, and experimental samples was essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the Thambapanni area. This can be identified as a key component of research that adopts a phenomenological design, as these visuals can be effectively used to understand the phenomenon by combining design sensibilities with participant experiences (Holgar, 2019). This approach helps to identify the core aspects of the experiences, supported by clear practice-based evidence. Further, this preparation helped the researcher to avoid setbacks during the experimental phase, as the research team had limited opportunities to visit the site. Since it was highlighted during the conceptualization phase as a key feature in the *Kuweni* folklore, the copper-colored soil was collected during the field visits, and this soil was later used for experiments.

Observation and detailed recording of such data is identified as a successful evidence-based research technique that can be practiced under creative PLR, and hence, crucial. Using the observation technique, the researcher explored, observed, identified, and recorded important visual and tangible data that can be used for experimentation. The following section discusses the use of self-experiments and open-source data in the thinking-in-action method.

- Experiments with Open-source Data

In the creative practice, the researcher generates new knowledge of using techniques as well as materials (Choi, 2016). For this new knowledge generation, there should be a frame-work that serves as a guideline for experimentation. The secondary data related to most of the practice led work was referred while conducting the self-experiments. Initially inspired by connections to place legends, such as Thambapanni, the copper-colored soil and responsible dyeing techniques, the researcher became curious about using soil as a dyeing substance. To explore this, the researcher conducted development experiments after consulting secondary data on natural and mineral dyeing.

Secondary data such as literature and the knowledge of different materials and methods were vital to initiate the experiments. The researcher followed relevant journal articles as well as open sources such as YouTube videos to practice different experimental techniques. In this phase of the research, the researcher worked as a practitioner in the practical context. Videos suggested by YouTube and other social media through hyper-personalization were also followed to strengthen the experiments. Accordingly, the practitioner found very interesting dyeing techniques that can be applied in both eco and mineral dyeing. During the experimentation process, in some instances, the practitioner used self-reflection, and accordingly, subtle changes were made to the existing techniques to reach novel outcomes. The solar dyeing technique found on YouTube, for instance, was successfully applied to dye yarns using natural leaves and flowers. In creative practices, the practitioners are capable of generating new

understandings and insights based on experiences (Candy,2019). Therefore, new knowledge can be created by conducting different experiments based on the existing ones. Referring to the solar dyeing technique, the researcher used soil and sea water instead of flowers or leaves with water to dye the cotton yarns and the outcome was successful. Open-source videos were helpful to systematically plan the dyeing techniques as the researcher could watch them multiple times. Moreover, their content was rich and everything was explained in detail. By observing the techniques, the practitioner self-experimented using *Thambapanni* soil for dyeing cotton fabrics and yarns. Initially these experiments were tested on cotton fabrics and since the outcome was successful the same technique was applied to dye cotton yarns as well. Following the domestic experiments, onsite experiments were also done by the researcher, and these are described in detail in the discussion section. Thus, self-experiments were identified as a key component in PLR to achieve successful outcomes.

At the intersection of the researcher and the designer, practice comes into play through the experimental work being carried out. Therefore, the designer, practitioner and researcher can be identified as the title or description of an individual, their work role or the understanding of the integration of various aspects in a professional background (Vaughan, 2017). Accordingly, in the Design Practice chapters, the roles of designer and practitioner are reflected in accordance with the tasks performed by the researcher.

- Experiments with Participant-driven Data

Natural dyeing and handloom weaving were key themes identified in the conceptualization phase of the study. In order to investigate the ancient practices related to these traditional industries, the researcher met dyeing practitioners and weaving artisans who were identified during the conceptualization stage. Snowballing technique which was used for qualitative data collection was used to recruit more artisans who were in the field. When conducting the research, a researcher can either observe and ask the right questions from the participants while they are working, or continue to observe them without interruptions (Candy, 2011). In this research, observations made by the researcher as a participant observer were helpful for identifying different dyeing and weaving techniques. Apart from theoretical information, the practical knowledge and experience of the artisans were important factors for generating tangible outcomes via creative practice. Experimental knowledge can be identified as explicit and ineffable, and tacit content contains experimental components (Biggs, 2004). According to Holgar (2019), the phenomenological research aspects can be successfully considered since the researcher focuses on participants' verbal experiences rather than problematizing or collecting data via a structured interview. It considers live and conscious experiences of people as reliable knowledge and rich information (Holgar, 2019). This helped the researcher to build a rapport with the participants of the study since the information was gathered in a natural setting. There were many positive outcomes from the experiences-based

discussions and live exposure in terms of creative participation. Further, observation and engagement with the artisans helped the researcher to identify and record the data that are needed for design development.

The experiential knowledge shared by natural dye practitioners and artisans was highly useful for the experiments done by the researcher to find raw materials and ingredients; make decisions on the quantity and timing of the process; and avoid foreseeable mistakes while doing the experiments. Especially, the artisans had a very good idea about the practical issues that emerge when creating these products in the Sri Lankan context including environmental issues and practical problems in the industry. Practical problems in the industry include the lack of skilled artisans who prefer to work out of the traditional framework, the lack of looms in the weaving centers, and difficulty to get approval from the government bodies. Environmental issues, on the other hand, were mostly related to natural dyeing and scouring techniques. These included difficulties in finding some raw materials for dyeing and the impact of adverse weather conditions on the dyeing process. Identifying these practical issues were important for the design development time frames and planning of the upcoming work. Further, the artisans were supportive in discussing the post experimental issues with the researcher, especially when her experiments were unsuccessful. They often shared their knowledge on the issues the researcher encountered based on their own experiences or discussions with fellow artisans in their network or by referring to any available literature. Therefore, even after multiple iterations, the researcher was able to achieve successful outcomes through the self-experiments.

- Experiments with Self-reflections

In creative PLR, the researcher uses sketchbooks, drawings, their own opinions and feelings as well as experimented data which are presented as self-reflections (Haseman & Mafe, 2009). In the design development phase of this research, the researcher maintained a sketchbook and a note-book to record highly personalized yet research-related reflective data, most of which were gathered through textile exhibitions, workshops, and seminars, which provided the researcher with exposure to similar work. Maintaining a working journal is very important since it helps the researcher to reflect on the most important ideas while engaging in research work (Candy, 2019). Further, the researcher visited art exhibitions, viewed undergraduates' work, and watched stage dramas which used similar creative PLR concepts to her research. This exposure to the various creative works helped the researcher to contemplate new design elements, principles, colors, and emotions related to the research. Further, it helped the researcher to refresh her mind and find inspiration for new design ideas for self-design practice. As Candy (2011) highlights, the researcher becomes an observer that engages in a new activity by recalling how different artisans or craftsmen do their work. During her observations, the researcher recorded such data in the form of

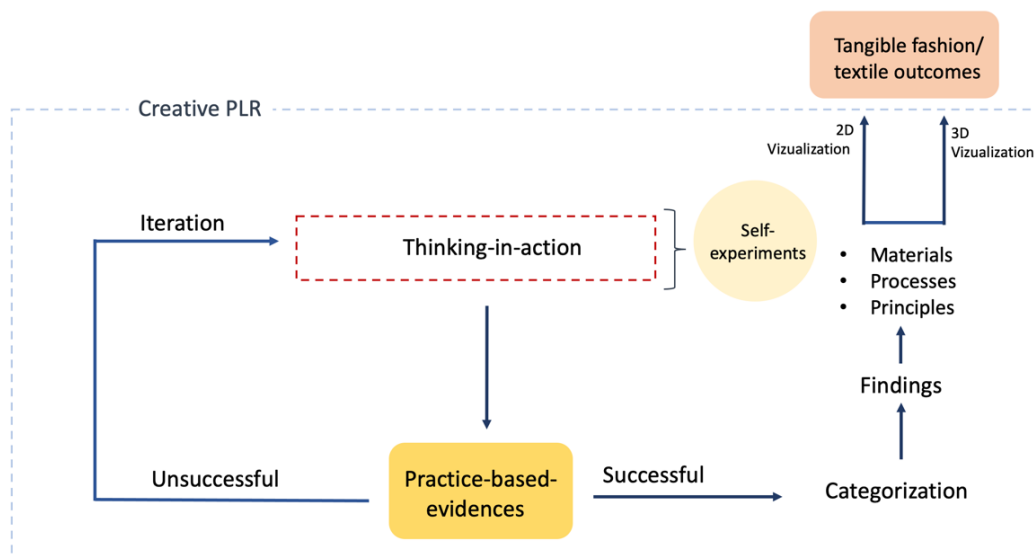
sketches, notes, and illustrations in a sketchbook, recalling and reflecting on the observed data helped the researcher to conduct her own experiments more effectively.

5.3.2 Application of Creative PLR Techniques – Phase 02

Thinking in action by Candy (2011) was practiced in both the first and second phase of this research. As described in Section 5.3.1, application of creative PLR technique, the data collected during the conceptualization phase were transformed to tangible outcomes using creative PLR techniques such as observations, participant-driven data, open-source data, secondary data on research practices, and experiments. Through the above approaches, new knowledge was created by experiments and self-reflections that can be identified as practice-based evidence. In creative PLR, there can be both successful and unsuccessful outcomes. Despite the success, the outcomes can be taken as new findings as the process of both successful and unsuccessful findings can lead to further research in the discipline. In the creative PLR, the researcher generates practice-based evidence since the researcher iteratively engages in the experimenting process (Candy, 2019). As shown in Figure 5.9, the results generated when engaging in thinking-in-action could be both successful and unsuccessful. But as a whole, all of them become new knowledge or practice-based evidence.

Figure 5.9

Generating Practice-Based-Evidence from Thinking-In-Action

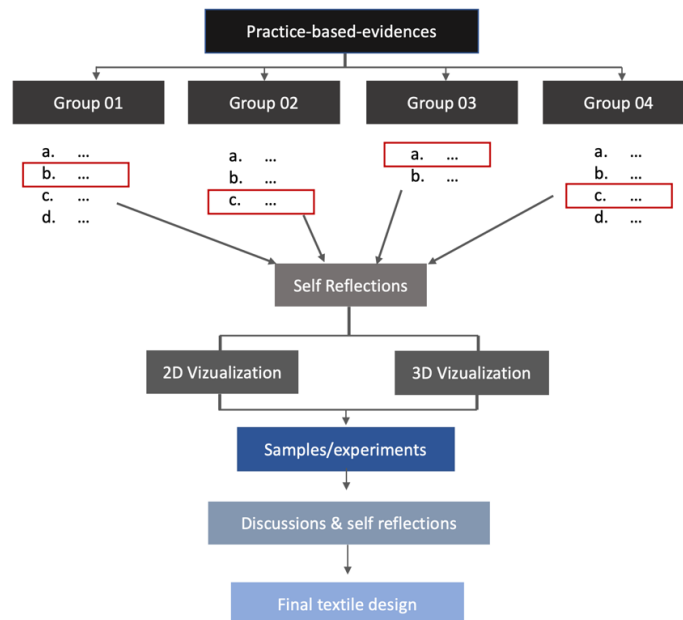


Note. Developed by author (2024).

Although there were a lot of findings gathered through different approaches in this creative PLR study, only a few could be taken for the final product development given their suitability and relatedness to the research study. Thus, only the most appropriate findings were selected for the final product development. Although most PLR try to be more scientific, it is not practical because being systematic is more important than being scientific (Candy, 2011). In order to make them systematic, the selected findings were clustered into specific groups so that it would be manageable to select the most appropriate findings for the two-dimensional (2D) and three dimensional (3D) developments (See Figure 5.10). As illustrated in this figure, the researcher can follow one of the developments or mix them to come up with a textile or a fashion product.

Figure 5.10

Creative PLR Method for Categorizing the Findings



Note. Developed by author (2024).

As shown in Figure 5.10, reflective analysis was used to identify the most important findings. Here, the reflective practitioner's role is finding answers to questions or issues via reflection in action (Candy, 2019). Reflective analysis plays a critical role in achieving successful outcomes in this form of design research. In the context of design research, a designer is also seen as a reflective practitioner who learns through doing and critically evaluates their decisions and outcomes (Schön, 1984). According to Simonsen et al. (2010), reflection enables the practitioner/researcher to examine design processes and outcomes with a critical lens, uncovering the assumptions and values that shape decision-making. One of the main differences between creative

practices and traditional scientific research lies in their epistemological approaches and the nature of knowledge they produce. Scientific research typically seeks generalizable, objective, and often quantifiable knowledge that adheres to established methods and theories. In contrast, creative practices are grounded in context-specific, experiential, and often tacit forms of knowing, where making and doing are central to the inquiry (Simonsen et al., 2010).

According to Candy (2019) and Simonsen et al. (2010) setting themselves in the dominant culture and gaining exposure is one main factor for enhancing the self-reflection of a practitioner. This PhD researcher has been living in Sri Lanka all her life, and her social scientific education background and her engagement in this research for over four years have equipped her with the knowledge of self-reflection that was needed for this research. Through reflections and experimental approach, the present research has identified natural yarn dyeing, scouring, and bleaching techniques related to the purpose of the study. Further, reflective practice is important because it enables learning from multiple iterations. In other words, the development of the design happens via iteration. Therefore, empirical knowledge can be gained from practice-based evidence. Furthermore, with these self-reflections, it is possible to work back and forth with the concept development data to derive the most appropriate findings. The tacit knowledge of creative PLR is ambiguous. Hence, this new knowledge can be a new means of understanding, which can be transferred to other practitioners via a systematic framework.

- 2D Visualization for Textile Experiments

After clustering the practice-based evidences (See Figure 5.11) from different themes such as colors, materials, processes, and different elements related to the folklore of Kuweni, the most suitable findings for future proceeding could be easily identified. Further, this helped the systematic continuation of the research because in the design realization phase, the most suitable findings for the final textile development could be identified. Further, this categorization ensures that no important findings are left out. By integrating findings from these groups, different 2D developments can be created to explicitly depict the narrative of Kuweni as a textile or fashion outcome. Therefore, 2D outcomes, which were in the form of sketches and illustrations, were later developed into 3D experiments as well as final textile development.

Part of the development process was based on the decision making of scale and proportions of symbols, motifs, and structures. In order to define the placements of the design elements such as motifs and structures, Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop software were used. Illustrator and photoshop were used for 2D visualization, since there are many possibilities to mix and match different color combinations and motifs. Working on a virtual platform helped the researcher to save time because it was more efficient than manual tryouts. When developing 2D visualizations such as inspiration boards, other designers' and handloom artisans' work were also referred to by using

open sources such as Pinterest, Instagram, and web sites. Since human beings are natural thinkers and makers, the exposure that is acquired from different experiences can contribute to successful creative outcomes (Candy, 2019) which can be identified as another key feature of a phenomenological research. Therefore, both manual sketches as well as the software were used for 2D visualization. 2D visualization was important to forecast 3D outcomes. Further, it was also used as a supporting material to present the design ideas to the research team, so that necessary changes could be done based on the feedback. Inspiration boards were developed by using similar ideas from open sources to convey the design outcomes related to weaving and natural dyeing.

- 3D Development: Textile Sample 01

As mentioned above, different 2D visualizations were done manually as well as via using software to create a 3D outcome. 2D visualization was important to identify the color combinations as well as pattern placements. Although visual outputs can be achieved through 2D developments, tactile sensations such as the textural differences could not be achieved through that. Therefore, 3D samples were developed to understand the textural feeling of the fabric. There were two mockup textile samples developed under 3D developments. The first textile experiment was done using Thambapanni dyed cotton yarns. This sample was developed by using a utility loom since a small sample was expected to be developed to see the color combinations, weaving structures, and textural feelings. It was developed by the handloom weaving instructors from the Design Center, Katubedda, Sri Lanka. Since they are familiar with the handloom textile developments, it was easy to convey how the sample should be developed. A skilled craftsperson constantly engages in a dialogue between practice and thought. Over time, this exchange develops into enduring habits that create a rhythm of both solving and identifying problems. Their expertise is shaped not only by practical knowledge of the correct methods but also by an inner vision of the outcome they aim to achieve (Kane & Philpott, 2013). Thus, the knowledge and experience of the handloom instructors proved invaluable in developing the textile samples. The researcher also continuously visited the weaving center to see the development of the textile sample. The first textile sample from Thambapanni soil, gave a sharp insight into the natural colors, defects, and different textures that could be achieved for the design development as well as realization.

- 3D Development: Textile Sample 02

Having successful results from the textile sample 01, another textile sample was developed to see the application of design elements such as motifs of Kuweni story. For this experiment, synthetic yarns similar to the natural colors were used given the time constraints of sourcing natural dyed yarn. A young female artisan was purposively selected based on the recommendation of researcher's professional

network to do the textile sample, and she was made aware of Kuweni's story before starting the textile development. Because she was also living in a rural village in Sri Lanka and had a thorough idea about the folklore and its emotions, it was easy to convey what is expected from the narrative textile. Accordingly, 2D visualizations such as inspiration boards and manual sketches that were developed were shown to the handloom weaving artist in order for her to get a better idea about the sample textile. Following the initial discussions with the weaving artisan, the researcher discussed the design developments with the PhD supervisors to see whether any amendments needed to be done before starting the handloom preparations for weaving (threading). The knowledge and experience of the weaving artisan were taken as a key factor for this textile experiment. The iterative practices of the craftsperson play a crucial role in fashion and textile design. Moreover, the artisans' tactile experience and material awareness are essential components in the textile development process (Kane & Philpott, 2013). Therefore, the initial discussions were done with the artisan regarding the handloom setting to achieve the needed patterns and textural surfaces. Apart from the expertise, the positive attitude of the artisan was crucial. At some points during the textile development, the artisan needed to be flexible and enthusiastic to incorporate the necessary amendments because some changes took more time and effort than expected.

5.3.3 Limitations in Design Development

There were various limitations during the design development process including time, resources, and skilled labor. Initially, the time constraints in obtaining permission from the government bodies to visit the data collection site (*Thambapanni*) was an obstacle. As the research followed ethical guidelines, obtaining permission from authorities was essential. But the delays in getting permission affected reaching the expected time frames, and in turn, the quality of the creative PLR-based findings. Moreover, the permission granted was time bound, and the research team was not allowed to stay on site for a continuous period as the place was a restricted area for human habitation. Apart from that, the experimental work of the study conducted on site as well as domestically was also affected by adverse climatic conditions. Therefore, it is advisable to plan a study like this considering all aspects of regulations and climate conditions.

In the design development stage, there was a shortage of equipment and skilled labor. Therefore, the time allocated for textile sample development took more time than expected. The experiments of the textile samples were a challenge for the researcher as most of the artisans were not ready to work out of their comfort zone even though they were skillful enough, and doing experimental developments directed by a conceptual framework was not appealing to many of them. Hence, the researcher had to take extra care in cultivating their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In this context, one of the extrinsic motivators was the payment as their regular wages were not satisfactory. Moreover, due to the lack of proper training and development, most

artisans have stagnated in terms of current knowledge in the sector. However, the researcher observed that artisans' engagement with this kind of research projects make them think out of the box.

When it comes to the process of natural dyeing, most of the skilled artisans and dye practitioners are used to following their traditional methods. They were not ready for experiments or to mix and match different techniques and materials to come up with innovative outcomes. Further, some of the dye practitioners who were doing it as a business, tended to demand an overrated payment which was not affordable, and they were reluctant to reveal their secret dye recipes. Therefore, the researcher had to do experiments and develop several yarn hanks samples by herself to generate the expected colors and designs, which took extra time in achieving the expected outcomes.

5.3.4 Validation of the Design Development Findings

In creative PLR, the researcher should have the reflexivity to claim the significance of the study and its contribution to both theory and practice, without solely depending on self-reflexive approaches (McNamara, 2012). In a PhD study, in particular, the researcher should be able to explain the methodology and concept behind the outcome. The findings can be validated by cross referencing with the systematic approach, i.e., the conceptualization and design development in the context of this study. Expert opinion and self-reflection are also significant ways of validation in creative PLR. In this study, the researcher and supervisors were able to contribute to the process. Further, documenting the reflections and experiences can be identified as a key pillar in creative practices which is important in validating the findings (Candy, 2019). Considering this fact, the data validation was done through peer reviewed publications and this study was able to get published in two Q1 journal articles and seven international conferences. The feedback from the journal reviewers and the conference audience were also significant in shaping up the study and validating the findings.

5.4 Design Realization

Design realization is the final phase of the creative PLR followed under this methodology. In design realization, a textile outcome was created to narrate the folklore. In this specific phase, the researcher actively involved with the artisans and dye practitioners to produce the creative outcome of the research tested in the product development stage. Completing two experimental textile samples and 2D developments in the design development phase of the research was helpful to get valuable insights for the final textile development.

There were several steps to be considered before the design realization phase. Since this design explicitly displays the final outcome of this creative PLR, this artifact should be an amalgamation of all the filtered data from the conceptualization phase, design development phase, and design realization phase. The design realization was a collaborative effort involving the researcher, and the weaving artisan. The artisan who created the textile sample -02 was selected for the final textile development. Since she had a thorough idea about this study's ongoing work, the researcher could effortlessly convey what is expected from the final textile development. At the same time, since two experimental textile samples were already produced, it was easy to identify the best practices to be followed as well as pitfalls to be avoided in the final textile development. Further, the initial sample development was a training for the artisan to prepare the final textile development. The inspiration boards developed during the design development phase were helpful for the design realization. But new sketches were also developed for the design realization, as the researcher reflected that some changes have to be made in the final design development. In this phase, the researcher collaborated with the handloom artisan chiefly by supervising the development of the final textile. It was critical for the researcher to continuously engage in the final textile development to ensure that the progress was monitored, and development of the textile was overseen. This was also taken into consideration when selecting a weaving artisan as she comes from where the researcher lives. Therefore, the researcher had the opportunity to spend more time engaging in the textile development process.

At the same time, socio-cultural factors should also be taken into consideration while doing a creative PLR since the research team has to collaborate with different participants. Since the researcher has lived and experienced the lifestyle of the people in this area for a long time, it was effortless for the researcher to develop a good rapport with the weaving artisan. While engaging in the textile development 02 in the design development phase, the researcher further understood the lifestyle and behavior of the artisan as they spent more time together while working on the textile sample. A healthy human relationship always helps to come up with more energetic and successful design outcomes. Since the weaving artisan was young and well educated about handloom weaving, she was happy to accept the challenges and was flexible in doing the experiments the researcher needed. This was identified as a positive point in the design realization because, although there are plenty of skilled weaving artisans, most of the elderly artists were not willing to do experimental work or venture out of their framework. With the current low wages in the sector, they were not willing to do any intricate designs as those were time consuming. Considering this fact, the researcher motivated the artisan to do intricate designs with satisfactory payment scheme to compensate her skills and time. Although sample development 02 was done in a government weaving center, the final textile development was done at a domestic environment the artisan had her own handloom machine which was suitable to do the final textile development. This arrangement helped the artisan to engage in her own work as well as textile development. In the researcher's perspective this has a positive physiological impact towards the design since the artisan did not want to bear any

additional cost (ex: transport cost). During the days the researcher could not visit the artisan, development progress was monitored through photographs and video recordings shared through WhatsApp. The researcher always motivated the artisan to call or text if she had any issues regarding the loom setting, patterns or colors on days when there were no physical visits. Further, she was motivated to communicate any financial issues or personal difficulties since those problems indirectly affect the design outcome.

Another important aspect of this phase was the materials used for the final textile development. The researcher treated all the yarns on her own to ensure the reliability of the process. Further, researcher dyed all of them on her own except for black and green colored yarns. Therefore, the researcher did her own experiments and came up with successful outcomes. In creative practices, the practitioners are always encouraged to document their experiments and reflections throughout their professional life since it helps to update the practice-based knowledge (Candy, 2019). Considering this fact, throughout this research, the researcher tried her best to involve in all the creative practices by herself to identify the successful as well as unsuccessful outcomes. This helped the researcher to get a profound knowledge on practice-based evidence related to natural scouring, bleaching, and cotton yarn dyeing. All naturally scoured and dyed yarns were used for the final textile development.

Notably, there were contrasting perspectives between designer's (researcher in this context) thinking and the artisan's approach during design realization. Although the designer came up with many innovative design ideas, most of them were subjected to changes with the design development limitations. As an example, handloom weaving plays a crucial role in textile realization since it is strongly connected to the conceptualization of the study. Thus, the design team had to consider handloom weaving as the most suitable textile development technique in this research. But when the designer came up with design elements, most of those elements could not be used as there were some restrictions in the loom or handloom techniques. Further, the handloom artisans always think about the design process in a limited frame, considering all these loom restrictions. Therefore, before starting the final textile design, the researcher discussed and exchanged ideas about the possibilities and limitations with the handloom artisan. This verbal communication assisted by visual examples such as inspiration boards, helped to create a clear understanding between the researcher and the artisan. In the design realization, the researcher played the role of a textile designer to achieve the artistic values in the textile, and proper communication helped to identify the feasible design outcomes of handloom weaving.

The presentation of the final textile was merely based on draping of the textile to explicitly narrate the story of Kuweni illustrated through symbols, metaphors, and significant emotions embedded in the textile. Further, the study disseminated knowledge on the process of all three stages through publications and validated the findings. Since the outcomes of a doctoral level practice-based research maintain originality and novelty of ideas in its methodology as well as in the methods, the final design can be used together with the thesis as the outcome of the research (Candy,

2019). Further, the public dissemination of the outcomes can be done through an exhibition of creative work and it is expected to be validated by the audience experience. Social media can also be a rich source of public dissemination via digital media for a compilation of the full process. Therefore, it can be helpful to inform other researchers about the overall development process of folklore in fashion including concept development, design development, and realization.

5.5 Chapter Conclusion

As explained, the methodology used in this research the concept development, design development, and design realization can be used as a guide by any creative practitioner who hopes to develop a folklore-based fashion or textile products. In a creative PLR, the researcher should become a practitioner, designer as well as a reviewer of their own study to attain a successful design outcome. Since the researcher is the practitioner or the designer, they can reflect on the methodology outlined here and customize the methods that are suitable for their own work to come up with a systematic design study. When entering a new context, a novice designer/researcher can either adopt, adapt or reject the practices to establish his or her own design contribution (Vaughan, 2017). Further, multi-disciplinarity can facilitate insights into the dynamic complexities of the socio-material-technical cultures design seeks to change. They may need to further understand that one's creative PLR methodology may not be completely adaptable to another's creative PLR research, yet the design principles, methods, and techniques can be customized to suit their projects.

CHAPTER 06

DESIGN PRACTICE – CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the Concept Development phase of the research, which are recognized as the outcomes of the concept development phase of the study. It should be noted here that the findings of this phase have been published and presented in reputed journals and conferences³.

6.2 Identification of Place Legends Related to the Folklore of Kuweni

Following a comprehensive study of literature, the folk narratives related to the story of Kuweni were explored extensively. *Mahavamsa* and all other mainstream literature in SL portray Kuweni as a woman of devil (*Yakka*) origins and Vijaya as a heroic prince who defeated the *Yakkas*, and established a ‘civilized’ rule. Thus, according to the story in *Mahavamsa*, Sri Lanka became a civilized country only after the arrival of prince Vijaya, which shows favoritism towards the Aryan supremacy. Furthermore, both *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* indicate the time before the arrival of prince Vijaya as an abominable era, and *Yakkas* have been referred to devils who ate flesh. Thus, the native communities in Sri Lanka were labelled as primitive tribes, and the establishment of civilized human communities is attributed to prince Vijaya who established the Aryan reign in Sri Lanka.

Nevertheless, this historical literature is not consistent with the archeological findings regarding pre-historic Sri Lanka which were excavated recently. Folklores related to native communities who lived in this island before the Aryans such as the legend of Ravana, too, suggest the existence of an advanced civilization before the arrival of prince Vijaya. Ravana is mentioned in *Ramayana* as a warrior king of Sri Lanka who lived during the time of King Dasharatha of the Kosala kingdom in India, many years before prince Vijaya’s arrival in Sri Lanka. As such, there are alternative folklores on

³ 1. Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Wickramasinghe, A., & Payne, A. (2024). The Native Princess of Sri Lanka: The Thematic Metaphorical Approach in Symbolizing Characteristics of Folklore of Kuweni. *Journal of American Folklore*, 137(544), 204–218.

<https://doi.org/10.5406/15351882.137.544.03>

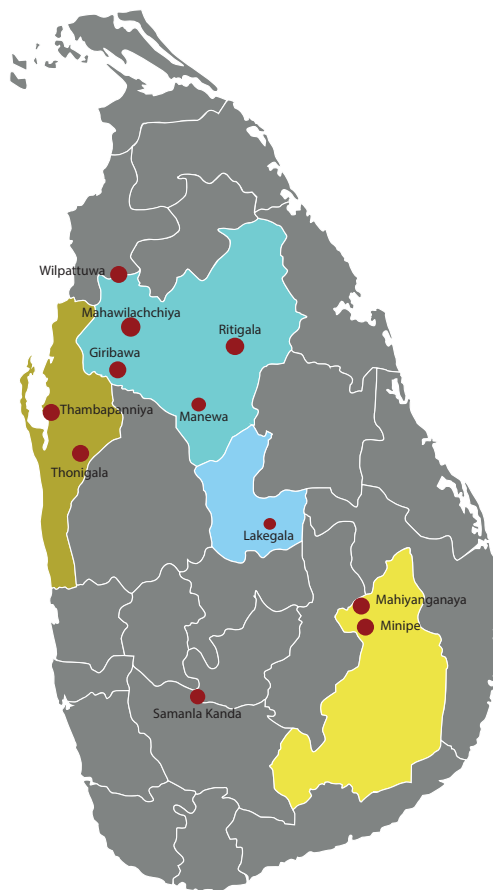
2. Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., & Wickramasinghe, A. (2023). Visualising intangible cultural heritage: a conceptual framework on the adaptation of oral traditions into creative practices. *IDR Conference Proceedings*, 02, 16–21. <https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.2023.9>

Kuweni apart from the mainstream historical narrative recorded in written literature which are thought-provoking and able to challenge the mainstream history. As shown in Figure 6.1 several areas related to Kuweni’s story can be identified. Accordingly, by referring to these place legends and the data provided by the professional scholars and local communities, folklore related to Kuweni were identified. For the ease of reference, the researcher has named the folklore by highlighting the main features emphasized in the story.

In this chapter, diverse stories related to the folklore of Kuweni that were collected from different areas of Sri Lanka are discussed (See Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1

Areas Famously known for the folklore of Kuweni in Sri Lanka



Note. Developed by author (2022).

6.2.1 Kuwana – Swarthy Princess with Three Nipples

There are many place legends related to the story of Kuweni in Sri Lanka. The most famous place legend roots are mentioned in Figure 7.1. However, so far, no place legends related to Kuweni's story are found in the Southern or Northern parts of the island. In this story Kuweni was known as "Kuwanna". According to folklore in the Thonigala area which was related by participant 08, Kuwana was the daughter of the *Yakka* king Bamba. "Kuwanna" was a nickname for this princess because she had darker skin compared to others. "Ku" refers to dark and "Wanna" refers to color in Sinhala. It is also said that despite being a beautiful girl, she had the problem of having three nipples, a secret known only to her mother and a few trustworthy ministers as per the king's orders. According to the legend, even the caregiver of the princess did not know that. During king Bamba's rule, the kingdom suffered from a terrible famine and the citizens thought that the reason for this famine was the misfortune of the king. Then they began to protest the king, and the king assumed the famine was due to the bad luck of his daughter who had three nipples. Therefore, he decided to kill her and end the famine. However, the queen mother was vehemently against that idea and requested the king to send the daughter out of the country with her fellowmen. When the squad was going to leave the country, they saw a beautiful place called "Thonigala". It was a fertile land and *Kuwanna*, who was not just beautiful but also wise suggested her group to settle in this area saying "if we go out of the country, we wouldn't know what the challenges we might have to face. No one would know us or help us". At that point, her group accepted the princess' idea and decided to settle in this area. Therefore, it is believed that Kuwana made Thonigala her kingdom. The name Thonigala is a compound of two Sinhala words [Thoni + Gala], and the word 'Gala' refers to a large rock. It was common practice among kings and the elite in ancient Sri Lanka to build their palaces on the top of rocks which is known as the "*Parwatha Raja Sankalpaya*" in Sinhala which means the concept of kings living on the top of a rock. It is said that Kuwana had a thorough understanding of agriculture and irrigation technology. According to the legends, after getting married to Vijaya she moved to *Thammenna Nuwara* with the Aryans. But once abandoned by Vijaya, she returned to Thonigala area and committed suicide by jumping off the rock after cursing Vijaya. Afterwards this rock came to be known as Lathonigala. In Sinhala "*Lathoni*" means weeping and lamenting. This shows the connection between place legends and the narrative of Kuweni.

6.2.2 Kuwana – A Princess Victimized by a Horoscope

There is another story that is very popular in and around Minipe area in Sri Lanka. There are many folklores related to King Ravana in and around Minipe, Lakgala, and Loggala areas. In this story also Kuweni was known as Kuwana and considered as a granddaughter of *Ravana*, the great king of Lanka. According to participant 09, in

ancient times there had been a *Yakka* tribal king called Thimira. King Thimira's son was known as Kanasha. King Kanasha had four sons, and Bamba, the third son, was the most talented one among them (personal communication, August 8, 2020). Hence, he became the successor of King Kanasha and married Princess Chakrawathi (Chakrawarthy). According to folklore, Minipe was the kingdom of King Bamba. Even today, there is an area known as "Bemiya" which is derived from the word Bamba. Since time immemorial, a symbol known as "Babha" is carried in the annual procession of the *Maha Saman Dewalaya*, Mahiyanganaya. This image of Babha has two faces. One side is a human face and the other side is a demon's face. It is believed that it symbolizes the end of King Bamba's *Yakka* dynasty and the beginning of the Aryan dynasty from King Vijaya. King Bamba selected Bambugala (Bambagala) rock as his capital since it was very close to his great grandfather Ravana's capital that is called Lakegala (Lankapura). King Bamba and Queen Chakrawarthy had a son as their firstborn and he was known as Prince Mahayana. Then they had a daughter and since she was darker in complexion compared to others she was known as Kuwanna. Later, Kuwanna was called Kuweni as said in the folklore. It is common in Minipe area to address a person by a nickname at home although they had a specific name. Therefore, Kuwanna could be the name that they used at home. When this princess was born, her horoscope was checked by soothsayers and they predicted that one day she would get married to a foreigner and slaughter her community, causing a terrible disaster. When the king heard this, he decided to kill his daughter that day itself. But due to the pleading of the Queen Chakrawarthy, the baby was not killed, but it was decided to send her into exile.

She was sent to *Thammennawa* to be raised by her mother's relatives. According to soothsayers, having three nipples was another reason for her bad luck. Even at that time, Sri Lanka had barter system-based trade connections with other countries. When Kuwanna grew up, she became the ruler of that area as well as the trade ruler of *Thammennawa*. Since she was a trade leader, it is believed that she had connections with different nations, and she got to know Vijaya through them. Similar to the *Mahavamsa* story, this folk story also says that she helped Vijaya to capture the power of the island and became his queen.

As the researcher, I observed the procession of *Maha Saman Dewalaya*, Mahiyanganaya in 2022 to observe the mask of Bhaba (Bamba) worn by a performer. I noticed that the original two-faced mask of Bhaba has been replaced with a normal traditional mask which is used by Southern dancers of Sri Lanka (See Figure 6.2). Since there is no proper preservation mechanism to protect these cultural heritages, it is clear that even the tangible evidences related to the folklore have been tampered with and wrong or deviant interpretations are presented to contemporary society.

Figure 6.2

Bhaba in Maha Saman Dewala Procession, Mahiyanganaya



Note. Recorded by author (2022).

6.2.3 Queen Mahapali – The Savior of a Nation

There is another interesting folklore related to *Kuweni* that is popular in and around areas such as Giribawa, Manewa and Ritigala in Anuradhapura district (See Figure 6.1). People who believe this story assume that they originated from the *Yakkas* of Sri Lanka, and not from the Aryans who came from India. However, they call their community as *Ravishailasha Wansaya*, and not as *Yakkas*, because this folklore, *Yakkas* were referred as *Ravishailasha Wansaya* and their commanding center was at *Nilagiri* mountains which are now called Ritigala mountains in Anuradhapura. According to participant 03, there is a historically significant Ola manuscript called *Wargapurnikawa*, where this information is found. That manuscript belongs to a family from the *Ravishailasha Wansaya* and they believe the insights given in that manuscript as their ancestral stories. It is said that the *Ravishailasha* people were talented in a range of fields including astrology, mathematics, irrigation, agriculture, psychology, medicine and surgery.

However, it is evident that *Yakkas* and *Ravishailasha Wansaya* are the same. According to this folklore, when Vijaya arrived in Sri Lanka (*Lankadeepa*), the ruler of the island was Queen Mahapali (Her generation was known as *Giribaddra*) at that time. Having understood that it is impossible to invade the island due to the power of *Ravishailasha Wansaya*, Vijaya brought more people from India. There were terrible fights during this war causing the death of Vijaya's brother Sanjaya. Enraged by his brother's death, Vijaya intensified the war, causing severe damage to both parties.

Then Queen Mahapali wanted to end this destruction and came into an agreement to marry Vijaya in order to stop the war. Neglecting her own customs, Queen Mahapali married prince Vijaya in order to save her community even though he already had a Tamil Queen named *Kaweri*. However, seeing the continued atrocities done by Aryans to her community, i.e., (*Ravishailasha Wansaya*), Queen Mahapali secretly set fire to the grain stores of Vijaya and moved to Mahiyanganaya where her relatives lived.

There she gave birth to twin sons from Vijaya and died during childbirth. Their twin sons were named as Weeriya and Maagala. Later on, Vijaya brought down a Padi Queen from North India. It is believed that Queen Mahapali's sons got married to *Naga* virgins (another indigenous community of Sri Lanka). They moved to the forest and fought against Aryans, and later on, they came to be known as the *Vedda* community.

6.2.4 *Kuweni Ammiletto* – A Deity Who Protects Children and Pregnant Mothers

According to *Mahavamsa* and folklore, the *Vedda* community are the descendants of Kuweni and Vijaya's children Jeewahatta and Disala. But the *Vedda* community rejects that idea emphasizing that marriage between sisters and brothers is totally prohibited in their culture. To logically support their point, they highlight that if the marriage between siblings of the same family was accepted, it would have been continued as a tradition to this day in order to preserve and respect their ancient beliefs and customs. But they have never seen or heard of marriage of siblings. Therefore, according to their folklore, Kuweni is a *Yakka* tribal princess who had a relationship with prince Vijaya. They believe that Kuweni got married to Vijaya and had two children named as *Jeewahatta* and *Disala*, which is similar to the story in *Mahavamsa*.

Yet, they do not believe that they are the descendants of Kuweni's children but they believe that they are the descendants of the *Yakka* community, and they worship and respect Kuweni as a deity. The *Vedda community* believes that the spirit of their ancestors protects them. Usually, the women who die are considered as *Kiriamma* and they believe that those female spirits protect their children and tribe as deities. Therefore, Kuweni is referred to as *Kuweni Ammilatto*, the deity who protects their community.

There are different *Vedda* (indigenous) communities in Sri Lanka. So, some *Vedda* communities refer to Kuweni as *Kukulapola Kiriamma*. *Kukulapola Kiriamma* is referred to as *Kalu Kiriamma*, who is also the mother of *Bilindi Yaka*. According to local legends, Kuweni's son *Jeewahatta* became *Bilindi Yaka* in the afterlife. The *Vedda* community believes that *Kiriammas* bless small children and expectant mothers. In the *Kirikoraha Shanthi Karma*, which is a traditional performance invoking the blessings of the spirits of their ancestors, *Vedda* people also pay homage to *Kiriammas* as well. This fact highlights that Kuweni is considered as a deity by certain communities because they believe in her power to bless children and mothers. Figure 6.3 shows the *Dambana Vedda* communities.

Figure 6.3

Vedda Community in Sri Lanka



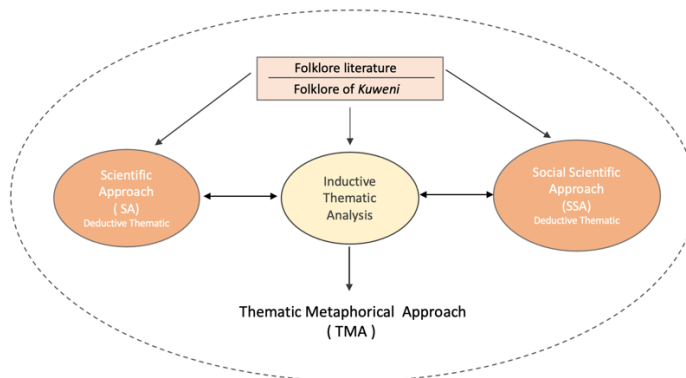
Note. Extracted from Open Sources by author

6.3 Thematic Metaphorical Approach (TMA)

As discussed in the data analysis of the Methodology of Conceptualization, the themes that have been discovered through the inductive thematic analysis and the themes that were taken from SA and SSA helped to define all the themes related to the folklore of *Kuweni*. This systematic process can be identified as the Thematic Metaphorical Approach (TMA) developed by the author. The correlation between the inductive thematic analysis, and SA and SSA can be clearly seen from Figure 6.4

Figure 6.4

Thematic Metaphorical Approach (TMA)



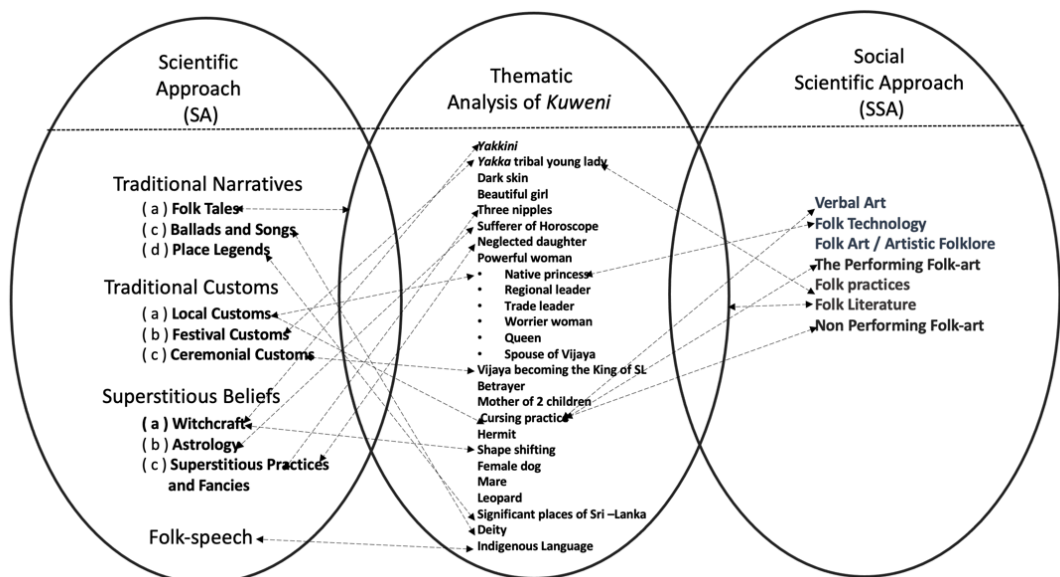
Note. Developed by author (2023)

SA consists of four main areas of traditional narratives, traditional customs, superstitious beliefs, and folk speech (Gomme, 1885). SSA consists of ten main areas of verbal art, folk medicine, folk technology, folk art, performing folk art, folk science, folk practices, folk games, folk literature and non-performing folk art to investigate which shapes up the overall folk culture (Gupta, 2007; Islam, 1985). Therefore, the literature as well as the primary data related to this specific folklore can be categorized

under these main themes (See Chapter 02 section 2.1.2). Both SA and SSA were used in a deductive approach (Creswell, 2014), where specific themes could be selected following the inductive approach while the themes were developed by the empirical data using the thematic analysis. Since, the inductive approach is used to explore new themes (Evans, 2017), both inductive and deductive approaches were used in this research to get a productive research outcome (Creswell, 2014). Figure 6.5 shows the selected themes from SA, SSA, and thematic analysis for the folklore of Kuweni. The middle part of the onion consists of the themes derived from the inductive thematic analysis, and the other themes were identified from SA and SSA in a deductive approach.

Figure 6.5

Cross Analysis of SA, Inductive Thematic Analysis, and SSA



Note. Developed by author (2023) using SA, SSA and Inductive Thematic Analysis.

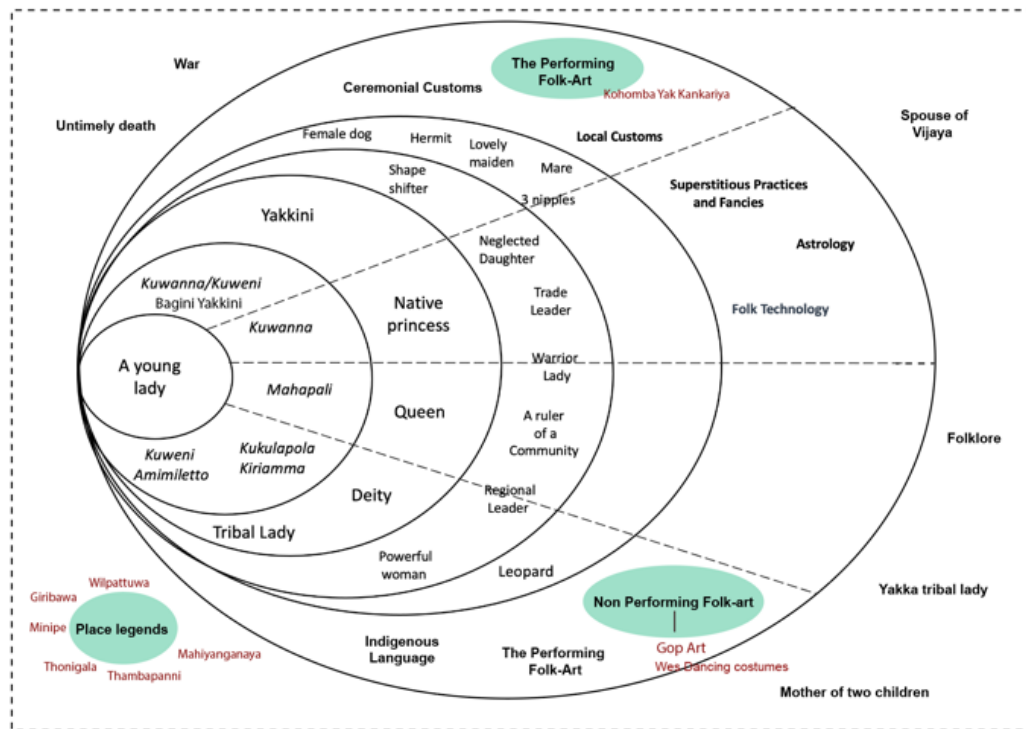
6.4 Identifying Fashion-related Themes from Kuweni - Folklore Characteristics Onion (FCO)

Developing the TMA as discussed in the previous section helped to create the Folklore Characteristics Onion (FCO). This FCO is a layered illustration which consists of all the key themes related to the narrative of Kuweni. These themes were helpful to create inter-connections between these three approaches and develop the FCO. It was developed from the inner core to outer shell by peeling off all the aspects related to the story of Kuweni. As shown in Figure 6.6, it started with the general identification of

the character of Kuweni in accordance with the different characters (Yakkini, Princess, Mare etc.) attributed to her in the folklore of Kuweni.

Figure 6.6

Themes Selected from the Folklore of Kuweni – FCO



Note. Developed by author (2023)

The innermost layer shows the different names she has been given such as Kuwanne, Kuweni, Mahapali, Kukulapola Kiriamma, and Kuweni Ammiletto. The second layer highlights the different identities vested in her life such as *Yakkini*, native princess, queen, deity, and tribal woman, among which the distinct roles of *Yakkini* and Queen attributed to her stand out. The third layer interprets some of Kuweni’s shape-shifting attributes, while emotional and symbolic interpretations of the character, such as animals, are indicated in the fourth layer. The terms in the outer circle highlight the correspondences with folklore categories identified by SA and SSA. The themes in the square represent the attributes shared by all four main variants. Though the common attributes convey a general idea about the character of Kuweni, the Thematic Metaphorical Approach (TMA) helps to reveal some hidden layers of the folklore of Kuweni which have been overlooked in the mainstream history.

Furthermore, Kuweni’s FCO helps to investigate the character in detail, such as animal representations (female dog, mare, and leopard) that symbolize different aspects of Kuweni’s personality. As demonstrated by the Thematic Metaphorical Approach, these three animals symbolize different personalities significant to the folk culture of Sri Lanka. Kuweni was known as a shapeshifter in different situations in her life.

Specifically, many people believe that the female dog is more faithful to an owner than a male dog. The female dog always cherishes the love and care of the owner, leading to a strong relationship. Thus, Kuweni's subservient qualities are symbolized by a female dog, hermit or a lovely maiden. The rise of the dominant characteristics of Kuweni as a regional leader, queen, and female warrior with power and strength are symbolized by a mare, denoting victory and strength. The leopard indicates the gloomy and aggressive feelings of this woman when she was abandoned with two children.

These four stories represent folklore related to Kuweni from different regional legends of Sri Lanka. Regardless of the name chosen to signify this female character, all of these stories share common elements such as a *Yakka* tribal woman, spouse of prince Vijaya, war, mother of two children, and her untimely tragic death that symbolizes the end of the *Yakka* dynasty. Therefore, throughout Sri Lanka, Kuweni can be understood as a woman who had gone through diverse life experiences. Among the themes that were developed from FCO, there are some specific ones that can be directly applied to the creative PLR.

In order to initiate the design practice – design development phase, as the researcher I selected the themes shown in Figure 6.6. Accordingly, the selected themes were decoded and the ideas embedded in them were expanded. When the researcher was exploring the place legends in the folklore of Kuweni, some interesting features that combine the story and the places were found. The soil in Thambapanni, for instance, is directly connected with the arrival of Prince Vijaya, and it is believed that he named that area as Thambapanni because of the copper-colored soil. Such interesting details related to the story itself were identified to initiate creative PLR. As a result of that, the theme of place legends was selected as the first theme.

Meanwhile, the themes such as non-performing folk art and folk technology were also selected for the ideation. All these themes were cross-referred with the literature related to fashion practices, trends and movements to start the design development phase of the research.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion

Conceptual development-based findings lay the foundation to proceed the fashion practice of the research with a theoretical approach. Both TMA and Kuweni -FCO indicate how the folklore related themes are identified and expressed as a layered outcome. This model can be applied as a mind map for any folklore to identify important themes related to the characters in the folklore.

CHAPTER 07

DESIGN PRACTICE - DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

7.1. Introduction

The themes that have been developed by the Kuweni- FCO are considered as the data for the design development phrase of this research. This phase starts with the exploration of the current global fashion trends, fashion movements and fashion product theories. Therefore, the researcher conducted a comprehensive literature review on fashion trends and theories, out of which, sustainability and fashion localism were identified as two important fashion movements (Fletcher, 2018). Fashion storytelling can be identified as a successful trend used by most brands in contemporary society which can also incorporate folklore. Localism from fashion movements and place legends from FCO are identified as closely interconnected areas where the fusion of concept development and design development can be successfully applied. Hence, place legends were identified as a key theme from the concept development phase when proceeding the creative PLR in design development with fashion localism. It should be noted here that these findings were presented in conferences and published in reputed journals⁴.

In the design development chapter, the findings are expressed in the first-person narrative style since all the innovative findings and experiments were done by the researcher and the experiential learning could be more effectively expressed through self-reflections.

⁴ Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Wickramasinghe, A., & Payne, A. (2023). Craft Traditions in Folklore: The Craft Symbols and Metaphors in the Folklore of Kuweni. *Book of Abstracts of the 4th International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage*, 247
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T_GgmfD8EYNn_D0-IXE3n1iA88KEjCwt/view

Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Payne, A., & Wickramasinghe, A. (2024). Crafting Kuweni's Legacy: Folklore-Inspired Responsible Dyeing Techniques and Textile Developments. *Fashion Practice*, 16(3), 1–24. Taylor and Francis. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17569370.2024.2409151>

Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., Payne, A., & Wickramasinghe, A. (2024). The Resurgence of Localism in Fashion: Celebrating the Traditions and Folklore through Storytelling. *IFFTI Annual Proceedings 2024*, 03, 444–449. <https://iffiti.org/downloads/iffiti-publication/annual-proceedings/proceedings-2024/PDF-444-449.pdf>

Thilakarathne, S., Gopura, S., & Wickramasinghe, A. (n.d.). *Folklore Traditions to Trend: Incorporating Local Textile Processing Knowledge with Contemporary Fashion*. Japan-KSCT Joint Symposium, Jeju Island, South Korea

7.2 Exploring the Place Legend of Thambapanni

Having identified Thambapanni as a prominent place legend in folklore, I revisited and examined this location for suitability and relatedness for the creative PLR. Currently, the Thambapanni area is known as Kudiramalai. However, considering its relatedness to the research, I decided to use the name Thambapanni in the entire research. I first visited this place to collect data for the concept development stage, and so, during the second visit, prime concern was given for the observational data that can be gathered for the creative PLR process. The relationship of Kuweni's palace inside Wilpattu National Park and Thambapanni (Kudiramalai) beach gave an insight into the narrative and the place itself had a mysterious ambience befitting the story itself. It is believed that Prince Vijaya arrived at the northwestern coastal area of the island. On his arrival, he was said to have touched the shore, and mesmerized by the copper-colored sand, named this beach Thambapanni. Thus, the Thambapanni beach has a direct relationship to the history of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, this location has been documented in historical literature such as *Mahavamsa*. During the second visit to Thambapanni, as the researcher, I experienced an indescribable, shadowy feeling probably because of the narrative of Kuweni back in my mind. As I touched the shore and turned my palm upwards, it was tinted with the same copper-color (See Figure 7.1), which was similar to what Prince Vijaya is said to have seen upon arrival. The fact that my prior studies on fashion trends and movement, and the colored soil in this place motivated me to experiment further on this soil and use it as a raw material for folklore driven textile development in fabric dyeing. During this research, based on the ethical guidelines, samples of Thambapanni soil were collected for the initial experiments.

Figure 7.1

The Sand from Thambapanni Beach



Note. Recorded by the author (2023).

7.3 Colors in Place Legends and Natural Yarn Dyeing Techniques

7.3.1 Thambapanni Soil Dyeing

The sand and soil samples collected from the Thambapanni (Kudiramalai) area were subjected to experimentation at the Department of Textile and Apparel Engineering Laboratory, University of Moratuwa. My primary objective was using the copper-colored soil from Thambapanni as a fabric dyeing substance.

Initially, I did the experiment at the University laboratory using a soil sample in order to see whether I can extract any color out of the soil. One of the PhD students who was conducting his PhD on Nano particles also helped me to conduct the Laboratory experiment. The date, time, experiments type and the methods followed are described in the following table.

Table 6

Laboratory Experiment to see Color Outcomes from Thambapanni Soil

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
01	22/12/2022	Morning	Lab experiment	<p>1.Sand was grinded into small particles using a hand grinder and dry weight was measured.</p> <p>Wet weight – 5 g Dry weight – 4.852 g</p> <p>2. Fabric swatches were measured (mercerized cotton)</p> <p>Weight of F 01 – 2.0038 g Weight of F 02 – 2.1196 g</p> <p>3. Washed the fabrics thoroughly and hung them to dry.</p> <p>4. Heat the soil sample with water for around 2 hours</p> <p>5.Let the soil sample cool for some time</p> <p>6.Separated the liquid from the soil using a sieve</p> <p>7.Ground up some alum (<i>Seenakkaran</i>) and added 60 ml water and 0.1g of the ground alum into a beaker and dissolved the compound well.</p>

				<p>8. Added one fabric sample and heated it at 70-75⁰ C in the solution for 1½ hours while stirring it well from time to time.</p> <p>9. Let the fabric cool for some time and rinsed it well.</p> <p>10. Dipped both fabric samples in the dye bath and heated at 60⁰ C for 1½ hours.</p> <p>11. Let the fabric samples cool and rinsed them well and used the shade dry technique to dry them.</p>
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One fabric sample was mordant with alum and the other was only scoured. But the dye was fixed to both fabric samples, and without doing the washes, both fabric samples looked similar. This laboratory experiment was useful to understand the potential of extracting dye from soil samples for textile dyeing. See Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2

The Laboratory Experiments with Thambapanni Soil



Note. Recorded by the author (2023)

Having completed the lab experiments, I started doing domestic experiments with available mordents and natural fabrics such as cotton, poplin, and linen given the sustainable nature of this project. Further, these experiments were done with semi-synthetic fibers such as viscose. The experiment process and outcomes were recorded in a reflective learning journal (See Appendix D). Domestic experiments on sample dyeing on viscose, linen, cotton, and poplin fabrics showed outcomes similar to the lab experiments, and shades of Thambapanni copper-color were created (See Figure 7.3). Therefore, these experiments were helpful to understand that Thambapanni soil could be used as a natural dye substance in this research, given further technical investigation was conducted.

Figure 7.3

Thambapanni Soil Dyed Fabric Swatches



Note. Recorded & developed by the author (2023)

After observing the enigmatic ambiance of Thambapanni, characterized by its unique environmental features, and having conducted the laboratory experiments, the research team planned an on-site experiment to explore the feasibility of direct dyeing fabrics and yarns from Thambapanni soil. Consequently, I devised two distinct sample sets for conducting on-site experiments within the Thambapanni area in Wilpattu National Park. Thambapanni is located within the boundaries of Wilpattu National Park and is conserved by the Department of Wildlife in Sri Lanka. Therefore, I obtained the ethical clearance (EDN/2021/01) approved by the University Ethics Committee and all the necessary permissions, approvals and steps to conduct the study with minimal impact to the conserved area (Refer Appendix C). For this specific experiment, cotton yarns and fabrics were selected based on the story behind the folklore of Kuweni. As per legendary accounts, Kuweni was spinning cotton in a hermit form when Prince Vijaya arrived at Thambapanni, creating a strong connection to cotton yarns and fabrics from the original folklore. The cotton trees that are still there in and around Kuweni's palace inside Wilpattu National Park also provided further affirmation to the story. Therefore, under the folk technology in FCO, handloom weaving was selected as another important topic that can be used in the design development process. Handloom weaving can be identified as a huge set of knowledge and skills since it is related to diverse areas. There are different methods, materials as well as skills related to handloom weaving. Setting up the loom and spinning the cotton yarns are few of them. In that sense, handloom can be identified under the theme folk technology. The cotton were selected as the yarn type for the weaving process, drawing on both the story of Kuweni and its relationship to Thambapanni.

- The process of scouring the cotton yarns and fabrics

For this experiment, I utilized greige (raw) and white cotton yarns that are readily available in the local market. In order to initiate the onsite experiment, I referred to

scouring and mordanting processes based on the information acquired from literature and open-source data by different practitioners. My lab experiment for the dyeing process was helpful to follow the methodical steps in scouring. For this onsite experiment, 16 cotton hanks from $2/80$ yarn count, 2 raw cotton samples and 18 cotton fabric samples were arranged. 16 hanks underwent a 20-minute scouring process under constant low heat (40 – 60° C) from the stove, and sodium carbonate (Na_2CO_3) and mild washing liquid were used to eliminate impurities. Since 16 hanks could not be scoured at once, 250 g of cotton yarns was measured and totally immersed in a stainless-steel bowl with water. Then, 5 g of sodium carbonate and 5 ml of mild washing liquid were added to this solution and the yarns were scoured for 20 minutes under low heat (approximately around 40-60°C). It was recommended to use a Ph neutral washing-up liquid or detergent powder for this scouring process. Greige (raw) and white yarns were scoured separately, and rinsed well with clean water and dried under room temperature.

- The process of mordanting the cotton yarns and fabrics

After the scouring process, 12 hanks out of the 16 hanks were treated with alum. Similar to the yarn samples, fabric samples were also scoured and part of that was mordanted as shown in Table 08. According to the standards followed by most dye practitioners, alum (locally available as *Seenakkaran*⁵) amounting to 15% of the weight of the fabrics or yarns was added to a hot water bath for the mordanting. The yarns and fabrics were mordanted separately for 30 minutes. Both scouring and mordanting were done at a domestic level with the available tools. Yarns and fabric samples were made to compare and contrast the similarities and differences before and after the dyeing process. For better organization, I assigned unique codes to each sample, and their details, including their respective locations (L1 and L2) and the outcomes were meticulously recorded in data sheets. Accordingly, I prepared two separate sets of data sheets for the experiments, one for each sample. The coding of the samples was done as shown in Table 07. L1 and L2 locations were hypothetically named before the second visit to Thambapanni considering the environmental factors such as the quality of soil, minimum interference from wild animals and human behavior. After visiting the Thambapanni (Kudiramalai) area, the exact location for soil sample collection was decided.

Table 7

The Fabric Samples for Onsite and Solar Dyeing Experiments

⁵ *Seenakkaran* is a locally available type of alum (white color hard material) that can be purchased from indigenous medicine shops.

Material type	Code	No of hanks/fabrics samples	L1	L2	Solar dyeing
Greige Yarn- Scoured	GY-S	3	✓	✓	✓
Greige Yarn- Scoured & Mordanted	GY-SM	2	✓	✓	
Greige Yarn- Scoured, Mordanted and Tie-dye	GY-SMT	2	✓	✓	
Greige Yarn	GY	2	✓	✓	
White Yarn- Scoured	WY-S	3	✓	✓	✓
White Yarn- Scoured & Mordanted	WY-SM	2	✓	✓	
White Yarn- Scoured, Mordanted and Tie-dye	WY-SMT	2	✓	✓	
White Yarn	WY	2	✓	✓	
Raw Cotton- Scoured	RC-S	1		✓	
Raw Cotton	RC	1		✓	
Handloom Cotton fabric- Scoured	HCF-S	2	✓	✓	
Handloom cotton fabric- Scoured & Mordanted	HCF-SM	2	✓	✓	
Handloom cotton fabric- Scoured, Mordanted & Tie-dye	HCF-SMT	2	✓	✓	

Machine loom cotton fabric- Scoured	MCF-S	2	✓	✓	
Machine loom cotton fabric- Scoured, Mordanted	MCF-SM	2	✓	✓	
Machine loom cotton fabric- Scoured, Mordanted and Tie-dye	MCF-SMT	2	✓	✓	
Handloom cotton fabric- 2/80 Scoured	HCF 2/80 - S	2	✓	✓	
Handloom cotton fabric- 2/80 Scoured & Mordanted	HCF 80/2 - SM	2	✓	✓	

7.3.2 Approach 01: Onsite Experiment at Thambapanni

The onsite experiment was planned from 11th to 25th of February 2023 in Thambapanni (Kudiramalai) area. Accordingly, the research team carefully selected two distinct locations near Thambapanni (Kudiramalai) in close proximity for conducting onsite experiments. The selection of these locations was based on several factors, including the quality of the soil (ensuring it was uncontaminated), minimal human interference to safeguard the materials, and protection against environmental factors such as sea tides and wild animals. Location 01, shown in Figure 7.4, was situated approximately 30 feet above sea level and experienced strong oceanic winds from the northwest.

Figure 7.4

The Selection of L1 and L2 for Onsite Experimentations at Thambapanni



Location 01



Location 02

Note. Photographed by the Author (2023)

This location was chosen primarily to ensure the protection of the materials and its proximity to the Naval base in Thambapanni (Kudiramalai), making it a highly restricted area for public access. This ensured the safety of the samples from human interactions. Location 02 was situated much closer to the sea, approximately 30 feet away from the shoreline. The sand on this shore had various colors, and the environment had an obscure look as shown in Figure 7.4. In contrast to Location 01, Location 02 had higher soil moisture content. Further, I referred to different mud dyeing techniques used across the world during the literature review to collect data regarding the dyeing process (See Section 2.6.2 Responsible Colors). Accordingly, in both locations, the research team placed two yarn sample sets as shown in Table 08, to investigate the possibility of dyeing the yarns directly using the soil, without using any natural or artificial fixing agents.

To conduct the experiment, the onsite research team dug pits on L1 and L2 measuring 3x2x1 feet (length, width, and height) making enough space to bury the samples. The pits were kept shallow to avoid difficulties in retrieving them. The moisture of the soil was another factor I considered in this context. Sea water was added to mix the soil with the yarns, and then the pits were covered with soil. Indicators with name tags were placed to mark the locations. The weather during this period remained consistently sunny, with no rainfall. The samples remained buried in the soil for 14 days. Although mud dyeing and onsite experiments are slightly different, considering the environmental concerns and time constraints, two weeks were considered a sufficient time to absorb color from the soil to the cotton yarns and fabrics.

Figure 7.5

Onsite Experimentation Process at L1 and L2 in Thambapanni



Note. Photographed by the author (2023)

After two weeks, the samples were retrieved from their respective locations. It is worth noting that both locations were inhabited by wild animals, including wild boars, and unfortunately, some samples buried in the area were attacked by wild animals. Some fabric samples were also taken out of the pit by wild boars. Location 02, in particular, was significantly impacted by wild animals. Given the social scientific nature of this study and its relationship with folklore, I decided to take these factors positively. In order to avoid contamination and minimize the exposure to the external environment, the samples were carefully collected and placed in protective containers once they were taken out of the pits. However, upon retrieval, the samples exhibited some moisture content. Following the drying process, the most effectively dyed and high-quality yarn samples were selected for handloom textile experiments and developments.

Additionally, it was noted that almost all the fabric samples were damaged by termites creating some natural patterns. Most of these fabrics were also slightly dyed by the soil in both L1 and L2. Therefore, although there was no perfect outcome in the dyeing aspect, in the creative design aspect, there were possibilities that designers could explore to achieve natural effects for the fabrics. The fabric samples that were attacked by termites could also be used in a creative approach in future research by observing the natural effects that they have created in the fabric.

I did some tie and dye fabric samples with some seeds and those seeds had taken root as they were buried in the soil while tied into the fabrics. In fact, tender leaves were found when the samples were taken out of the pit (See Figure 7.6). These seeds could be a reason why the wild boars attacked the pits. Since they are fond of eating different seeds, the boars may have tried to dig them up. Moreover, because of biological reactions, the color of the fabrics has been changed around the places where seeds were tied to the cloth. Such natural reactions can also be used as an inspiration for different patterns and shapes created by nature.

Figure 7.6

Biological and Animal Reactions of the Onsite Experiments



Note. Recorded by author (2023)

The open-source data such as YouTube videos gave plenty of insights into conducting experiments, and helped to enhance the experimentation process. The trial-and-error outcomes motivated me to achieve the best results, and the successful yarn samples in particular, motivated me to develop a fabric sample to clearly identify the color outcomes.

7.3.3 Approach 02: Offsite Dyeing Experiments of Thambapanni Soil

- Solar Dyeing Technique

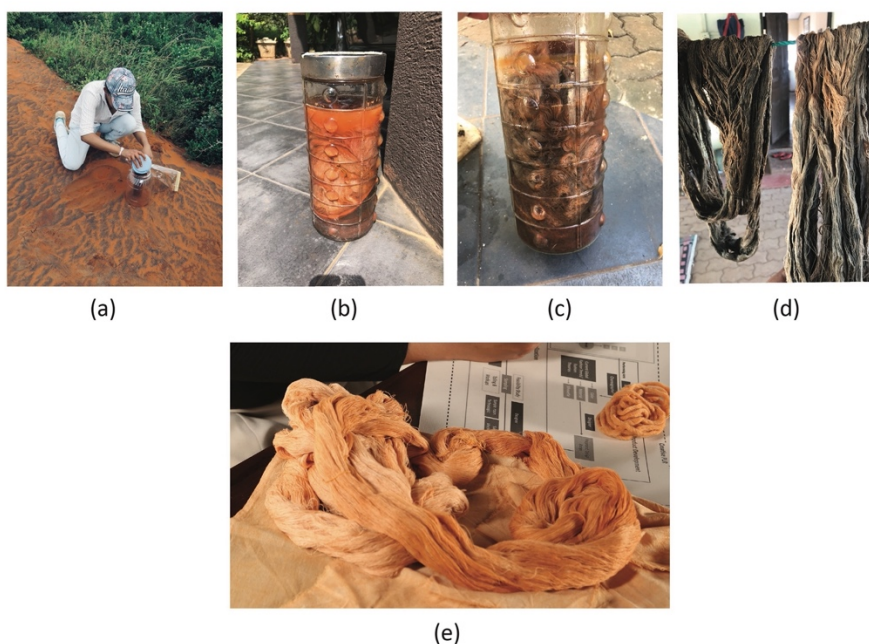
Solar dyeing technique has been used to extract dye from natural materials such as flowers, and fruits using water and sunlight. In this technique, natural fibers like cotton or wool are immersed in a glass jar containing dyeing materials such as flowers, leaves, and bark, along with water, for a duration of 7 to 10 days under direct sunlight. When I was exploring different dyeing techniques, I explored this simple dyeing technique in many open sources such as YouTube, Instagram, and blogs done by different practitioners. Among them, the YouTube channel by Cabin Boy Knits had highly descriptive and instructional videos that enabled viewers to get a better idea about the whole process (*Solar Yarn Dyeing*, n.d.). In my study, I followed this experimental approach in a controlled environment, and I used the soil from a sand dune in Thambapanni closer to the L1 location. Although I have seen most practitioners using

natural materials such as flowers, barks, and leaves, I have not seen anyone using minerals such as soil for the dyeing process. Therefore, for this solar dyeing experiment I used the soil from Thambapanni as an innovative raw material along with sea water instead of normal water. The sea water was taken from the sea near the L2 location. The soil samples as well as the sea water were collected under ethical guidelines after obtaining the permission from the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka. One of their wildlife officers also joined us to supervise our activities inside the forest.

In this particular experiment, the objective was to investigate the feasibility of dyeing cotton yarns using soil and seawater using sunlight as a catalyst. This experiment was done from 13th to 26th of February 2023 in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. As depicted in Figure 7.7, the scoured greige yarn hank (GY-S) and scoured white yarn hank (WY-S) were soaked in the soil and sea water solution for 14 consecutive days exposing the glass jar to an open environment so that it could receive direct sunlight at temperatures ranging from 27 to 30 degrees Celsius throughout the day.

Figure 7.7

Solar Dyeing Technique and its Outcomes



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

Periodic shaking of the jar was done to ensure even distribution of the solution on the yarns. No mordents or artificial fixatives were used. Figure 7.7 (c) illustrates the appearance of the yarns after 14 days, followed by shade drying. Initially the yarns were shade dried to avoid burning of the colors from exposure to direct sunlight since

the temperature was quite high in the month of February. The soil particles remaining on the yarns were removed during the shade drying process. The resulting color can be seen in Figure 7.7 (e). The yarns effectively absorbed the color from the soil, and even after shade drying, there was no discernible fading or alteration. This experiment demonstrated greater success when compared to the onsite experiment approach. While solar dyeing is typically applied to natural materials such as flowers, leaves, or nuts, this experiment demonstrated that it could be successfully applied to this specific soil as well.

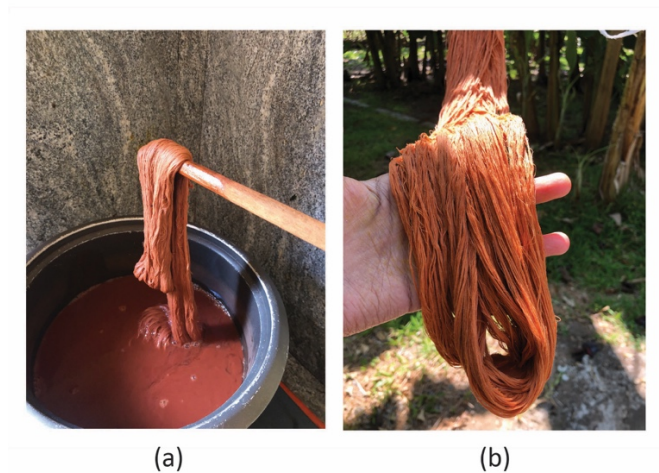
- **Hearth Dyeing Technique**

In order to identify the most productive technique to get a unique color from the Thambapanni soil, I wanted to conduct different experiments. Hence, after conducting onsite and solar dyeing techniques, I decided to conduct a domestic experiment similar to the very first laboratory experiment. This was done using the available domestic utensils. In this experiment I mordanted two scoured yarn hanks in an alum (*Seenakkaran*) solution. First, I measured 5g of alum and ground it well. Then I measured 3 liters of water and boiled it on a gas stove. For this experiment, I used a stainless-steel rice cooker bowl which was non-reactive with mordants or dyes and easy to handle. When the water came to a boil, I reduced the heat and added alum and stirred it well. At this moment, some white color bubbles appeared with a slight noise. I reduced the heat of the stove further and set the temperature to around 40-60⁰C while the mordanting was taking place. The soaked hanks should be boiled at low temperature for around 30 minutes once they are added to the alum-water solution. Afterwards, I put the mordanted yarn hanks aside to cool.

Thereafter, I put 3 cups (750g) of Thambapanni sand and 3 liters of Thambapanni sea water which was collected during the field visits to the rice cooker pot. This was boiled for about 30 minutes till it reached 100⁰ C. Then I turned off the stove, put the scoured yarns to the container, and set it aside for around 30 minutes. After rinsing off the excess dye liquid, I let the yarn hanks dry in the warm sunlight. While conducting these offsite experiments, I checked the temperature multiple times, and at the time of this experiment, the temperature in Anuradhapura was around 35⁰C. After drying the yarn hanks, I washed them around three times to remove the sand particles and excess color. Then I dried it again under direct sunlight. After drying the hanks, it had a very soft feeling and a nice copper color as shown in Figure 7.8(b).

Figure 7.8

Hearth Dyeing Technique for Cotton Yarns done by the Researcher



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

7.3.4 Eco-printing Techniques from Surrounding Environment

With the exposure to the open-source data, particularly by referring to WGSN trend reports related to sustainable natural dyes, I experimented with some leaves and flowers that are indigenous to Wilpattu National Park, bringing the folklore relationship to eco-printing technique. Having obtained the permission of the Wildlife Conservation Department for specimen collection, I collected some leaves and flowers during my visits to Thambapanni. I experimented with several natural dye extraction techniques found in open-source videos on the Internet along with traditional techniques that were practiced in Sri Lanka (See Appendix D). This was helpful to identify some colors that can be naturally extracted from leaves, flowers, barks, and roots. Among the different eco-printing techniques available, bundle dyeing is a technique where steam is used to print the color of the natural material onto the fabric. The techniques and methods I used were documented in a separate logbook. In the process of bundle dyeing, fresh leaves or flowers are wrapped in the fabric and steamed well so that the fabric absorbs their colors as shown in Figure 7.9 (a). First, the leaves, flowers or fruits should be placed on a fabric according to the desired pattern. A polythene cover should be placed above the materials, and then, the fabric should be rolled with a stick. Thereafter, it should be wrapped with some cotton cloth pieces. After wrapping, the rolled fabric should be steamed well for about 15-30 minutes. A rice cooker steamer was used to do this experiment and the outcome can be seen in Figure 7.9 (b).

Figure 7.9

Bundle Dyeing Experiments Conducted by the Author



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

In eco printing technique, fresh flowers, leaves or fruits were pressed to the fabric by a hammer. This also further described in the Appendix D. These experiments were done to identify the potential of applying natural printing and dyeing techniques. It was vital to use fresh, natural materials for this printing technique. These experiments were conducted to see the potential of applying simple printing techniques using natural materials from the surrounding environment.

7.3.5 Natural Cotton Yarn Dyeing Techniques from Traditional Practices

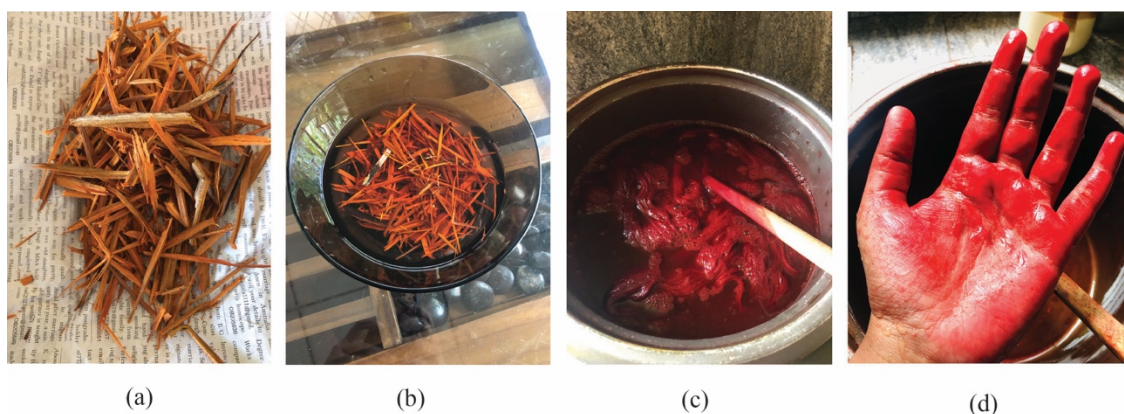
After the printing experiments, I focused on Sri Lankan traditional dyeing techniques using natural raw materials. To initiate the novel experiments, I went through secondary and open-source data as well as participant-driven data. Here, participants mean dye practitioners and handloom weavers with solid knowledge about traditional natural dyeing techniques. During the creative PLR, the knowledge, experiences and the data collected through observations were applied to conduct experiments on natural dyeing. Initially, I collected different raw materials such as leaves, barks, roots and flowers from the surrounding environment of Thambapanni area, and some raw materials were purchased from local indigenous medicine shops in Sri Lanka. As the experiments went on, only some techniques and materials yielded positive outcomes while others were unsuccessful. However, both successful as well as unsuccessful outcomes are explained because even the unsuccessful ones give important insights into the failures and reasons behind those failures, which would be helpful for other researchers.

- Pathagi dye (Sapan wood dye)

Following the methods of the local natural dye practitioners, I started conducting experiments with the Sapan wood plant (*Biancaea sappan*), which is known as Pathagi in Sinhalese language. Currently, this plant can be found mainly in the central region of Sri Lanka but previously, they had existed in the North Central province as well. However, due to human activities such as chena cultivation and bush fires, now it is hard to find Pathagi all around Sri Lanka. For my experiment, I borrowed a Pathagi bark from Kegalle area. The sapwood as well as the heartwood of the tree are taken to produce the natural dye. Heartwood of the tree has a strong red color. After peeling off the bark from a matured tree, the sapwood or heartwood part should be cut into small pieces, and the more raw materials used the stronger the color becomes (See Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10

Pathagi Dyeing Process followed by the Author



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

As the first experiment, I added 40 g of Pathagi heartwood pieces to 500 ml of water and soaked it in the water for 2-3 days as shown in Figure 7.10 (b). Even after a few hours, the water became a reddish orange color. Gradually this color turned dark red and I could see the color changes in the transparent glass container. The process was followed according to the data provided by the natural dye practitioners.

Initially I made small cotton yarn samples that were scoured for the dyeing experiments. After 2-3 days, I soaked one yarn sample in the Pathagi solution for 15 minutes. After rinsing off the excess dye, the sample assumed a bright orange color. Then I dried the sample 01 under room temperature. After this experiment, I boiled the Pathagi solution (in a gas stove until it reached 100⁰ C (See Figure 7.10 (c)). After turning off the heat, I submerged a few cotton yarn samples in the Pathagi dye solution. This produced a very strong and vibrant shade of red, which even tinted the skin on my palms bright red when I rinsed off the yarns (See Figure 7.10 (d)). These yarn samples were then dried in a shady place without exposing them to the direct sunlight. After the yarn samples dried, I washed one sample several times under flowing water

to wash off the excess dye. Then the color became a little faded compared to the initial color.

After this experiment, I wanted to see the color changes that I can do to these samples by adding natural acids or bases to the dyed yarns. Vinegar is an acidic component that is traditionally used in Sri Lanka. Therefore, I soaked one sample in a coconut vinegar solution for around 10 minutes to see if there is any brightening or fading of color. As a result, the color of the sample faded turning it into a dark beige color. By changing parameters such as the number of raw materials, amount of water, number of soaking days, heat, and duration of the dye bath, the color of the yarns can be changed as shown in Figure 7.11. I observed that a color pallet ranging from pink to bright red can be created by changing these parameters according to the practitioners' requirements.

Figure 7.11

Pathagi Dyed Yarns – Color Palette



Note. Developed by Author (2024)

I recorded all my experiments in a separate journal with the dates, processes, and photographs, and all the experiments conducted using Pathagi were done from February to March where the average temperature of the experiment location (Anuradhapura) is between 30-35°C. This warm climate was extremely helpful in getting a good color since it was easy to dry the dyed yarns.

- Nuga and Gansooriya dye (Banyan and Portia bark dye)

The next experiment was done using the barks of Nuga (Banyan) and Gansooriya (Portia) trees. Nuga (*Ficus benghalensis*) is a species that is commonly found in the dry as well as intermediate zones of Sri Lanka. Gansooriya, (*Thespesia populnea*), on the other hand, is commonly found in the dry zone of the country.

Since it is difficult to peel off the barks of Nuga and Gansooriya, they were purchased from indigenous medicine shops, where they are abundantly available since both barks are used in Ayurvedic medicine. In relation to this experiment, I had the benefit of having prior experience and self-reflections related to the dyeing process because I have observed a strong reddish-brown color when these two compounds were boiled together for traditional (Ayurvedic) medicine production. Since ayurvedic doctors usually prescribe medicine that can be made at home using commonly available natural materials, we are used to boil different parts of trees with medicinal properties to extract traditional medicines.

These barks were available as small pieces, and I washed them well and soaked them in water under room temperature overnight (See Figure 7.12 (a)). After soaking well, the following morning I boiled the solution on a gas stove for 45 minutes until the color was extracted. Since I used about 100g of raw materials, around 1 liter of water was used for boiling them. Having referred to open sources and observed how traditional dye practitioners make the dye bath, I had learned that darker hues can be created by heating the dye solution over and over again for a few days. Therefore, I boiled the solution again in the evening for around 30 minutes. Then I set the solution aside for one day and boiled it for 15 minutes on the following day. By boiling it repeatedly, I could extract a strong brownish orange color, which was similar to the dye extracted from Thambapanni soil.

Figure 7.12

Nuga and Gansooriya raw materials and outcome



Note. Developed by Author (2024).

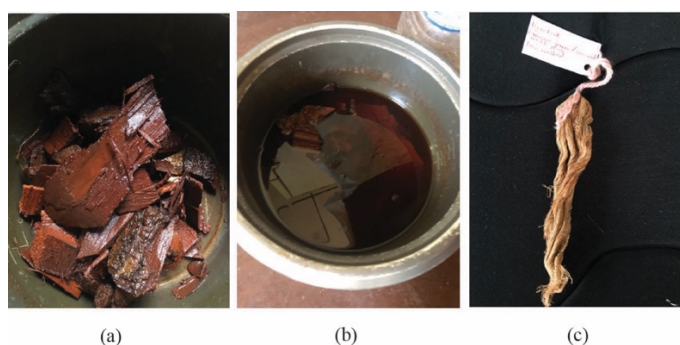
After taking them off the stove, I soaked one scoured yarn sample in the hot dye bath and let it rest for around 30 minutes. After rinsing it well, the yarn sample was shade dried in order to fix the color to the yarn. After drying it well I tagged it for future references as shown in Figure 7.12 (b)

- Kumbuk dye (Arjun tree)

Kumbuk (*Terminalia arjuna*), known as Arjuna tree in English, is abundantly available in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. Kumbuk is considered a very valuable tree with lots of herbal properties, and so, I could purchase pieces of Kumbuk bark from the indigenous medicine shops. After washing them well, I soaked them in cold water overnight. The next day, I boiled this Kumbuk water solution on a gas stove for around 15 minutes under 100°C -. Then I let it cool for one day and boiled it again the following day until its colors were well-extracted to the dye bath, creating a dark brown color as shown in Figure 7.13 (b).

Figure 7.13

Dyed Kumbuk Cotton Yarns



Note. Developed by author (2024).

After turning off the stove, a sample cotton yarn piece was soaked in the dye bath. Although there was a strong brown color in the solution, the yarn sample dyed lightly, resulting in a light brown color (See Figure 7.13 (c)). This specific dye bath gave a very pleasant aroma when it was boiling, and the same fragrance could be smelled in the sample as well.

- **Venivel (*Tree Turmeric*), Kohomba (*Neem*), Amu Kaha (*Turmeric*), Nika (*Chaste Tree*), Sepalika (*Night-flowering jasmine*) and Aralu (*Myrobalan*) dye**

The same technique followed when extracting Kumbuk dye for dyeing the yarn samples was applied for extracting dye from Venivel (*Coscinium fenestratum*),

Kohomba (*Azadirachha indica*), Kaha (*Azadirachta indica*), Nika, (*Vitex negundo*), Sepalika (*Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*), and Aralu (*Terminalaia chebula*) to dye the yarns. All of these materials are herbal ingredients that are used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine production as well in the traditional dyeing process in Sri Lanka. Venivel powder, kohomba barks and fresh kaha roots/powder are specially considered as herbs that are beneficial for a healthy skin and curing dermatologic conditions like skin rashes. Sepalika flowers, aralu nuts and nika leaves are also used as valuable indigenous herbs. Kohomba, kaha, nika and sepalika are widely found in the dry zone of Sri Lanka which has strong connection with the natural dyeing and Aurvedic medicine production. I purchased all these ingredients except Sepalika from indigenous medicine shops. Since there is a Sepalika tree in my garden, I collected fresh Sepalika flowers from it as shown in Figure 7.14 (a)

Figure 7.14

Collected (Night Jasmine) Sepalika Flowers from Home Garden



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

As the first step, all ingredients were cleaned well, and soaked in water for around 30 minutes in separate containers. Turmeric roots were crushed into a soft pulp using a grinder. After that, they were boiled well for around 30 minutes. Twenty-four hours after the first boiling process, the second boiling was done. When repeating this activity, the color of the dye bath becomes darker and more intense. If a light color is needed, the number of boiling days and hours can be reduced. If a strong color is needed, the solution should be boiled repeatedly for around 2-3 times until the color becomes darker.

On all these dyes, cotton yarn hanks were soaked in a water bath for the dyeing purpose. Accordingly, the cotton yarn samples which were soaked in the venivel dye bath gave a light-yellow color, kohomba a dull yellowish color, amu kaha a brilliant yellow color, and sepalika a bright yellow color. The Sepalika dye bath can be seen in Figure 7.14 (b). Both venivel and sepalika emanated a pleasant smell while boiling compared to Kaha and Kohomba, which produced a strong unpleasant odor after being boiled for several days. All the above-mentioned raw materials helped me to create a yellowish color pallet with shades of yellow slightly different from each other.

Figure 7.15

Yellow Color by Amu Kaha (a) and Sepalika + Vevivel Dyed Cotton Yarns (b)



Note. Developed by Author (2024).

During this research I expected to extract a shade of green from Nika (*Vitex negundo*) and dark brown or black color from Aralu (*Terminalia chebula*). Yet, both Nika and Aralu did not yield successful outcomes. First, I ground the Nika leaves in a small hand grinder and boiled them well following the same process mentioned above. Although it produced a shade of green, the dye was not absorbed by the scoured cotton yarn sample. I used the same technique for Aralu nuts as well. I did not crush them but soaked them in water and boiled them repeatedly to get a dark shade. That, too, was not successful, though it gave a pleasant aroma while boiling.

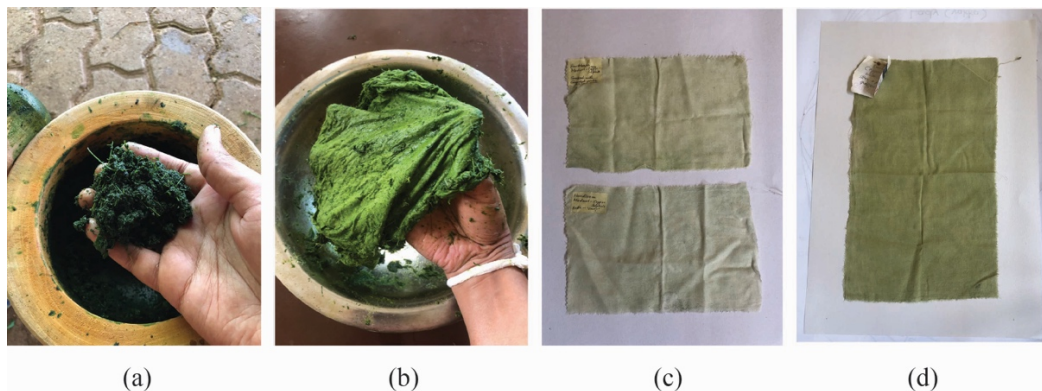
When selecting raw materials for the dyeing process, I sometimes used barks, flowers, or leaves as well as nuts to get different colors because different parts of trees can produce different colors and aromas. This knowledge was acquired from the Sri Lankan socio-cultural background. For example, since my childhood I knew that venivel, amu kaha and sepalika produce shades of yellow because they are part of our day-to-day life. Amu kaha (turmeric) is mostly used as a coloring agent with medicinal properties in Sri Lankan cuisine. Further, venivel and amu kaha are used for skincare and beauty treatments because they give a pleasant golden color to the skin while also nourishing the skin. As mentioned earlier, since most indigenous doctors ask the patient to make some medicines at home, we have to find different plants from our environment including forests. However, commonly unavailable or rare herbs and medicines can be purchased from indigenous medicine shops. After collecting the raw ingredients, we make the medicines by boiling, grinding and mixing different ingredients together as per the instructions of the Ayurvedic doctors. This experience coupled with the knowledge shared by Sri Lankan elders familiar with natural remedies, gave me a wealth of knowledge about different plants, and their daily uses, qualities and herbal properties as well as colors and aromas. Therefore, the experiences I had acquired throughout my life were useful for this entire process.

- Nil-awariya dye (Indigo plant)

There are different Indigo dyeing techniques all over the world. After watching some open-source videos on YouTube, I tried some experiments related to Indigo dyeing on my own. Nil-awariya (*Indigofera tinctoria*) is the Sinhalese name used for the Indigo plant. Usually, these plants are available in the rainy season and die in the dry season, and they grow closer to a water source. First, I collected some Nil-awariya leaves from nearby lakes and canals. After collecting the leaves, I started to replicate some experiments I saw on YouTube. According to these videos, different techniques of color extraction were followed by different communities in the world. So, I crushed fresh leaves using a wooden mortar to extract the dark green liquid from them (See Figure 7.16 (a)). I also ground some fresh leaves with salt following the Japanese technique known as the salting technique as shown in Figure 7.16 (b). But none of them could dye the cotton fabrics a shade of blue. Instead, they only produced a dull green color as shown in Figure 7.16 (c)

Figure 7.16

Initial Experiments with Crushed Leaves of a Plant Similar to Nil-awariya



Note. Developed by Author (2024)

Since the experiment was not successful, I contacted natural dye practitioners and indigenous medical doctors to affirm the color that could be extracted from the nil-awariya plant. A traditional oil known as *Nilgundayadi Thailaya* is made by Ayurvedic doctors using the nil-awariya plant. Hence, those indigenous doctors have a good idea about the plant. When I contacted the dye practitioners and indigenous doctors, they confirmed that I had been using a wild plant (nil-hawadiya) which is very similar to nil-awariya. Since these plants look similar, they can only be differentiated by careful examination. Having understood my mistake, I was able to find the exact nil-awariya plant near a small tank in Wilachchiya area, Anuradhapura, with the help of a native villager from the area. Further, the identity of the plant was confirmed by one of the Ayurvedic doctors as well.

After collecting enough leaves, I washed the leaves and ground them into a paste in a wooden mortar. Then I squeezed the liquid from the pulp, collected the pulp in a container and let it dry for 1-2 days to collect the dried layer as Indigo Color. But it was green in color, and did not produce a blue color as I expected. When doing these experiments, I put some leaves in a water container to keep them fresh for a few days. The color of the water in the bucket became dark green after around three days, and I observed that the edges of the bucket were tinted blue and the surface of the water bucket had become blue (See Figure 7.17).

Figure 7.17

Nil-awariya Turning into Blue Color After Some Days



Note. Developed by Author (2024).

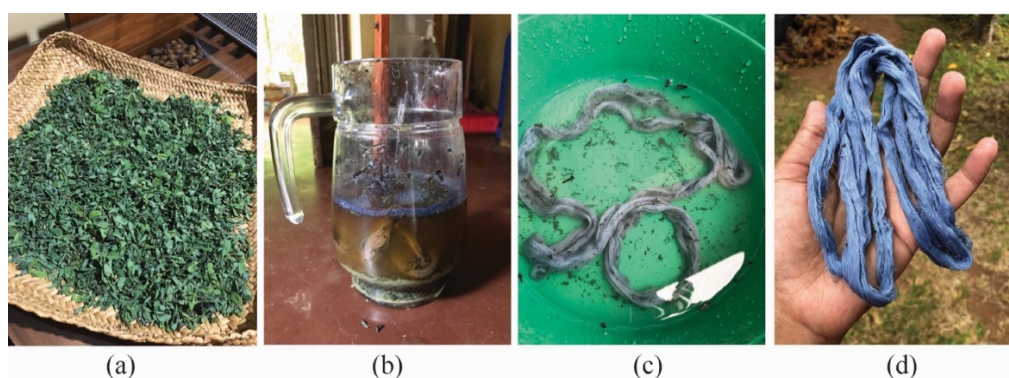
Therefore, I realized that there could be some other technique to extract a dye of this shade. Though my initial experiment was unsuccessful, I conducted further investigations to come up with a successful outcome. I posed this question to dye practitioners but they were also unable to explain a correct way to extract indigo color in a traditional way. They said that they also created blue color by adding artificial chemicals to nil-awariya leaves. Then I watched a YouTube channel by Michel Garcia, a renowned natural dye expert. He is a master dyer, botanist, and chemist, and all his experiments were very easy and could be performed with easily available materials. His descriptive videos made me think of a new way of doing the experiments.

Accordingly, I collected some Nil-awariya leaves from the Wilachchiya area, taking care to collect only fresh leaves. Collecting these plants in the month of July was extremely difficult since it was the dry season to Anuradhapura district. After collecting the leaves, I separated them from their twigs. Then, they were shade dried for one day. The next day I measured 25g of leaves and ground them into a fine powder using an electric grinder. According to Michel Garcia's video, the powder should have been light green in color, but my leaves were dark green. Then I gathered quicklime (Calcium Oxide), a glass jar, wooden spoon and hot water for the experiment as explained in the video. As per the instructions in the video, I add 500 ml of normal water to the glass jar and add the nil-awariya powder. After stirring it well, the solution

turned to dark green. Then I add some hot water while stirring the solution. Meanwhile, I soaked a cotton yarn hank in water for this experiment. After stirring the solution, 5 g of quicklime was added to it. Quicklime can be purchased from hardware shops or chemical shops, and this Calcium Oxide (CaO) chemical composition can be naturally made from seashells as well. Adding quicklime should be done carefully since it pops up when it is put into water. After adding quicklime, the temperature of the dye solution increased while changing its color from dark green to yellow. Then I added the soaked cotton hank to the dye bath and stirred it well for 2 to 3 minutes. Then the cotton hank also became dull yellow in color as shown in Figure 7.18 (b), but when the cotton hank was taken out of the solution and allowed to react with air, it began to turn to blue color. Then I washed it well in a clean water basin, and put it into the dye bath again. I kept it there for 2-3 minutes and again washed it well. This was repeated a few times until it achieved a nice blue color as shown in Figure 7.18 (c). The color did not fade when it was washed with clean water. When repeating this experiment, the hank was cleaned for around 4-5 times and shade dried. After shade drying, I washed the sample again to remove any remaining leaf particles (See Figure 7.18 (d)). The final yarn sample had a very light blue color similar to a pastel blue shade.

Figure 7.18

Indigo Dyeing from Fresh Nil-awariya Leaves by the Author



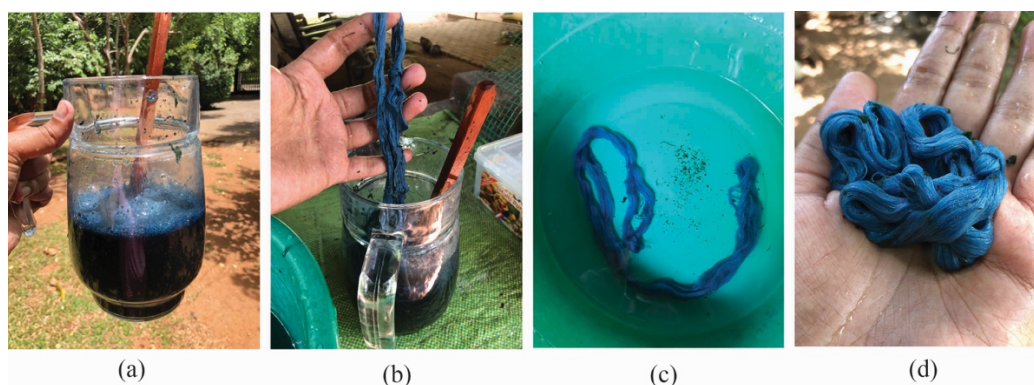
Note. Recorded by author (2024)

The experiment was done by doing slight changes to the procedure but it gave a completely different outcome. For this experiment also I used the above-mentioned materials, i.e., ground leaves (25 g), quicklime (5 g), normal water, hot water, glass jar, metal bowl, cotton hank, and a wooden spoon for stirring. As an additional material, I used 2.5 g of brown sugar as shown in the video. Initially, I mixed hot water and normal water and made a lukewarm water solution around (40°C). Then I added the ground leaves to the glass jar and mixed them well with lukewarm water. That solution turned a nice turquoise green color. After stirring it well for 2-3 minutes, the solution was further mixed by pouring the liquid into a glass jar and metal bowl, which helped the aeration process. Then I took 2.5g of sugar and mixed it with some hot water until it dissolved, and after cooling, added to the dye solution. This turned the

color of the solution darker. After stirring the sugar solution, 4g of lime was added carefully. Then the solution turned into a beautiful blue color as seen in many of the videos. I was delighted to see this beautiful color change (See Figure 7.19 (b)). Then I soaked the cotton hank in this solution and stirred it well for 3-4 minutes. As in the previous experiment, the yarn hank was cleaned well with water and this activity was repeated 3-4 times (See Figure 7.19 (c)). Then I was able to get a darker shade of blue compared to the previous experiment as shown in Figure 7.19 (d). Thereafter the sample was shade dried and tagged for the future references.

Figure 7.19

Dyeing Yarns Using Nil-awariya to Achieve Blue (Indigo) Color



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

Achieving the blue (Indigo) color was one of the most challenging tasks during the dyeing experiments. There were many unsuccessful outcomes but I finally achieved the desired color by applying different techniques during the experiment as shown in figure 7.20.

Figure 7.20

Indigo Samples Developed by the Author



Note. Developed by Author (2024).

- Mixed Techniques (Raw Turmeric and Sapan Wood)

As a researcher and designer, I also wanted to explore the potential of mixing natural dyes to create a new color in an experimental approach. Therefore, I used Pathagi (Sapan wood) and Amu kaha (fresh turmeric) to create an orange color. I used the Pathagi and Amu kaha dyes I had made earlier and boiled them together for around 30 minutes on a gas stove. When it was well-boiled, I used it to dye a yarn hank. After boiling it twice for 2-3 days, Amu kaha (fresh turmeric) developed a bad odor. After dyeing the yarn hank, I rinsed it off and let it dry. Due to the bad smell, I purchased Amu kaha from a shop and let it soak in water overnight before grinding it into a paste. Then it was boiled well, and I washed the hank and immersed it again in the Amu kaha bath after removing the sediments.

This gave a nice orange color to the yarn hank. This also indicated the possibility of mixing different dyes to enhance and reduce different shades. However, given the time constraints of the PhD study, after this experiment, I paid attention to sample making and final design development.

- Developing the naturally dyed cotton yarn hanks for the Final Textile Development

Considering all the above dyeing experiments and its positive outcomes, I dyed cotton yarn hanks for the final textile development. Accordingly, colors were developed by thambapanni sand, sapan wood barks, fresh turmeric, venivel, night jasmine flowers, arjuna tree barks and nilawariya leaves. All these raw materials were taken from the place legends related to the Kuweni's lore. By using these colors, I was able to develop an attractive natural color pallet for the final textile development (See Figure 7.21). Since there were more yellow color outcomes, in order to develop some shades, I mixed different raw materials together. Nice golden yellow color was created by mixing venivel and night Jasmin. Orange color was created by mixing sapan wood and turmeric dye. Major colors were developed for ²/80 cotton yarns and by using ²/30, limited colors were developed for the final textile developments. All these yarns were naturally scoured by cow dung after doing the experiments and the natural yarn scouring process is explained in the following section. Considering the time constrains, I purchased black and green naturally dyed cotton yarns from dye practitioners for the final textile development.

Figure 7.21

Color Palette Developed for the Final Textile Development through the Natural Dyeing



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

7.3.6 Natural Yarn Scouring Using Cow-dung

Similar to traditional eco dyeing, yarn scouring techniques that were traditionally followed by Sri Lankans were explored under the non-performing folk art techniques. The dye practitioners and traditional weaving community gave many insights such as their own experiences regarding this process. Further, journal articles on traditional scouring and dyeing techniques were also referred to validate these facts.

While observing the traditional dyeing techniques, I noticed that there were yarns dyed using cow dung. Following several discussions with traditional dye practitioners, I got to know that there were cow dung-based scouring techniques. Since cows have played a major role in the socio-cultural life of rural Sinhalese and Tamil people since time immemorial, I paid attention to this traditional scouring technique. Apart from using it as a fertilizer, cow dung was traditionally used as a floor and wall polishing material in houses made of wattles and mud. Therefore, cow dung was considered as a valuable material, and not as fecal matter.

Scouring yarns is crucial since it directly affects the mordanting as well as the dyeing processes. Dyeing does not become successful if there are impurities, or if the yarns are not scoured properly. Fresh Cow dung and water are the only raw materials used for this process, and it takes around three to four days to achieve a successful outcome. Sunny weather (27-35⁰C) and the availability of fresh flowing water devoid of any chemicals or impurities are crucial factors that affect the success of the scouring. However, this is a time-consuming activity.

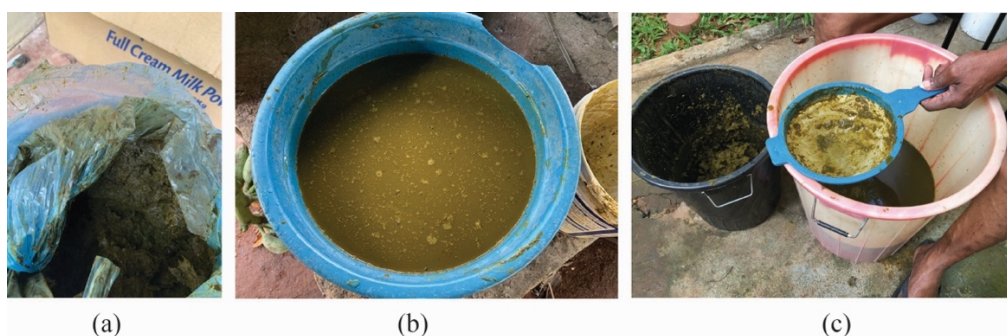
I started scouring experiments as a domestic experiment in Anuradhapura in February 2024. Raw cow dung used for this experiment was collected from *Mahawilachchiya* area, Anuradhapura. There are lots of farmhouses in this area and it was easy to collect a bag full of fresh cow dung for the experiment. Natural dye practitioners asked me to follow a specific ratio of 1: 1.5: 7 Cotton yarns: cow dung: water to practice the scouring process.

Accordingly, for 1 kg of greige cotton yarns, 1.5 kg of fresh cow-dung was used with 7 liters of water. However, the 7 liters of water were not added all at once. Firstly, as mentioned in this ratio, all the raw materials were collected. Since it was always advised to perform these activities in an open space with a roofing shelter, I did it in an open garage at home. After measuring 1 kg of greige yarns, the weight of cow dung was measured excluding the weight of the measuring bucket. Thereafter, 1.5 kg of Cow dung was measured. The cow dung was dark green in color and looked like a paste. I was careful to collect cow dung early in the morning before sand, soil or any other foreign materials got stuck in the dung. When conducting this activity, I was careful about the weather condition as well since I was advised to do it in a sunny climate. When using the utensils, too, I was always careful to use clean ones.

After measuring 1.5 kg of cow dung, 3.5 liters of filtered water was added to a clean container. To squeeze and mix the cow dung well with water, I wore rubber gloves. It was a bit difficult for me in the beginning because it was disgusting to squeeze the cow-dung. Although the locals are familiar with the smell, it could be unpleasant for a newcomer, and I realized that wearing a mask can help overcome such difficulties. However, since I had to engage in this task for a while, I got used to that smell and task. The liquid was further mixed with a long wooden spoon as shown in Figure 7.22 (b). After mixing it well, the mouth of the bucket was covered with a net. It was not closed completely or tightly. After around 2 hours the solution was sieved using a large strainer to separate the liquid from the cow-dung sediments as shown in Figure 7.22 (c). This liquid was collected in another bucket. Though it took a considerable time to separate the solid sentiments from the liquid, it was mandatory because the liquid had to be devoid of any solid sediments. If any solid sediments remain, they may stick to the cotton yarns, which could give adverse results in the scouring process. Then, the liquid was kept overnight to proceed to the next step.

Figure 7.22

Making the Scouring Liquid from Cow Dung, Recorded by the Author



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

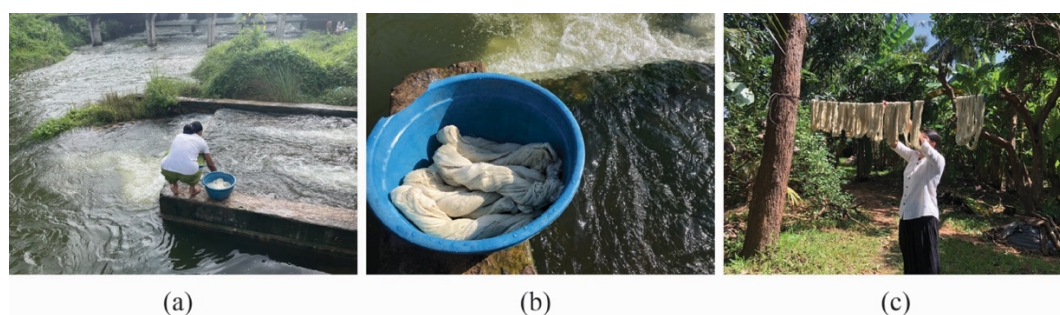
The following morning another 3.5 liters of water was measured in another bucket and all the greige yarns were soaked in it for 4-5 hours. Since I started soaking them at 6 a.m., I let them soak in water until 11.00 a.m. Then those yarns along with 3.5 liters of water were added to the cow dung solution and mixed well. I took extra care not to tangle the hanks. The yarns were submerged in the cow dung solution overnight. However, the dye practitioners advised me not to keep the yarns in the solution for more than 24 hours since cow dung is a strong fermenting material.

The next morning around 6.00 a.m. I took the cotton yarn hanks out of the cow dung bath and rinsed them well. The yarn hanks were light green in color and had a bad odor. The natural dye practitioner's advice was to wash them in clean flowing water, and so, I took the yarn hanks to a nearby spill. In Anuradhapura, there are many large tanks, and in order to remove excess water or supply water for the paddy fields, water is sent out of the tank through the spill. Therefore, a large quantity of water is expelled from the spill. I washed the yarn hanks well in the Tissa wewa minor spill. Since there had been heavy rain, the water was clean and pouring. Floating water was useful to wash the yarns without causing tangles. Because of the fast flow of water, all the residue in the hank got washed away as shown in Figure 7.23 (a).

It took around one hour to wash and clean the yarns well, and though the dark green color disappeared from the yarns; a light green color was visible as shown in Figure 7.23 (b). The yarns were rinsed well and let dry in the morning sunlight. I realized that it is better to hang them in a cloth line with a non-metallic cord above a grass lawn. I put it to dry at around 8.30 am as shown in the See Figure 7.23 (c).

Figure 7.23

Washing the Yarns from the Spill and Hanging them Using a Cord



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

These yarn hanks were fully dried after about two hours since there was good sunlight throughout the drying process. Yarn scouring is different from yarn dyeing since the yarns should be dried well in bright sunlight. When the yarns were drying in sunlight, the cow dung scoured yarns got bleached. They were washed again at the spill and let dry. After the second wash, the green color disappeared. After drying the hanks, I carefully stored them in a bucket. The next morning, I took them to the spill and

washed them again, after which they were hung out to dry well under warm sunlight. This activity was repeatedly carried out five times until I was satisfied with its color and texture. After completing around 4 to 5 wash cycles, the yarns became soft and clear white color compared to the greige yarns (See Figure 7.24 (a)). After completing the scouring process, the yarns were carefully stored inside a container without causing tangles as shown in Figure 7.24 (b).

Figure 7.24

Scoured Yarns After Continuous Washing and Drying

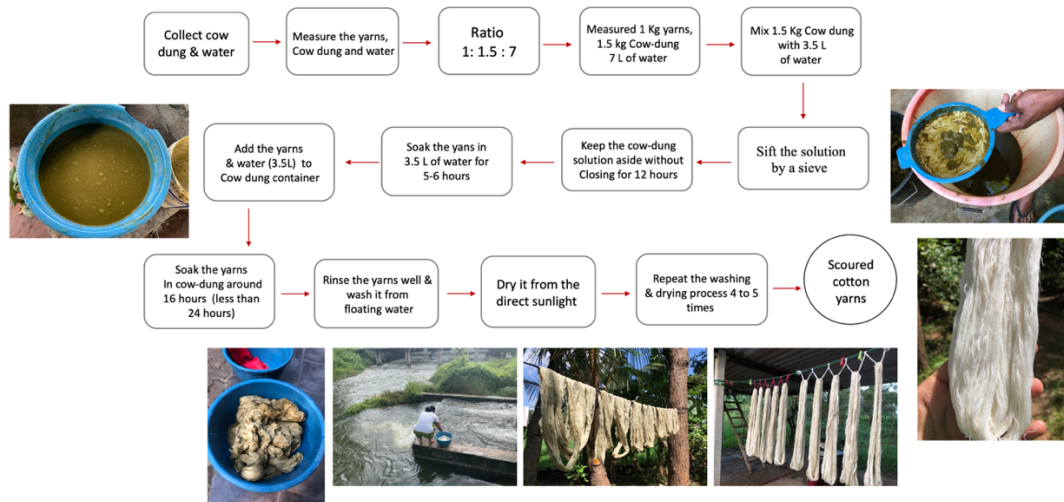


Note. Recorded by author (2024).

Cow dung being a natural raw material sourced from nature, this traditional scouring technique can be identified as a nontoxic process that is beneficial to the natural environment. Further, all these raw materials are widely available in Sri Lanka. Therefore, rather than following scouring methods that add harmful residue to nature, this technique can be taken back into the practice to scour greige cotton yarns as well as fabrics. After scouring the initial yarn set, another set was scoured by increasing the yarn amount, which was also successful. The summary of scouring cotton yarns using cow dung is illustrated in Figure 7.25. Subsequently, some yarns were bleached using traditional bleaching techniques.

Figure 7.25

The Scouring Process from Beginning to End Illustrated by Author (2024)



Note. Illustrated by the Author (2024).

The yarn scouring video of all the above process can be watched by the *Folklore in Fashion* YouTube Chanell. Through the following video the entire scouring process can be explored further.

<https://youtu.be/icSzkvqNGS4https>

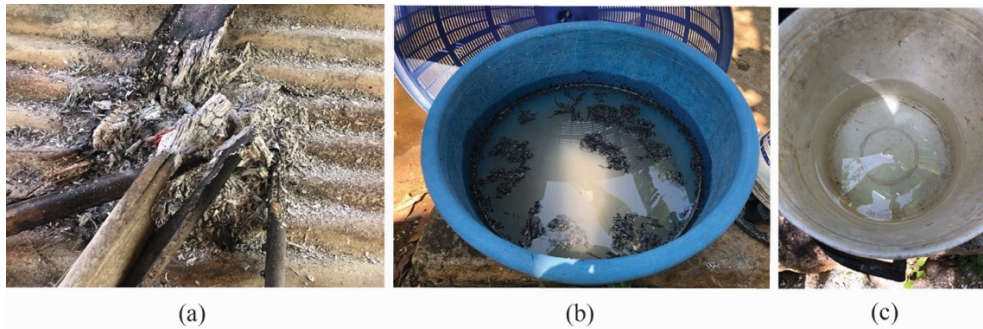
7.3.7 Natural Whitening Techniques using Coconut Ash

As a result of cow-dung scouring, the greige cotton yarn colors changed slightly to white color. The following experiment was done by me following the instructions given by dye practitioners. But nowadays most of them do not use this method since they purchase artificially bleached yarns for dyeing. Most dye practitioners have abandoned these techniques considering them as time-consuming techniques.

Coconut petiole or coconut husks were collected for this traditional bleaching technique. Except in highly urban areas and the hill country, coconut trees grow in most areas of Sri Lanka, and coconuts are included as one of the export products as well. For this experiment, I collected dried petioles from my own garden. These dried petioles were then burned on an old metal sheet to make ash. The petioles were placed on the metal sheet and set fire without using kerosine, paper or any other external material (See Figure 7.26 (a)).

Figure 7.26

Traditional Bleaching from Coconut Petiole Ash



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

According to the experiences and knowledge shared by the dye practitioners, after burning the coconut petioles, I kept the ashes aside to cool for a few hours. However, no exact measurements were given by the practitioners. So, I measured the available ash and it was closer to 200 g. Then, I added 200 g of coconut petiole ash to 4 liters of normal water and mixed it well as shown in Figure 7.26 (b). Then the water became dark ash in color. Then I mixed it well and covered the mouth of the container with a net cover. After resting for around 24 hours, the ash sediments were sunk to the bottom of the container. Then, a clean new container was taken, and I separated the water from the ash very patiently. Even though I did it slowly, some tiny ash particles were mixed with the collected water solution. Therefore, this activity should be done repeatedly until water becomes clean without any visible impurities as shown in Figure 7.26 (c). This water can be used to bleach the scoured yarns.

According to the insights given by the dye practitioners, the scoured yarns should be soaked in a normal water bath and rinsed well. After that, they should be immersed in the bleaching water solution for about 1 to 2 hours maximum. After doing this, I rinsed the yarns well and let them dry completely in warm sunlight as shown in Figure 7.27.

Figure 7.27

Coconut Petiole Ash Bleached Cotton Yarn Hanks

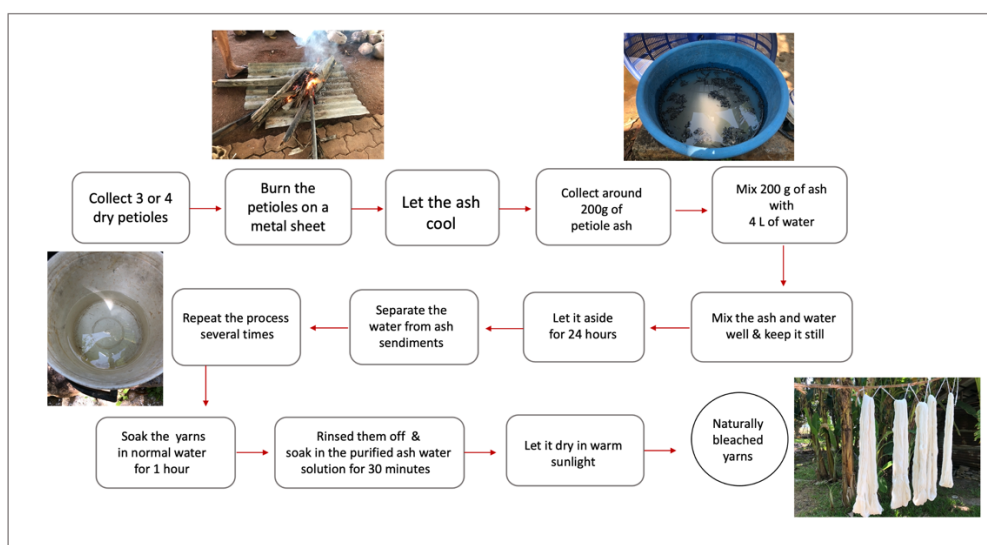


Note. Recorded by author (2024).

When they were dried, they had a brighter white color compared to the scoured yarns. This process can be repeated 2-3 times until satisfactory outcomes are reached. Warm sunlight was an essential factor, and I did all the experiments under a temperature of 30-37°C. The summary of the overall process can be seen in Figure 7.28

Figure 7.28

The Overall Bleaching Processes



Note. Illustrated by the author (2024).

The bleaching techniques and materials used can be further explored by the *Folklore in Fashion* YouTube Channel. While I was performing these experiments, I used to take photographs and ideographs of those activities. Those actual experiences were used to make these videos which give an overall idea about the entire process. Go through the following link to explore the traditional yarn bleaching techniques.

<https://youtu.be/stAJKBVZHuE>

Both yarn scouring and bleaching techniques were practiced by our traditional dye practitioners using available materials from their surrounding environment. Cow dung as well as coconut husk and petioles are leftovers of the main product, which can be successfully used under localized fashion since they are widely available in this environment and usually discarded as waste material. Currently, cow dung is used as a fertilizer and to make biogas in limited areas. Coconut husks and petioles are used in rural household activities as a fuel. Therefore, both of these raw materials can be used for a productive activity related to the handloom industry, adding a more sustainable

approach to it. Further, a closed loop system can be successfully created under localized fashion by resourcing our traditional knowledge, and incorporating raw material from the environment into Sri Lankan handloom craftsmanship.

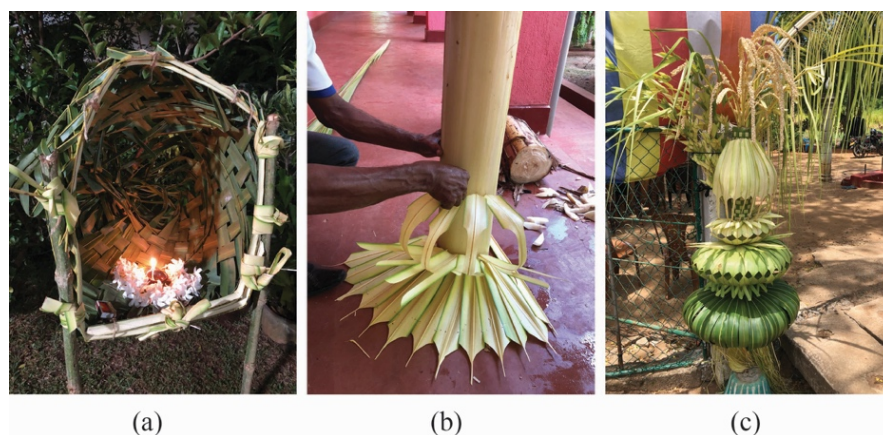
7.4 Folklore of Kuweni in relation to Traditional Craft Sectors

When referring to the literature and folklore related to Kuweni, *Kohomba Yak Kankariya* was identified as a significant performing folk art which originated from this folklore. But there are many non-performing folk arts such as traditions and rituals as well as crafts associated with *Kohomba Yak Kankariya*. Since the literature related to the *Gop* Craft are described in section 2.2 in Literature Review, the practical activities related to *Gop* Craft are described in the following paragraphs.

The construction techniques, flexibility of the material, and the color combination of *Gop* craft can be identified as key features that can be incorporated into fashion practices. The inspirations taken from harmonious color blending techniques in *Gop* creations can be used for contemporary fashion, especially since ecological self (green) has become a major trend after the Covid-19 pandemic. I personally visited some *Gop* craftsmen to experience simple *Gop* art techniques and observe different *Gop* crafts in the Sri Lankan context during scheduled visits and chance encounters. Therefore, my repository of knowledge in this regard was collected both purposefully as well as randomly. *Gop* crafts I observed during the research are shown in Figure 7.29.

Figure 7.29

Traditional Designs by the Gop Crafts



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

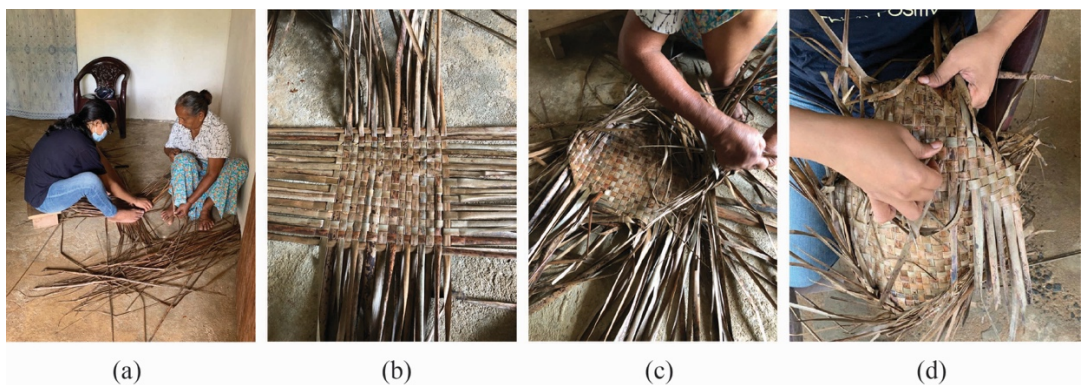
The mat weaving techniques used in *Gop* craft can be utilized for the structural development and decorative purposes of the final textile development since it is

connected to the *Kohomba Yak Kankariya*. There are specific *Gop* craftsmen and traditional mat weavers who collaborate to do decorations for the *Kohomba Yak Kankariya*. The woven structures which are needed, in particular, are made by traditional mat weavers. These traditional mat weaving artisans are used to making mats and other household products like storage boxes and winnowing fans as well as decorations from dried leaves. They use their hands and legs to weave different patterns from dried leaves of plants which are known as rush and reed. For rush and reed products they use plenty of raw materials from nature such as *pan* reeds (*gallehe* and *thunhiriya*), coconut fronds, talipot palm, and palmyra palm.

However, only tender coconut leaves are used for *Gop* craft related decorations and weavings, while dried leaves are used for the more durable rush and reed products. After observing and discussing with some traditional mat weavers in the Wilachchiya area, I practiced the basic weaving structure (basket weave) from dried coconut leaves. Thereafter, I tried to follow the same technique with fresh leaves, which were available in the surrounding environment (See Figure 7.30).

Figure 7.30

Basket weave techniques from different leaves done by the author



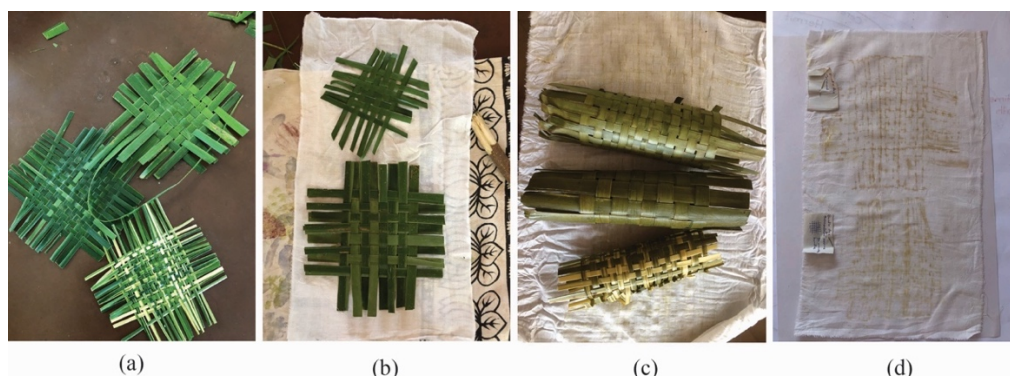
Note. Recorded by author (2023).

Practicing these mat weaving patterns from fresh leaves motivated me to combine the weaving patterns with bundle dyeing techniques, which can be identified as an outcome of the self-reflections that are highly used in creative PLR. The objective was to print the weaving patterns and absorb the natural colors and aroma of the leaf to the fabric by using bundle dyeing technique. More experiments on bundle dyeing are mentioned in Appendix A. In this particular experiment, I used coconut (*Cocos nucifera*), areca nut (*Areca catechu*), and pandanus (*Pandanus kaida kurz*) leaves which could be easily found in my garden. Since many mat weaving artisans use coconut and pandanus for their rush and reed products, these leaves were initially experimented for bundle dyeing. In order to print the dye to the fabric, I used fresh leaves instead of the dried ones. As an idea generation, I applied the bundle dyeing technique of the mat weaving of this coconut and pandanus basket weave on a cotton

fabric (See Figure 7.31). All the domestic experiments on eco dyeing, bundle dyeing and eco printing gave successful results leading to creative outcomes.

Figure 7.31

Bundle Dyeing Experiments with Woven Fresh Leaves



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

Coconut leaf crafts are common in most Asian countries, each with its own customs and lifestyle practices. In Sri Lanka, *Gop* art holds its own identity as an endemic folk tradition that is deeply embedded in the socio-cultural life of Sri Lankans, one such is related to the *Kohomba Yak Kankariya*, a ritual that is derived from the folklore of Kuweni. To preserve the memories of this fading art form for the future, it is essential to identify the technical as well as aesthetic knowledge in this craft and integrate them into modern creative practice such as fashion.

7.5 Folklore of Kuweni and Textile Development

7.5.1 Using the Colors from Thambapanni Soil for Textile Development

There were differences between the onsite experiment, which was done in the natural environment, and the offsite experiments, which were done in a controlled environment. Comparison of the outcomes affirmed that the color depth of the solar dyed samples was higher than that of the onsite samples. It was noted that the sunny climate, Thambapanni soil and sea water combination supported producing an adobe color in the samples. Yet, there were shadings as well. This in fact could be considered as a positive and creative outcome such as dip dye with the uneven color distribution on yarn hanks. The yarn color depth from the sample generated by onsite experiment L2 was comparatively higher than the L1 samples. But the L2 samples were highly affected by wild animal attacks. Some uneven dying appearances and damages in the samples due to natural occurrences can also be considered creative outcomes rather than defects. The L1 samples were slightly dyed and no considerable color variations

could be identified. Accordingly, five yarn samples (two solar dyed samples and three samples from L2) were selected as the best dyed yarn samples considering the color absorption to the yarns in order to do the fabric sample development. This selection was done by examining the yarn samples, and the selected best dyed samples are given below (See Figure 7.32)

Figure 7.32

The Yarn Samples Selected for the Textile Sample Development



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

7.5.2 Handloom Textile Experiment 01: “Thambapanni Weaving” Using the Utility Handloom

Considering the successful outcomes of Thambapanni soil dyeing and solar dyeing technique, the handloom fabric sample-01 has been designed to see the color outcomes from Thambapanni soil. I named this sample as “Thambapanni weaving”, since all the yarns were developed using the Thambapanni soil dyeing technique. A utility handloom machine was used for this purpose instead of the standard handloom machine. This handloom is normally used for weaving sample designs, serviettes, handkerchiefs, pillowcases, and tablemats since the limitation to the reed width (about 30 inches). Therefore, the maximum width of the utility loom woven fabric is about 20-24 inches. However, there is no limitation to the length of the fabric or for the gauge of the yarns.

Figure 7.33

Setting up the Utility Loom for Fabric Sample Development

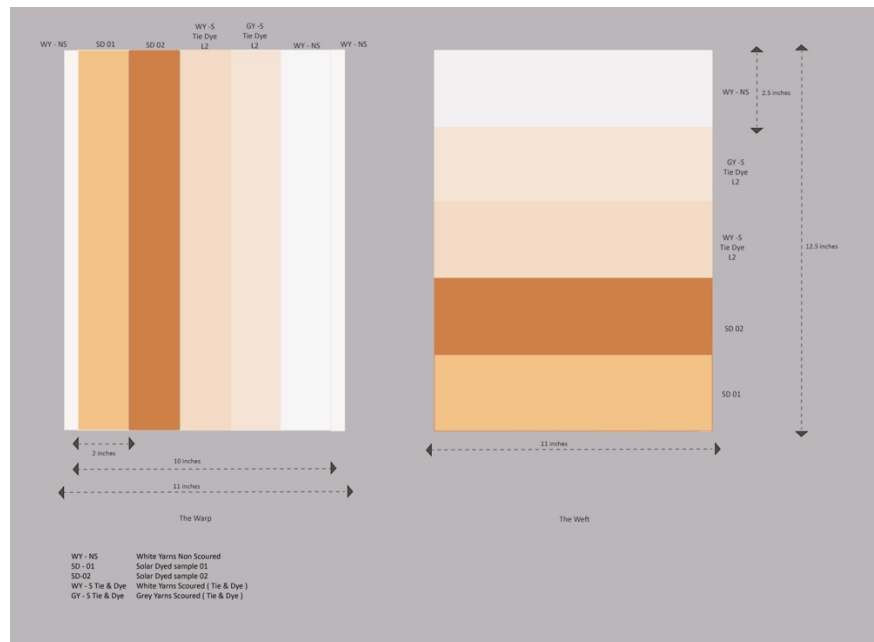


Note. Recorded by author (2023).

Initially, the warp was planned to include the $2/80$ selected yarns mentioned above (See Figure 7.33). The selected yarns were scoured white and greige yarns by solar dyeing technique, white yarns scoured-tie and die, greige yarns scoured-tie and dye, and greige yarns scoured from onsite experiments (L2). One inch selvage and 2 inches of selected yarns were used. In the yarn preparation for the weaving, the craftsmen suggested removing the greige yarn scoured (GY-S) from L2 since it was highly damaged by animal attacks. The hank was highly damaged, the yarns could not be taken continuously for the bobbin binding for the warp or pern winding. Therefore, the width of the fabric came out only 12 inches as shown in Figure 7.34. The length of the fabric sample's warp was taken as two yards (72 inches) to experiment the patterns with different textures by changing the yarn count of the weft. The order of the weft was also made using the same yarn arrangement as shown in Figure 7.34. The preparation of the loom was based on weaving pointed twill weave and plain weave to compare and contrast the color variation with the weaving structure. These weaving patterns were selected considering the ease of creating the sample forthwith. I suggested to do the pointed twill weave initially to see how patterns appear alongside the color combinations reached in dyeing experiments.

Figure 7.34

The Plan of the Textile Sample Developed using Adobe Illustrator Software

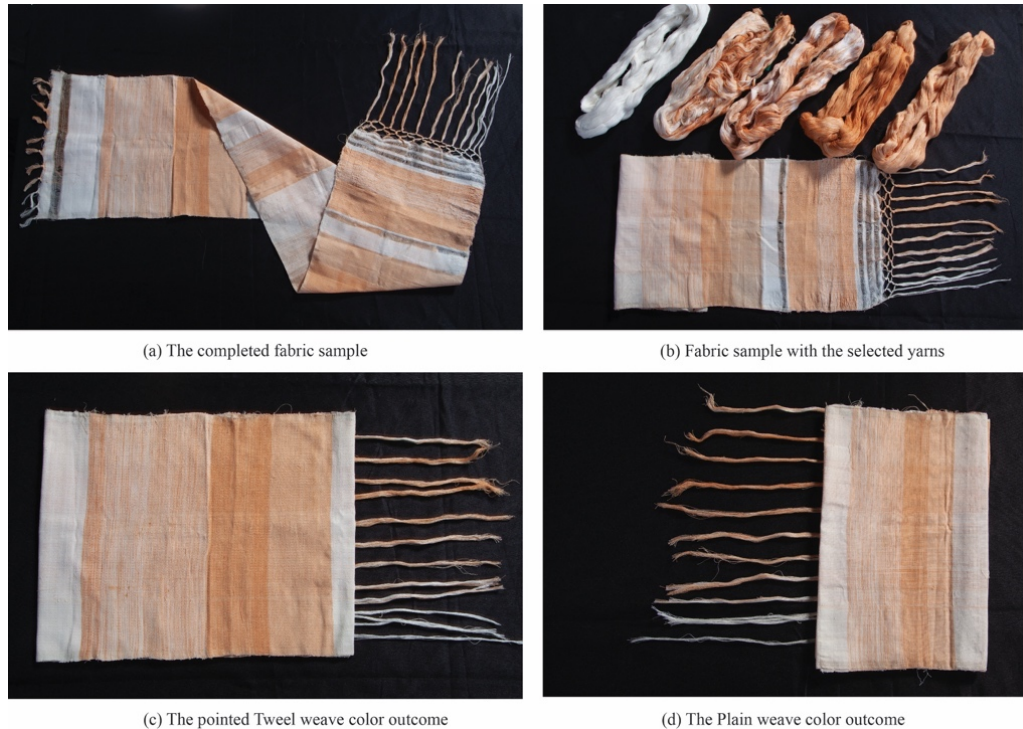


Note. Developed by the author (2023).

Accordingly, 12.5 inches length of the fabric was done using the pointed twill weave. This weave was used to see the appearance of the fabric and how effectively the colors were enhanced by the pattern. After weaving the pointed twill, the plain weave was done for another 12.5 inches using the order as shown in the weft by increasing the number of threads in the weft to get a hard texture. Again, another 12.5 inches of the plain weave was done after reducing the number of threads for the weft so that the textile would acquire a very soft feel to touch. Therefore, different experiments were done by changing the weaving structures and textures to see how the color outcome appears on the sample fabric. There was an effective tie and dye pattern visible on the dyed yarns from the onsite experiments (L2). This indicated the usage of defected yarns in an effective way in generating creative textile outcome. Although the warp was designed using different colors, when weaving the weft, there were no visible outcomes when the same colors intersected each other (See Figure 7.35).

Figure 7.35

The Fabric Sample done by the Utility Loom



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

During this creative PLR, it was identified that there were defect fabrics as well as yarn samples. Even in this research, the onsite samples selected from L2 for the textile development were not totally dyed, but those samples gave a tie and dye effect for the final fabric development through the loom. Therefore, more than the solid colors that were achieved through solar dyeing, these incompletely dyed yarns gave more aesthetic value to the fabric. This technique can be combined with some other textile development to achieve a fashionable outcome. Although the textile sample 01-Thambapanni weaving from Thambapanni soil dyeing gave successful outcomes, the creative PLR is a challenging practice because of the nebulous nature of the final design outcome.

7.5.3 Experimentation of the Thambapanni Weaving Sample with Textile Simulation

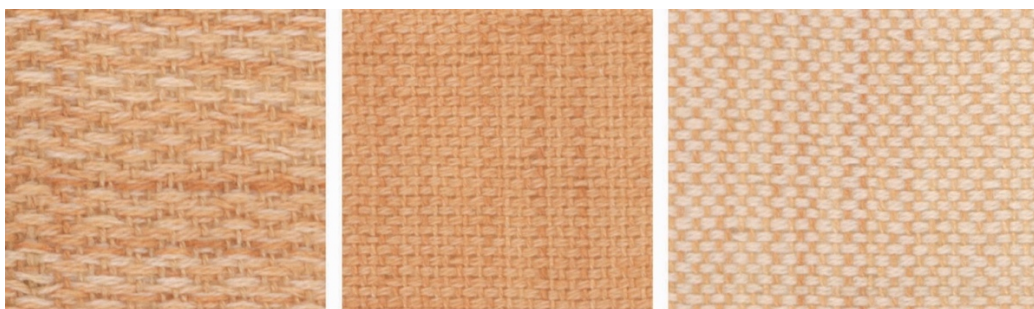
After achieving a tangible outcome with successful color and textile qualities, I considered other possibilities to make the creative PLR more effective and smarter. Accordingly, by following the traditional design process, I could create more and more tangible fabric samples to experiment with the color, texture and pattern outcomes. In this specific experiment, the attention was given to come up with a virtual sample through Textile Simulations and SHIMA SEIKI software, which was introduced by the chief supervisor of my research in order to evaluate any productive outcomes.

SHIMA SEIKI is a design software which can create realistic visual samples in ultra-high resolution. This software is used in the textile and fashion industry to create accurate virtual samples and to accelerate the product development process. From the planning of the fabric to developing prototypes as well as fashion shows can be done by this software. In the textile industry, SHIMA SEIKI is highly useful to shorten lead time, and it also contributes to the sustainable approach by minimizing the quantity of fabric samples. Therefore, this software can be identified as a successful approach for sustainability as well. SHIMA SEIKI's SDS-ONE APEX is commonly used for flat knitting and circular knitting, but there are plenty of opportunities to utilize it for weaving, printing, and embroidery work. In fact, it can be used for everything from textile product planning, pattern production and evaluation of colors to output of instruction sheets, and creation of product images. Having realized the immense potential of this software to come up with a realistic outcome, I collaborated with the Sri Lanka Institute of Textile and Apparel (SLITA), Ratmalana, to create a virtual sample for the Thambapanni fabric sample.

When using the software, I was guided and supervised by one of the lecturers from SLITA who has a thorough understanding about SHIMA SEIKI. First, we scanned different areas of the Thambapanni fabric sample to get an idea about the pattern and physical features of the fabric. Since I had already completed the fabric sample, we experimented whether we could get a virtual outcome similar to the physical outcome. After taking some scanned swatches from the Thambapanni fabric sample, it was noticed that the yarns had a kind of fur effect and there were some mistakes in the weaving structures in different places (See Figure 7.36).

Figure 7.36

The Scanned Parts of the Thambapanni Fabric Sample with Fur-Like Effect



Note. Recorded by author (2023).

This fur effect seen in the images above might have been caused as a result of the dyeing techniques I followed. Although this phenomenon can be identified as a defect in a technical aspect, it can be further studied and used in creative approaches.

Thereafter, we scanned the yarn samples selected for the weaving, and the yarn data were fed to the software. A thread was taken from each sample and scanned to get an

average idea about the colors. In order to create a virtual sample, we can either make use of the data already available in the data bank or feed new data we gather. Since I have collected actual data, the yarn samples were scanned and the data were fed to the data bank. Next, data such as the length and width of the fabric, number of yarns per inch, and the fabric pattern were given as the data sets. Accordingly, the first part of the fabric sample which was done using the pointed twill weave was created as shown in Figure 7.37.

Figure 7.37

The Virtual Outcome of Textile Simulation – Pointed Twill Weave



After completing the pointed twill weave, the rest of the sample was created by feeding the necessary data. Two plain weave samples were done by changing the number of threads for the weft to see the textural difference (See Figure 7.38).

Figure 7.38

The Virtual Outcomes of Textile Simulation - Plain Weave



(a) Plain weave – Single threads for the weft

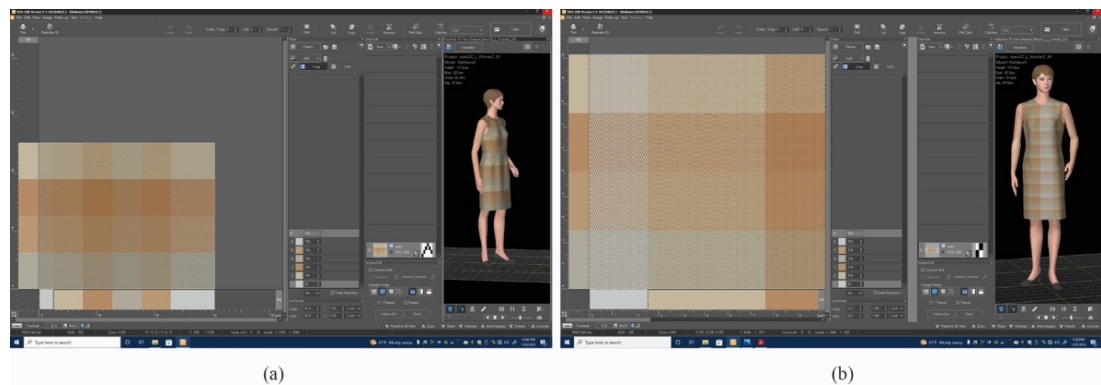


(b) Plain weave – Double threads for the weft

When comparing the virtual sample with the actual fabric sample, it was noticed that both fabrics had similar colors and pattern outcomes. Therefore, the physical attributes of the virtual sample were closer to the tangible fabric sample. This affirmed that the software can be effectively used to design virtual samples without making tangible fabric samples. Having all the physical attributes such as pattern, color and overall look, the texture or the feeling of the fabric (the tactile aspect) was the only physical feature that could not be experienced through the software. In order to circumvent that, the software has created an opportunity to show the drapability of the fabric on an avatar as shown in Figure 7.39 (a). There were different silhouettes that could be used to test the visual outcomes when it was used on the body. Further, both male and female avatars were available to test different silhouette ideas, and color and textural changes could also be done as shown in Figure 7.39 (b).

Figure 7.39

Fabric Simulations through SHIMA-SAIKI on the Avatar Body



In this research, the researcher incorporated both new technology as well as traditional methods to experiment and experience the enormous possibilities to come up with a rich traditional and cultural outcome by integrating folklore, place legends, localism, and sustainability. The use of cutting-edge technology added more value to the sustainable approaches in the study.

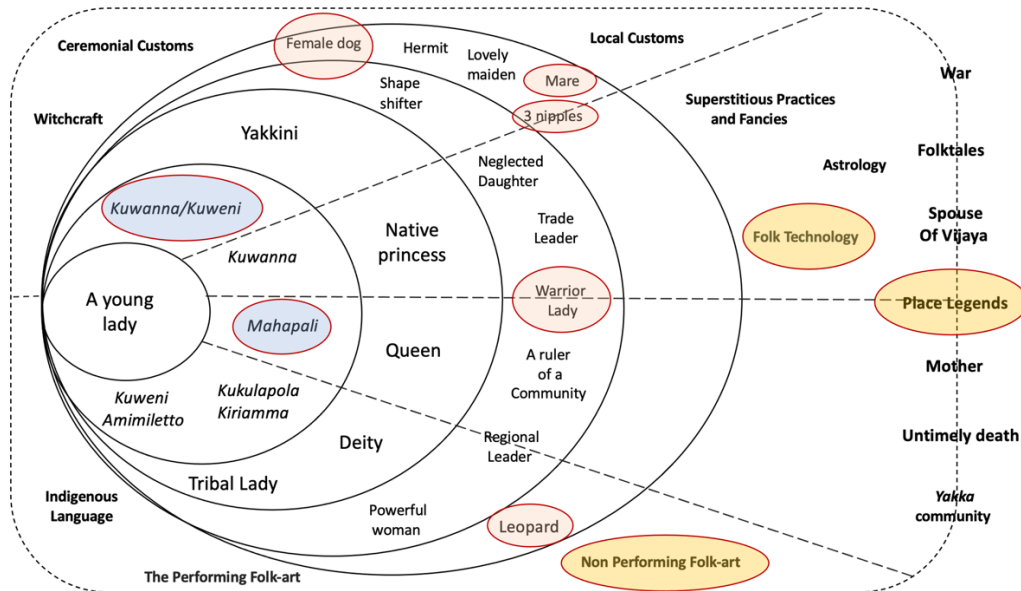
7.5.4 Design Idea Generation from FCO

Having achieved positive outcomes in yarn scouring, bleaching, and dyeing, I paid attention to the design elements that can be taken from folklore and used in the final textile design. A textile is expected to be designed as the final design realization since the narration of Kuweni can be clearly shown through a plain textile. It can be draped around the female body to highlight the specific features of the narrative. At this stage, I decided to do a feasibility sample textile before doing the final version after discussing it with the research team. The sample was designed by selecting similar colors and design elements from available yarns but not from the yarns prepared by

me for this research as proportions, technical challenges are the key feasibility points to check.

Figure 7.40

Selected FCO Themes by the Author for the Textile Development

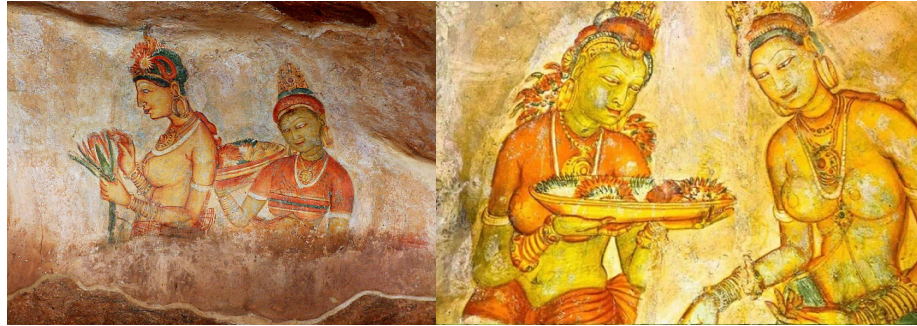


Note. Developed by the author (2023) for identification of themes.

By referring to the Kuweni-FCO shown in Figure 7.40, design elements that can be embedded in the sample textile were identified. But considering the broader aspects of FCO themes, more investigations were done to achieve design ideas through them. Further, fashion trends such as localism and eco-friendly colors were also taken into consideration when designing the sample fabric. At this specific stage, I worked as a fashion and textile designer rather than a researcher since I wanted to pay attention to design aesthetics, colors, and textures to come up with a narrative textile that will represent the emotions and story of *Kuweni*. After referring to the Kuweni-FCO, I selected the Kuweni's three nipples as a significant feature of the story since that was the decisive factor behind Kuweni's exile as a child who brings bad luck. In most traditional Sri Lankan arts and crafts, breasts have been highlighted as a significant body element. Female breasts have been highlighted in Sigiriya frescoes as well as in traditional Sinhalese arts such as *Nawanari Kunjaraya*.

Figure 7.41

Sigiri Frescos from Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Sri Lanka



Note. Open sources.

Further, in both Abhayagiriya and Jetavana vihara, there are sculptures of *Naga* and *Yakshi* figures that clearly depict female body shapes. After referring the book *Art of the Ancient Sinhalese*, I personally visited those locations to observe and photograph the female sculptures in Jetavana viharaya and Jetavana museum, Anuradhapura Sri Lanka as shown in Figure 7.42

Figure 7.42

Photographs of Female Sculptures in Jetavana Viharaya and Jetavana Museum



Female Sculptures in Jetavana Museum

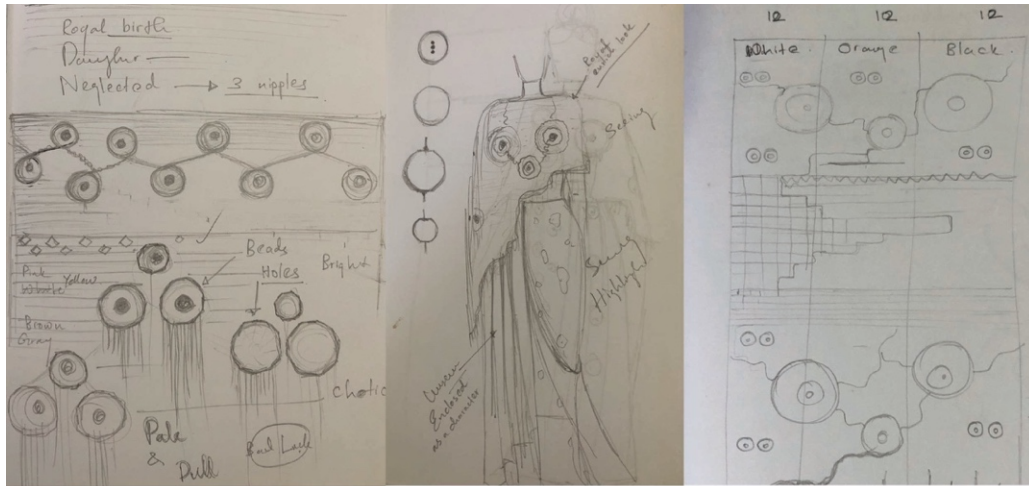


Female Sculptures in Jetavana Viharaya

After observing Jetavana Viharaya and Museum, I developed sketches to initiate the textile development, where the three nipples were shown on her upper body in an abstract manner as shown in Figure 7.43.

Figure 7.43

Sketches of the Three Nipples from Kuweni FCO

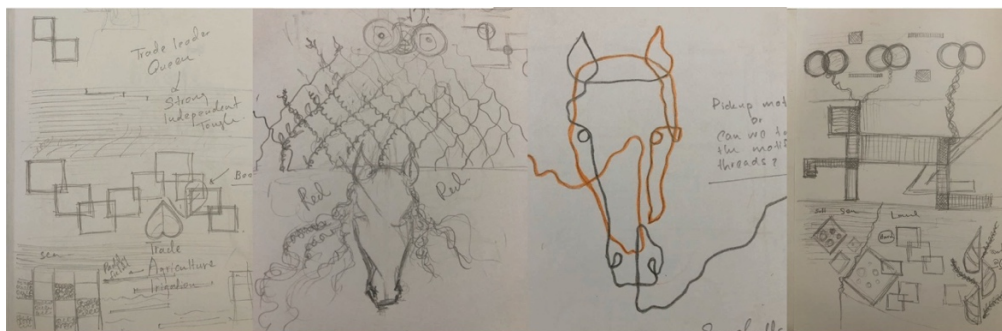


Note. developed by the author (2024).

Another aspect prominently depicted in the folklore is the prosperity that Kuweni achieved as an individual young woman. According to folklore, she made her kingdom flourish by developing irrigation to increase the cultivation of paddy and other crops. In fact, both weaving and paddy cultivation can be identified under the theme of folk technology. Therefore, those main themes were included in the next part of the story.

Figure 7.44

Sketches related to the Cultivation of Paddy and Other Crops

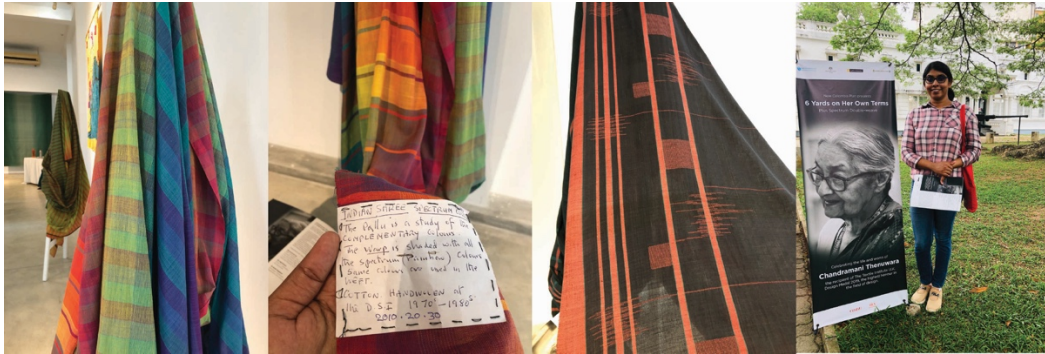


Note. Developed by the author (2024).

There are three main animals that appear in the story of Kuweni, which play a crucial role in shaping up the respective phases of her life. They are the female dog, mare, and the leopard. The female dog highlights her faithfulness to Vijaya as her master and husband; the mare highlights Kuweni's strength; and the leopard shows her anger and

Figure 7.46

Visiting Textile Exhibitions



Note. Photographed by the author (2024)

Further, I visited Sri Lankan historic painting exhibitions related to the story of Kuweni which gave me the opportunity to talk to the artist and gain his insights into the story as indicated in the painting (See Figure 7.47). This real time exposure gave me the opportunity to experience colors, shapes, and emotions immersed in the artifact.

Figure 7.47

Visiting the Unseen Colors 2



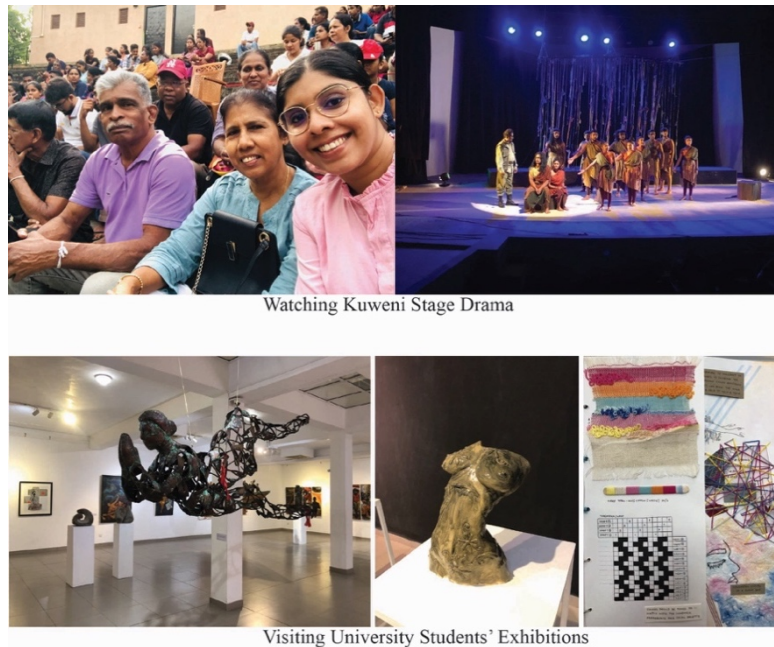
Note. Historic painting exhibition by Mr. Prasanna Weerakkody. The Researcher visited the exhibition to see the “Sands of Thambapanni” painting and “War-counsel of the Demon (Yakshi) Mare” painting related to the story of Kuweni

I also timely got the opportunity to watch Kuweni stage drama, which is a strong performing art that enables the audience to experience the emotions related to the character of Kuweni (See Figure 7.48). These diverse experiences regarding the folklore and the character of Kuweni helped me to identify how different art forms have exhibited their own perspectives and emotions in their own way. The emotions embedded in each art form was different from one another, but all of them revealed some strong features of the narrative. Figure 8.48 shows the exhibitions, students’ work exhibited by the University of Visual and Performing Arts and University of

Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. Therefore, the design ideas were developed by collecting all these creative data and exposure.

Figure 7.48

Exposure to Other Creative Disciplines

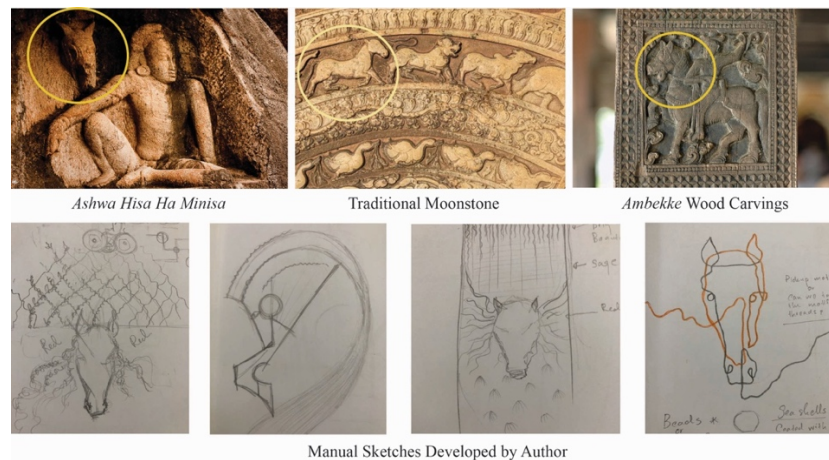


Note. Recorded by author (2024).

While engaging in all these activities, I drafted the initial ideas of designs using the knowledge I acquired through the experience. It is noteworthy to highlight that these design ideas were not spontaneous outcomes but ideas gradually developed through an iterative creative PLR process. Nevertheless, as shown in the above paragraphs, I drew inspiration from other creative disciplines such as paintings, drama as well as textile designs as I interpreted my own design ideas. For the animal inspirations, I went through the traditional Sri Lankan arts and sculptures shown in Figure 7.49, especially the rock sculptures, moonstones, and the vihara paintings that depict most of these animal figures. The horse, in particular, can be identified in moonstones, ancient sculptures such as *Ashwa hisa ha minisa* at *Isurumuni viharaya*, traditional flags, and in *Ambekke* wood carvings.

Figure 7.49

Inspirations from Historical Sri Lankan Sculptures



Note. Developed by the author by using open source images and reflective ideas.

After drawing a number of different sketches, the most appropriate ones were selected for the handloom sample which were then taken to the handloom weaving artisan. I discussed with her how to achieve those details, using my sketches as well as the inspiration boards to explain the final outcome and textural differences that I expect. However, certain sketches were omitted considering the limitations in the handloom techniques and machine, and only the achievable designs were practiced as sample designs.

7.5.5 Handloom Textile Experiment 02

The handloom techniques practiced in Sri Lanka were taken as the main textile development techniques of this research since it was directly connected to the story of Kuweni, which is significant for Sri Lankan craft industry under folk technology. There were weaving communities who are practicing this industry from generation to generation as well as new artisans who learn them from Textile Design Schools. The handloom textile experiment 02 was one of the most challenging parts of the design development phase since I had to work with the handloom artisans to achieve the desired outcome of the research. At this point, I had to multitask by playing different roles such as the researcher, practitioner, and a textile designer to work with the weaving community.

Since new textile development was a challenging task with lots of new experiments, I selected one of the young and talented handloom weaving artisans to create the textile experiment 02. I got to know her through my professional network, and she was also recommended by the weaving instructors and my supervisors. After contacting her over the telephone, I visited the artisan, and I went through her textile development

and works she had completed. This personal discussion gave me a better idea about her attitudes, interest in work as well as her skills. After identifying her potentials, I discussed and finalized the technicalities such as yarn count, colors, and how much yarn will be needed to do the sample. It was decided to do the sample using synthetic yarns but using the same colors rather than using eco yarn processed by me since this was going to be a sample. Therefore, I bought some yarn from ²/80 from some local yarn vendors in Pettah, Sri Lanka. Initially the artisan did the warp binding with three respective colors, i.e., black, white, and orange. Considering the restrictions of the selected loom reed width (36 inches) each part was 11 inches in width. Therefore, the width of the warp was 33 inches. The warp length was 08 yards, and it took around 2-3 weeks for the bobbin binding and warping. Four heddle frames were used, and threading was done as 1,2,3,4. For one inch 52 threads were used. The lifting plan and the warp can be seen in Figure 8.50.

Figure 7.50

The Loom with the New Warp



Note. Recorded by author (2024)

After setting up the loom, the weaving began. I too went to the weaving center with the artisan for the weaving. The initial ideas and sketches were drafted into point papers where I needed the pickup motifs. Since there were many pickup motifs, we used the plain weave only. While she was doing the weaving, I did the overseeing and did the necessary changes in the colors and textures. The artisan contributed to the textile development with her expertise, but as the designer, I was responsible for achieving the creative outcomes from the weaving artisan. As an example, I wanted to insert more yarn for the weft to make it stiff. Even in the pick-up motifs, I increased the number of threads to emphasize the design elements and get a rigid look. I was in touch with the artisan during the entire process even if I could not visit the weaving center every day. I instructed the artisan to send me pictures and videos as updates on the weaving process, which enabled me to constantly monitor the development process.

Figure 7.51

The Weaving Artisan Working with the Pick-Up Motifs



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

On some occasions I had to compromise, because realistically, the expected design outcomes were not achievable all the time. The artisan was supportive and flexible to undo certain weaving patterns and redo them as many times as I suggested. The motivational factor was crucial in the context. Both self-motivation and keeping the artisan, the heart of the mindful maker, motivated were crucial. There were heavy pickup motifs which needed lots of patience and they were time consuming. Since I needed to play with colors, textures, and significant motifs on this sample, it was not done the same as the final sample. However, the textile experiment 2 enabled the artisan and me to understand the possible future challenges in the creative as well as technical developments. This understanding also helped us to easily resolve issues in the final sample development. Further, this sample development gave me the opportunity to work with artisans from rural areas and understand their challenges while they engaged in this meticulous textile development process. It also helped me to build a good rapport with the weaving artisans and identify their potential.

In this textile development, the warp was taken as the life of Kuweni and the weft is defined by different stages of her life. Her emotions during different phases in life were highlighted through the colors and weaving patterns. Further, textural variations were incorporated to enhance these feelings and emotions. The diverse life experiences that Kuweni underwent from her childhood till her death were taken into consideration in the warp planning. Therefore, the width of every part of the warp is not the same since life experiences cannot be measured in periodic timeframes. The transition from one stage to another is subtly depicted by merging the patterns and colors. In order to depict a narrative, the most significant features of the folklore were taken into consideration. Accordingly, the story of three nipples, cultivations done by Kuweni, Thambapanni beach, the mare, the arrival of the new princess with her group, separation of Vijaya

and Kuweni, and Kuweni as a leopard were depicted in the textile by using different colors, textures, patterns, and motifs. Both the artisan and I collaborated to achieve the outcomes. Different sections of the textile can be seen in Figure 7.52.

Figure 7.52

Different Sections of the Story Woven into the Textile – Textile Sample 02



Note. Developed by the artisan and the author (2024).

During this process, there were successful outcomes as well as failures. While experimenting with this textile development, I wanted to incorporate other techniques related to this story such as *Gop* craft. Since it was impossible to do it from the warp and the weft, I tried to insert handloom fabric strips to the weft by following the *Gop* craft development techniques. As shown in Figure 7.53, I tried to insert the handloom stripes to the weft and make a *Gop* craft dog through the handloom machine. But due to technical restrictions, I could not achieve it by the loom itself as shown in Figure 7.53.

Figure 7.53

The Unsuccessful Outcomes of the Textile Sample 02.

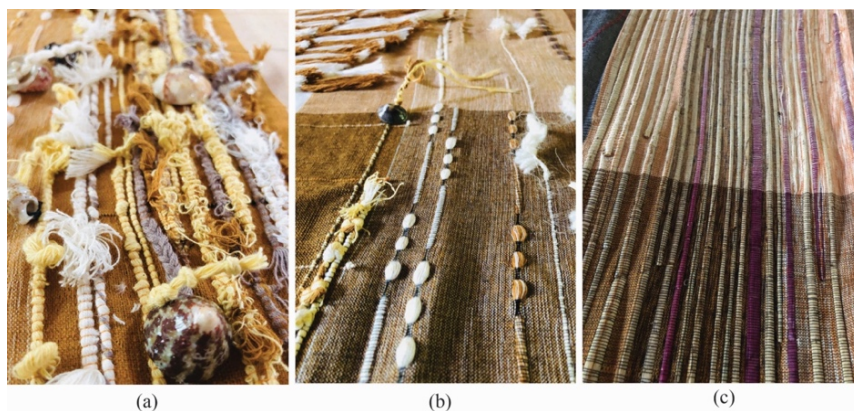


Note. Recorded by author (2024).

I wanted to try and get the full potential of the loom to come up with some new techniques. In order to get some textural differences in the textile, I inserted different types of yarns by knotting, twisting, and entangling. Further, different beads and shells were also incorporated to enhance the feeling. As a result of that, the beach section of the weaving became a successful outcome (See Figure 7.54 (a)). Further, I mixed the yarn colors together to create a tie and dye effect. The seashells taken from the Thambapanni beach were attached to give an intimate feeling of the exact environment. Further, I did some experiments with rush and reed to see the possibilities of incorporating them into future textile developments. The textural differences and the outcomes when we combine the fabric with other natural materials were experimented through this. A hard texture can be created by adding rush and reed to the weft of the handloom fabric and it can be used for structural developments. These successful outcomes can be seen in Figure 7.54 (b).

Figure 7.54

Textural Differences Added to the Fabric



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

All these experiments helped me to come up with innovative ideas for the final textile development, and showed me the challenges that I should overcome before starting the final textile development. We were able to do 3m of the fabric sample as shown in Figure 7.55 as the textile experiment 02. After finishing this fabric sample, the supervisory team and I discussed the improvements for the final textile. This specific experiment gave a wholesome experience to me as well as the young weaving artisan about the final textile development. For the final textile development, the natural dyed yarns with refined motifs and patterns were used to communicate the narrative of the Kuweni in a more comprehensive manner. The experiences of textile experiment 01 (Thambapanni weaving) and textile experiment 02 (Kuweni's Tale) were highly useful for developing the final textile.

Figure 7.55

Textural Changes Added to the Fabric



Note. Recorded by author (2024) after the completion of 6th Progress Review.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter of the research was based on the PLR approach to explore and realize fashion outcomes rooted in the folklore of Kuweni through the Thambapanni place legend, folk technology, and non-performing folk art. Ancient Sri Lankan used to invent novel outcomes primarily through their intense curiosity and observations. They have explored their surroundings and conducted experiments essential for inventing and reinventing. Thus, the place legend arising from the folklore of Kuweni plays a significant role in connecting the narrative to the local history, geography, and

ecosystems. Therefore, this has used folklore-inspired natural dyeing techniques using Thambapanni soil and textile development form a distinct outcome of creating novelty.

Design development related findings lay a very strong foundation to the next step of the research, i.e., design realization. Comprehensive experiments and novel findings on natural dyeing (both eco and soil dyeing) and handloom weaving experiments were highly effective for generating successful outcomes in the design realization phase. All these novel findings were helpful for coming up with a tangible textile outcome that expresses the story of Kuweni in a meaningful manner during the design realization phase.

CHAPTER 08

DESIGN PRACTICE - REALIZATION

8.1 The Creation of “Narrative Vogue – Kuweni”

Warp and the Weft: The designer–artisan collaboration

This chapter highlights the key factors of successful collaboration between the designer and the artisans as co-creators of the final outcome of this study, the techniques used, the tension of design thinking and craft skills in design realization. These key factors indicate how the concept development, product development and product realization phases of this research culminated in producing a tangible and impactful design outcome in the form of a narrative textile. Since the chapter presents details of a highly practical nature, the chapter is written in the style of an ethnographic narrative.

The experiential learning from the handloom experiment 02, conducted in the design development phase, was highly useful for me as well as the weaving artisan when developing the final textile product called *Narrative Vogue-Kuweni*. The warp binding and setting up of the loom took considerable time (around 2 months) since it was the very first handloom weaving of this nature done by the artisan. Therefore, the artisan had to make different arrangements to set the weaving facilities at her home. Since some practical issues arose when conducting the handloom experiment 02 at the weaving center, it was decided to weave the *Narrative Vogue* textile at the weaving artisan’s home. But the young artisan had other commitments including her education as she was following an external degree at a government university. Therefore, the decision to do the weaving at her home afforded greater flexibility and made it easier for the artisan. She stated that

“I like to do this at home, because I can balance my studies as well as weaving work, and that saves my time. If I have to do this at the [weaving] center, I have to go there every day and I feel tired after returning home. When I feel bored after studying for the exam, I focus on weaving when I do it here at home”
(The artisan, personal communication, 10/12/2024).

Weaving of the *Narrative Vogue* textile, therefore, was a homely activity for the artisan that also helped her relax. Further, weaving is her livelihood and working from home gave her enough artisanal freedom as well as the opportunity to work while spending time with her family members. Further, the artisan’s house is located near the *Yoda ela* in Ipalogama, one of the most beautiful areas in Anuradhapura. This natural and calm environment also enabled her to weave the *Narrative Vogue* textile development in a hassle-free environment.

Figure 8.1

The weaving Artisan's Home and Surrounding Environment



Note. Captured by Author (2024)

The first step of the weaving process is setting up the loom. While the artisan was arranging the loom, I made all the designs, visual boards, and silhouette ideas. The handloom was ready by 23rd December 2024, and all the naturally dyed yarn hanks I prepared (following the dyeing techniques explained in Chapter 8, Section 3.5) were ready by the time the loom was set up. The Narrative Vogue textile was developed using natural cotton yarns that were scoured and dyed by me. Therefore, the warp of this textile was set using solar dyed yarns and onsite dyed yarns from the Thambapanni area. However, a few colors of the textile were outsourced from reliable natural dye practitioners considering the time constraints. It is worth noting that the *Narrative Vogue* textile is a refined version of handloom experiment 02.

As the chief researcher and the designer, I took control of the final textile development—a process of co-creation with the artisan. On the first day she started weaving, I took the bus to the artisan's home, which became a journey I made every morning during the initial stage of the weaving process. Taking a closer look at the development in person helped us to avoid some obvious mistakes which saved a considerable amount of time and money. During the weaving process we experienced some technical errors like the snapping of the yarns. It was found that the onsite dyed yarns snapped more frequently compared to the solar dyed Thambapanni soil dyed yarns. For example, we saw that after weaving a few inches most of the threads in the warp had snapped. So, the artisan had to fix them before continuing. When the warp threads snapped, we had to tie extra warp threads and feed it through the heddle and reed from the back to the front. This was time-consuming, so both of us had to do it in order to expedite the task. Such hands-on collaboration with the artisan helped me to effectively transfer my design ideas into the final product while maintaining the quality of work. Further, this made it easier for me to understand that artisanal tasks require patience as well as good control of mind and body. Therefore, overseeing the process is important to incorporate the designer's touch and guide the artisan.

Figure 8.2

The Snapped Yarns of the Weft



Note. Captured by Author (2024).

Knowledge and experience sharing between the designer and artisan was another important aspect of this collaboration. As the yarns snapped, I was worried that the yarns may have lost strength during the scouring processes. But the artisan explained that at the beginning of the weaving process, the warp yarns usually break due to the high tension of the warp. In her experience, when we initiate the weaving, tension occurs because the intersection of warp and weft is not yet developed, and the bond between the weft and the warp is weak, which leads to the snapping of the warp threads. However, to my relief, she said that we can overcome this issue by weaving some other fabric before starting to weave our textile.

Therefore, after fixing the snapped yarns, we decided to weave around 10 inches before starting the textile development. Since the weft was done from Thambapanni yarns, it was of a cream color. In order to identify the color outcomes, I asked the weaving artisan to weave a small portion from each of the natural color yarns. This helped us to set the loom and adjust the tension of the fabric while understanding the color outcomes. Figure 8.3 shows the different colors and yarns I created for this textile development. Apart from these colors, I purchased black and green colors from natural dye practitioners (The development process, challenges and different outcomes have already been explained in Chapter 8 under natural dye developments). A few hanks were developed from the same color since it was time consuming to dye the yarns over and over again.

Figure 8.3

Naturally Dyed Yarns Used for the Narrative Vogue- Kuweni



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

During this weaving process, we used to take breaks for tea and lunch, which were provided by the weaving artisan's mother. In rural villages in Sri Lanka, the villagers treat their visitors as best as they can. Even though my visits were of a professional nature, they still treated me as a visitor whenever I went to their home. Considering the socio-emotional factors, however, I also took snacks for tea such as pancakes, *laveria* or biscuits purchased from a nearby shop. This practice was normal because when visiting someone's home, it is customary for the guests to bring gifts. My weaving artisan's mother cooked very tasty village foods and she loved to serve them while we were working. This emotional bond was very important to develop a strong relationship between the weaving artist and the designer. The rapport between us was not strictly professional due to the friendship we established, and consequently, she could work happily without any stress. Moreover, she was willing to share her thoughts about the design without any fear, which was extremely useful for me to get the best out of her skills and experiences.

While engaging in these activities, I used to interact with the weaving artisan's family as well. My weaving artisan's little brother used to play draughts with her during his leisure time. Since she was busy with weaving and studies, I agreed to play draughts with him, and he taught me the game from the beginning since I did not know it. In return, I taught him Chess. He also helped us with the weaving work, such as loom setting and fern binding, and gave his honest opinion about the color combinations and textural outcomes as well. As shown in Figure 8.4, working as a family helped me to reduce the academic stress and relax while enjoying their hospitality and company.

Figure 8.4

Playing Draughts and Enjoying Lunch at Artisan's Home



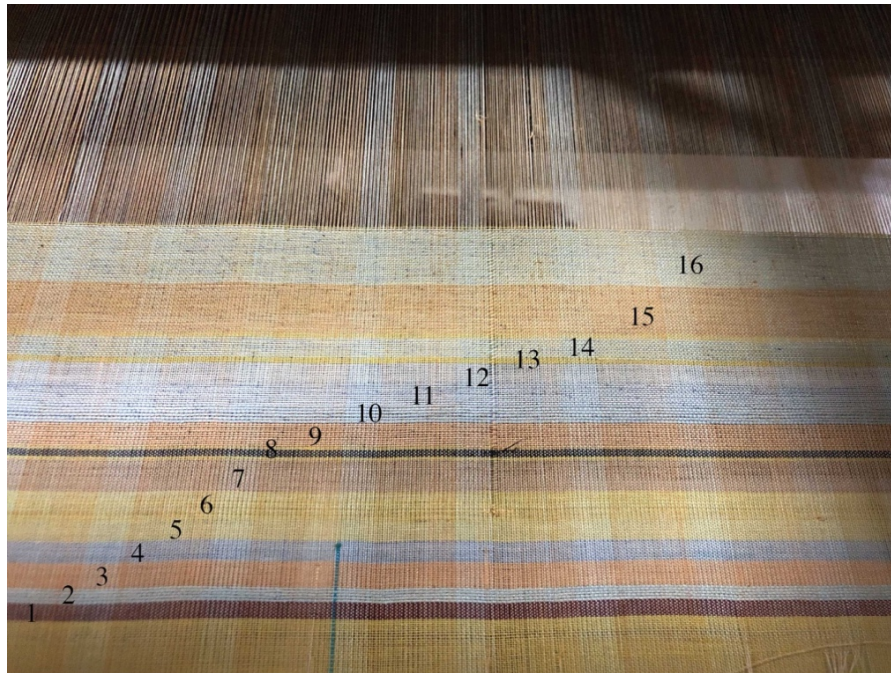
Note. Captured by Author (2024).

After repairing the snapped yarns, individual colors were woven to the weft as shown in Figure 8.5. After the individual colors were woven, I asked the weaving artisan to mix the colors. Other than using a single thread, we used two threads as shown in the figure. This gave a very nice, blended color pallet. Further, I asked the artisan to mix both 2/80 and 2/30 threads as well to see the textural differences. This combination gave a kind of an embossed effect and a hard texture. We practiced this same technique in the Textile Experiment 02 with synthetic yarns and they gave a bright color. But blending the natural colors only gave a slight blending of shades. In order to enhance that effect, I combined cool colors and warm colors separately. Since I did not have green yarns, I asked the weaving artisan to mix yellow and blue yarns together and it produced a light green hue. This combination gave me an interesting insight into creating and mixing colors through the loom. Most of the traditional weaving artisan weave the textile only using a single-color yarn, and so, this was a new experience for my weaving artisan as well.

Combining analogous colors together proved to be a beautiful color combination, and this experiment was quite interesting for identifying the possibilities of color blending as well as textural combinations.

Figure 8.5

Identification of Yarn Colors and Mixing the Yarns to Develop New Colors



1. Sappan-wood 2/80 x 2
2. Indigofera tinctoria 2/30 x 2
3. Thambapanni sand 2/80 x 2
4. Indigofera tinctoria 2/80 x 2
5. Tree-turmeric 2/30 and 2/80 (both yarns together)
6. Tree-turmeric + (Night jasmine & Tree turmeric) 2/80 x 2
7. Arjuna barks 2/80 x 2
8. Black color purchased by a dye practitioner 2/80 x 2
9. Tree-turmeric + (Tree-turmeric + Night jasmine) + Arjuna barks 2/80 x 3
10. Indigofera tinctoria 2/80 + 2/30
11. Indigofera tinctoria 2/80 x 2
12. Indigofera tinctoria + Scoured greaige yarns 2/80 x 2
13. Turmeric 2/80 x 2
14. Tree-turmeric + Indigofera tinctoria 2/80x 2
15. Thambapanni + Arjuna 2/80 x 2
- 16 Tree-turmeric + Indigofera tinctoria 2/80 + 2/30

Note. Developed by Author (2024)

After identifying the colors, the artisan and I got a better understanding about the color as well as textural options that we could use for the weaving. From that point onward, I used to plan a specific section for the day before going to the weaving artisan's home and then I discussed it with her. These discussions were helpful because communicating with her about the upcoming tasks ensured that no unnecessary pressure was given to her. Since we had developed the textile experiment 02 together, the weaving artisan also had a good idea about the placements and the designs we were planning to do. Still, I needed to do slight changes of the placement as well as colors in the Narrative Vogue- Kuweni. Here, we used the techniques that we used in the textile development 02, in a more advanced manner. In order to initiate the weaving, I wanted to use three different colors in the same weft. Usually, weaving craftsmen use only one shuttle for the weft weaving, but my weaving artisan had to insert three

shuttles manually in order to get the output I needed. Further, I wanted to try this technique in order to blend the colors well. In the beginning I wanted to show the fertility of King Bamba's kingdom, depicted through the water and greenery, before the birth of Kuweni. When I visited *Minipe*, *Mahiyanganaya* and *Lakgala / Lakegala* areas in Sri Lanka during the data collection, I took note of the beauty of that environment with rivers, lakes, mountains, and forests. Hence, I wanted to incorporate the beauty of that environment that is expressed in the story into the *Narrative Vogue – Kuweni* textile.

Figure 8.6

A photograph of Lakegala, and Mahiyanganaya Area



Note. Taken from open sources.

To use the full potential of the weaving machine and the skills of the weaving artisan, I always discussed the potential of applying advanced techniques that we could use to get some elaborated designs. During these discussions, the artisan told me about the possibilities, limitations as well as difficulties in achieving those outcomes. Even when we started the first part of the textile, she predicted that was going to be a highly time-consuming task. By measuring the width of the weft, I drew the design on a square paper by aligning it to the width of the weft including all the placements. Further, I colored the different segments with color pencils to avoid confusion with different placements. This made it easy for her to do the task without any confusion. As shown in Figure 8.7, the weft consisted of 3 different segments. I wanted to blend the colors randomly as in a watercolor painting without any sharp margins.

Figure 8.7

Segment Weaving done after Manually Inserting the Shuttle

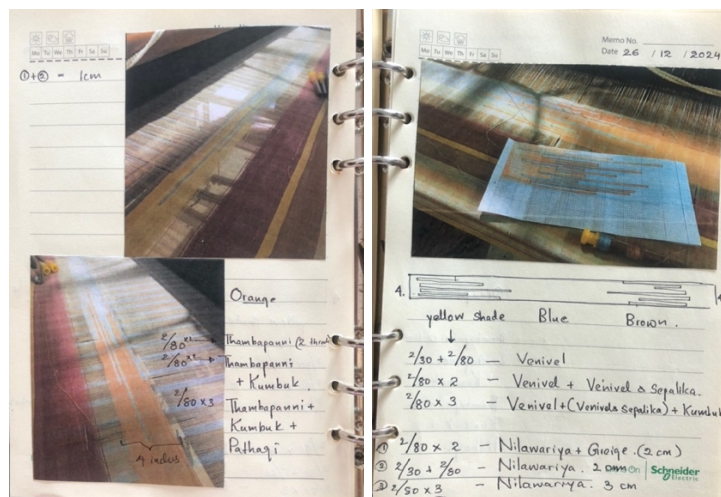


Note. Recorded by author (2024).

Since I mixed different yarns with 2/80 and 2/30 yarn counts, the tension of the fabric was different. Due to this the warp threads began to snap again causing some damage to the salvage. Usually, the weaving artisan was highly concerned about the salvage of the textile because the weaving instructors in the centers use it as a measurement to gauge the quality of a textile. If the salvage is damaged, they consider it as a damaged product. But I asked the weaving artisan not to worry about them too much since these defects also gave an effective outcome since that was produced through the hand skills and as an outcome of new experimental techniques.

Figure 8.8

Documentation of the Design Process in a Journal



Note. Captured by Author (2024).

As the designer, I documented the whole design process in a journal including the raw materials, techniques, the tasks we performed, challenges, and specific incidents that happened during the day etc. This documentation proved to be extremely important

when I began writing my design realization chapter, which was written after finishing the textile production. It took me more than one and half months to initiate the writing part. Documenting all the necessary details including the photographs was crucial in a Creative PLR. Therefore, I used to take photographs as well as short videos while we were working because they contribute highly to the Creative PLR of design realization. Further, this process helps a designer to reflect on the design process over and over again.

After developing the first part of the textile, the weaving artisan had a fair understanding about color blending. Usually, the traditional handloom weavers in the weaving centers use the color blocks or contrasting colors. As described earlier, I decided to mix threads of different colors. For example, in order to get a light shade, I used greige yarn and tree turmeric in one section. Then, in the next section, I used two threads from tree turmeric. After that part, I used tree turmeric and turmeric and next, I used turmeric and Sappan wood threads (See Figure 8.9 (A)). Accordingly, we could develop a pleasing color pallet from a lighter shade to darker shade. Further, textural differences as well as colors can be further enhanced by adding more threads. Since all the colors used in this development were natural colors, slight differences were effectively highlighted in the textile as shown in Figure 8.9 (B).

Figure 8.9

Developing the Shaded Effect of Colors While Weaving



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

Other than the shading of colors, in order to highlight the key incidents of the story, pickup motifs were used.

Before doing it in the loom, however, these placements were planned and tried out on a white fabric. This white fabric was useful to get an idea about the measurements of the weaving fabric as its length and width were similar to the length and the width of the weaving textile. As shown in Figure 8.10, the placements and measurements were marked on the white fabric, and the placements were assumed in the weft. The motifs and the placements of the textile experiment 02 were also highly useful when doing

the pickup motifs as shown in Figure 8.10. However, more elaborate patterns were added in the final textile development.

Figure 8.10

Setting the Placements on the White Fabric to Mark the Segments of the Weaving Textile



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

Since the weaving artisan was actively involved in the entire weaving process, she had a very good understanding about the expected outcome. This white fabric, used as a mockup fabric to mark the placements and drape around the body, helped her to get an understanding about the parts of the textile that would be revealed and concealed when draped. After marking the placements, I drew all the motifs and other design features I expected to use for the *Narrative Vogue – Kuweni*. While the weaving artisan was engaged in the weaving, I drafted the pickup motifs on square papers. Whenever she had a doubt, she came to me and got it clarified, ensuring effective collaboration. This also saved our time and helped me to focus entirely on the design realization process. As shown in Figure 8.11, I drafted the motifs on the square paper according to the width of the weft.

Figure 8.11

Drafting the Motifs on the Square Papers according to the Actual Size



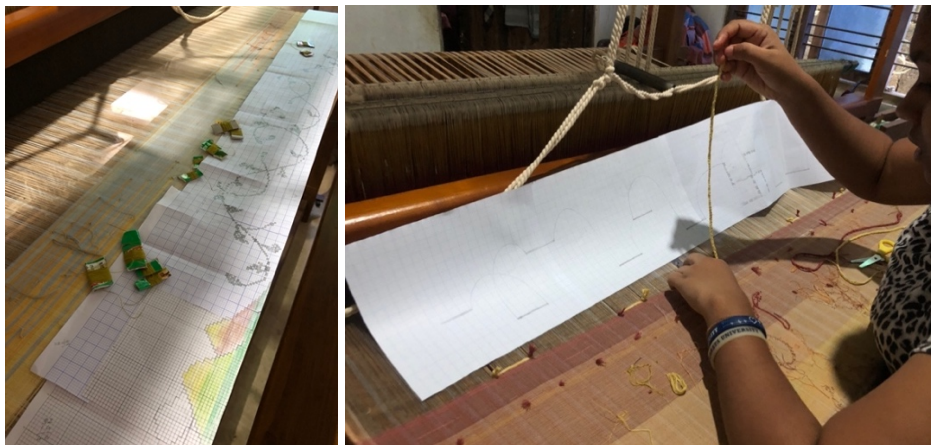
Note. Recorded by author (2024).

The weaving artisan wove the pickup motifs in the loom after referring to these papers. She marked each completed row using a pen or pencil. The pickup motifs were developed from bottom to the top, and when the motifs were done, they were not visible from the top of the loom. So, we had to go under the loom to check the color and textural outcomes of the motif. Selecting an energetic and young weaving artisan was important because she had to be physically fit to engage in all these activities. In fact, the whole body is engaged during weaving. Sometimes the artisan needs to stretch their body and crawl under the loom carefully to check the settings of the loom and tighten the robes of the machine. Further, the artisan should have excellent eyesight to do the pickup motifs. After completing a small segment of the pickup motif, we used to examine the outcome by crawling beneath the loom. When we were examining the output, my weaving artisan used to give feedback like the following: “It seems like this motif is too small to be visible. Shall we enlarge this a bit and see the outcome?”

As shown in Figure 8.11, I amended the motif by adding more depth. I modified the square sheet, and accordingly, my weaving artisan wove the pickup motifs. Likewise, after examining the motif outcome, we had to amend the colors, textural differences, and the size of the motifs if needed. Therefore, the active participation of the designer and the weaving artisan, and combination of their design ideas and skills were essential. When creating the pickup motifs, the yarns that were selected for a specific motif were bound to small cardboards (See Figure 8.12) and manually entered to the weft by the weaving artisan. These small motifs consumed more time compared to the large ones. Sometimes it took around 4-5 hours to complete ‘1 x 48 fabric (1-inch height x 48 width fabric).

Figure 8.12

Development of the Pickup Motifs by the Weaving Artisan



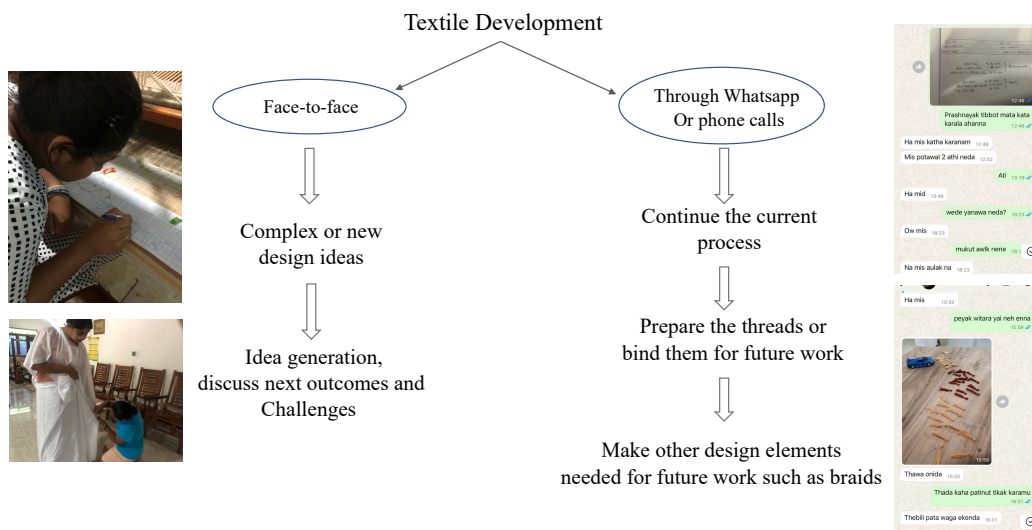
Note. Recorded by author (2024).

8.2 Defects to Effects

Throughout the textile development process, I tried my best to be present at the artisan's place every day, but due to some personal issues, on some days I had to communicate with the artisan about the work in progress from my home. On such days I guided the weaving artisan over the phone about the colors and motif placements. She sent me photos to explain how she was planning to do the pickup motifs. However, even though she sent me these photos through WhatsApp it was difficult for me to get an overall idea about the whole textile. For example, since this was her first experience of such a weaving task, she had accidentally made a mistake in one of the placements. When I visited her place after two days, she had already finished a considerable part of the motif by using the pickup motif technique. After examining the textile, I understood that if I maintained the same motif, the textile would look odd due to the placement issue. So, I stopped the task and discussed what we could do to mitigate the issue. We could undo the process by removing the pickup motifs, but that could damage the fabric and it would take a lot of time and effort from the artisan. So, I decided to change the motif and make slight changes. I tried to convert this defect into an effect by creating an optical illusion and applied the same motif to the other side of the fabric as well, so that it looked like a design. After this mistake, both of us agreed to discuss the placements in detail. Further, I decided to be there in person when the weaving artisan is about to start a new motif. When I guided her at the beginning, she could continue the weaving with less guidance. From this I learnt that no matter how talented and skillful the artisan is, the designer should be conscious and responsible about the decision making and giving clear instructions. After this incident, too, there were times I could not visit her every day in person. For instance, I had to go to university on some days and once I became severely ill after contracting a viral fever. But I was careful not to let that mistake happen again in my absence. So, I sent all the guidelines clearly through WhatsApp as shown in Figure 8.13 and avoided starting complex or new designs without my (the designer's) presence. Further, I always encouraged her to call and ask if anything was not clear to her. Accordingly, she called me to get the necessary feedback when there was any doubt.

Figure 8.13

Textile Development through Face-to-face Engagement and Virtual Platforms



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

Further, when making the Narrative Vogue development we made sure to avoid the mistakes that happened during the textile development experiment 02. The mockup fabric created in this experiment gave us important insights into the pickup motif designs, textures, and color outcomes. For example, when doing the textile development 02, the Karal pedura (a woven paddy mat) which symbolizes fertility could not be woven in the desired pattern. That mistake was analyzed and understood during the weaving of the mockup fabric. Further, in order to show the paddy fields, we had to change the warp threads by adding extra threads. It took a considerable time to add the extra threads to the warp but it did not yield a significant design outcome as we expected. During this weaving, instead of adding extra warp threads, pickup motifs were used to highlight the fields. My supervisor’s opinion on the previous design was that it was too symmetrical. Through the pickup motifs, the fields were made into irregular shapes. I guided the weaving artisan by showing the strengths and areas of improvement in the mockup fabric. In addition to that, I used sketches, visual boards and similar images to guide the weaving artisan during the weaving process.

Figure 8.14

Improvements in the Design Realization Phase



'Koral Pedura - weaving design' done for the design development 02

The expected outcome was not achieved through the Textile weaving

After identifying the mistake the new design was planned

8.3 Challenges and solutions

Considering the challenges, we faced during the textile development 02, several measurements were taken to overcome the upcoming challenges. The table 8 below shows some of the other challenges we faced and how those challenges were overcome.

Table 8

The Challenges and Strategies for Overcoming them

Challenges	How to overcome the challenges
Power cuts	Due to heavy rains and breakdowns, we faced power cuts from time to time. To overcome them, we used handphone flashlights and emergency lamps. If the power cuts became more frequent and prolonged, we planned to take the loom out of the room for better light.
Transportation problems	In the beginning I used to travel using public transportation (buses), but since it was time consuming and tiring, I opted to travel by my car

Heavy rain and floods

There were heavy rains and flooding throughout the months of December and January. Since most of the lakes and canals were overflowing, there were obstructions for travelling.

I avoided using public transport and travelled by car using alternative safe roads during this time.

Driving a long distance daily

Driving around 45 km from my home to weaving artisan's home every day was an extra challenge. Sometimes there was heavy rain and sometimes I had to stay there till evening. In the evening, I had to use alternative roads because there were wild elephants on some roads. I had to be careful and avoid any road accidents on the way and drive safely back home.

Weaving artisan's personal issues

Being aware of the artisan's personal commitments, we made a pre-plan about the deadlines. Therefore, we were able to identify the dates when the weaving artisan would have exams or lectures. However, if there was any unexpected incident, we changed the work plan accordingly.

Ex: The artisan sometimes had to attend ceremonies in the nearby temple or a funeral of a relative. At such times, she first attended to that and then covered the planned part of the weaving during night or early in the following morning.

Viral flues and cold

We were both careful to avoid viral infections as they could lead to poor health. Most infected people experienced body pain and were unable to work for a long time. Once I was affected by the flu, but I wore face masks whenever I visited the weaving artisan and used hand sanitizers to make sure that she did not contract the virus.

Designer's own personal schedules	I was planning to attend a wedding in Auckland, New Zealand in mid-February. Therefore, I had to plan everything including the finishing of the textile, the photoshoot, and the rest of the design realization part before leaving the country. It was quite challenging to finish everything according to the plan and stick to the deadlines.
Defects in the purchased yarns	I purchased the black color yarns from a dye practitioner recommended by one of my PhD colleagues. The yarns looked really good and had a good aroma as well. But when I wanted to use them for weaving, I found that they were decayed, and my weaving artisan mentioned that they could not be used. Therefore, I had to purchase more yarn within a very short period of time from a reliable practitioner.

Note. Developed by author (2024).

In a creative PLR process, we might face different challenges, but the most important thing is to take correct actions and mitigate the problem as soon as possible. We were able to finish the textile sample by 08th of February 2025. We could have done more developments and experiments, but time limitations such as my own personal schedules to migrate influenced me to finish the textile within this specific time frame.

Once the weaving was done, I completed all the payments including a complimentary gift to appreciate my weaving artisan's dedication towards this research. Further, we issued a letter from the University appreciating her skills and dedication. Therefore, the realization process was also completed according to ethical guidelines and good practices of paying appropriate wages to the craftsperson. This not only appreciates their hard work, but also their skills which promotes social sustainability. Further, I acknowledged the artisan even in the YouTube video since that would be beneficial for her to show her skills. Figure 8.15 shows removing the fabric from the loom and a family picture we took before I left their home. Both of us and her mother became emotional since a strong bond had been built during the time we spent together.

Figure 8.15

Finishing Off the Weaving – Narrative Vogue Kuweni at the Weaving Artisan’s Home



Note. Recorded by author (2024).

8.4 “Narrative Vogue – Kuweni”- Textile Dissemination

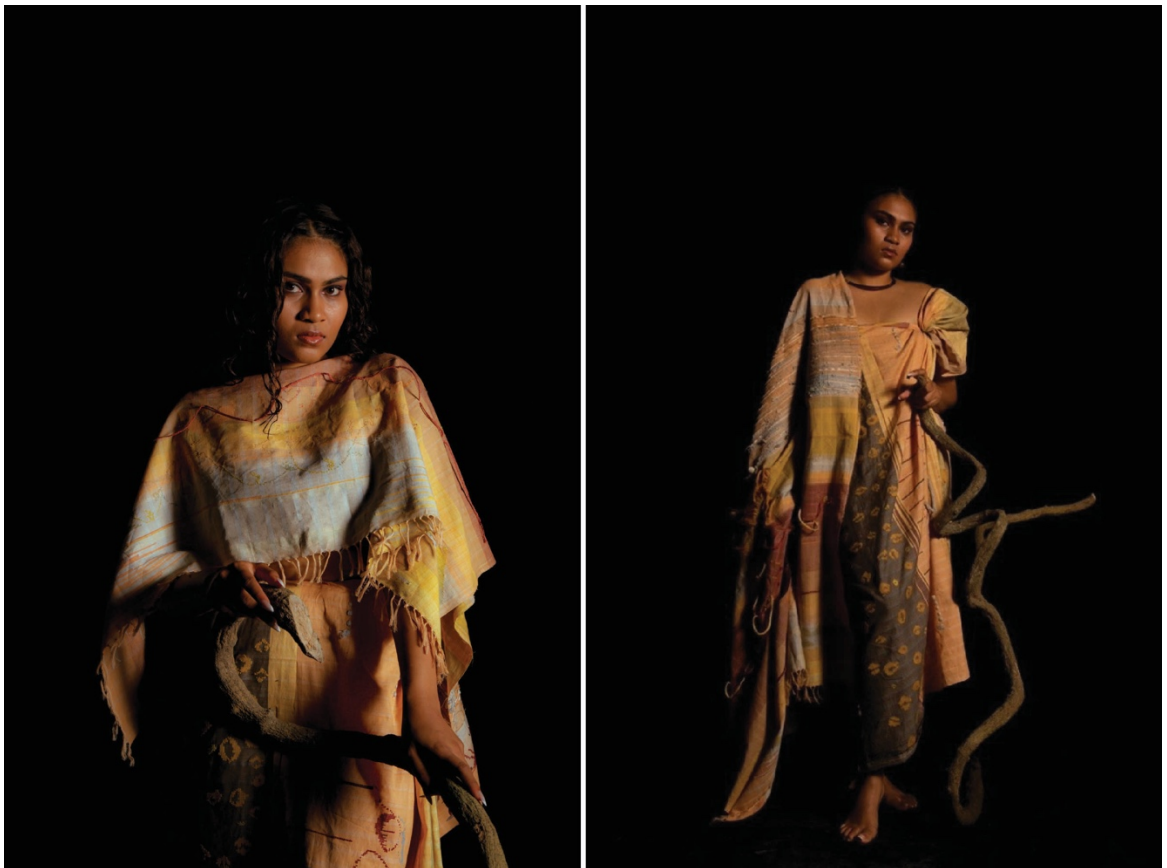
The length and width of the hand-woven fabric was four yards and forty-eight inches. The silhouette of the draping was pre-assumed in the textile development 02 and *Narrative Vogue* was designed keeping that silhouette in mind. Accordingly, I engaged in the textile weaving process and the process of selecting a model and planning the photoshoot and videography simultaneously. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, we had decided to use university resources as much as possible. If some resources were not available at the university, we planned to outsource them from the industry. Since we have studio facilities inside the university, I booked the Department of Integrated Design studio and discussed the necessary arrangements with the technical staff. Further, I was able to find a videographer, a second-year media and communication undergraduate from the university. I met him in person and explained the requirements and expected outcomes of the video and photoshoot. The model was an undergraduate from the University of Visual and Performing Arts. The height, skin tone, and sharp features were the criteria I used when selecting the model.

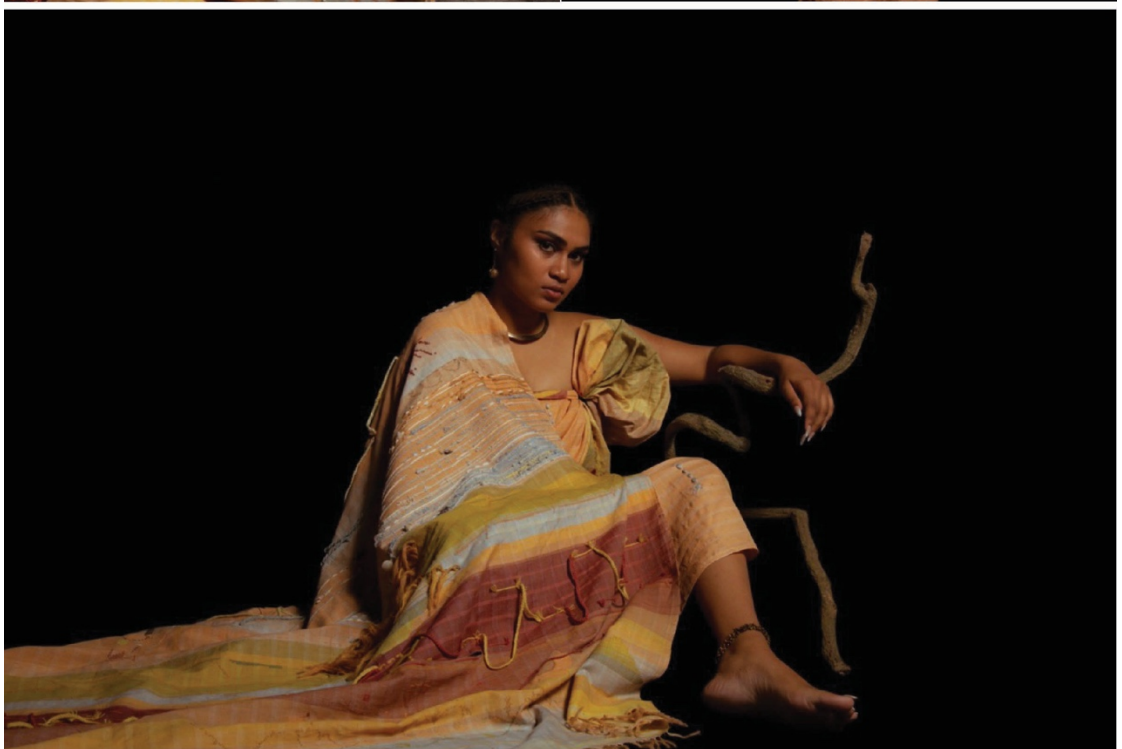
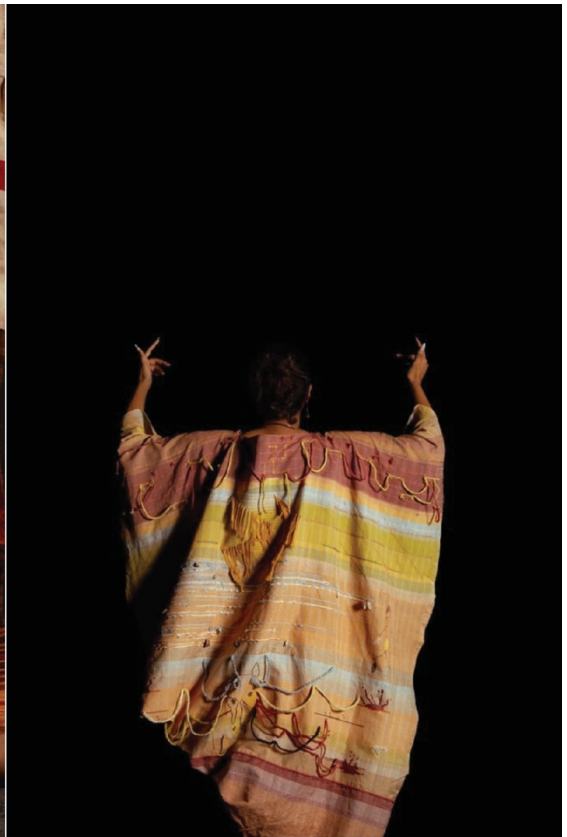
For textile dissemination, I wanted to do a textile exhibition showcasing the overall process or a television program about the textile realization. But due to time limitations, I thought to disseminate the textile outcome as a video and release it to the general audience through a YouTube Channel. For that I created a specific YouTube channel named *Folklore in Fashion*. Apart from the international publications and conference papers, this enabled the lay community also to get an understanding about the research in a creative way. Most of the activities related to design development were recorded while they were being performed, and those videos were developed

using real-life experiences. Through that I was able to give an overall idea how I did the scouring, and applied bleaching and dyeing techniques to the public community. Therefore, it can be identified as a successful mode of communication to share the creative PLR findings with the general public in an effective manner. If anyone is interested in the whole process, they can refer to the scholarly articles as well as the creative PLR videos through the Internet to get an overall idea. Figure 8.16 shows some of the photographs of the final textile development draped on the model's body.

Figure 8.16

Design Realization through Photo-Shoot







The final outcome was designed as a textile outcome from the design development stage. According to the research team, this textile can create diverse silhouette possibilities to show different attributes of Kuweni. Further, the textile can be exhibited as a continuous story in an exhibition space as well, where the attendees can observe the entire narrative through the fabric. Other than that, since Sri Lankan historical garments are interconnected with draping styles, the research team decided to plan the final textile piece also as a draping silhouette. Hence, in addition to the previously planned silhouette outcome, two more draping styles were also done during the photoshoot, so that different perspectives of the textile could be captured in multiple silhouettes. The following link provides access to a very short video on Narrative Vogue – Kuweni textile dissemination.

<https://youtu.be/hSsNdINSxY>

8.5 Chapter Conclusion

The Design Realization is a crucial part of the Creative PLR research since it disseminates the final product as a tangible outcome. This can be either successful or not, but according to the model we discussed during the Design Development chapter,

it was planned to show the final product as a tangible fashion outcome through the Design Realization phase. This can be identified as a parameter to measure how far the researcher has succeeded in completing the creative PLR process and achieving a tangible fashion or textile outcome. Even after achieving that outcome, it is necessary to communicate that outcome to the research community, and many forms of media can be used for that. In this specific research, the photoshoots and a small video were made as the final dissemination of the “*Narrative Vogue – Kuweni*”. Further, this textile is expected to be presented at fashion exhibitions or competitions to introduce it to a broader research and design community.

CHAPTER 09

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

As demonstrated by the previous chapters, the story of *Kuweni*, with its oral and literary narratives, presents a unique opportunity to explore how folklore can inform contemporary fashion practice. Insights gained through the literature review provided a sturdy foundation for identifying the key characteristics, emotions, and craft practices associated with the narrative, along with an understanding of current fashion trends, enabling the study to position folklore within contemporary contexts. The central question, “*how can folklore be used to materialize new fashion products?*” was explored in the study based on a comprehensive literature review and data analysis related to the narrative of *Kuweni*. Using qualitative exploration and a creative PLR approach, the study achieved its main objective of investigating how the social, cultural, and symbolic values embedded in folklore, particularly the emotive depth of the *Kuweni* narrative, can be translated into contemporary fashion.

Although Western designers such as Alexander McQueen and Jean Paul Gaultier have drawn inspiration from folklore and historical narratives, these influences have largely been limited to surface-level aesthetic inspirations. There is limited evidence of in-depth research that systematically connects folklore with fashion practices. Moreover, while folklore is deeply rooted in intangible ideas and traditions, fashion manifests through tangible forms. Despite this distinction, both areas intersect through storytelling, which has become increasingly central to contemporary fashion practice, especially in the context of social media and e-commerce platforms after the pandemic (Tschorn, 2020). In the context of Eastern practices, too, there is limited evidence of designers drawing on their own rich folkloric traditions in fashion design.

In an attempt to bridge the above gap by exploring how folklore can be used to materialize new fashion products, the PhD research was structured around three distinct yet interconnected phases: Concept Development, Design Development, and Design Realization. The Concept Development phase was informed by a review of literature on folklore, *Kuweni*, craft practices, fashion movements, and contemporary approach to fashion product developments. Particular attention was given to the narrative of *Kuweni*, which was explored through both ancient and contemporary literature and performing arts. This review provided critical insights into the cultural, symbolic, and emotional dimensions of the story of *Kuweni*, while also highlighting a significant research gap: the lack of integrated studies that bridge folklore and fashion to produce tangible fashion outcomes.

Concept and Design Development

The Concept Development phase generated two key analytical models: the Thematic Metaphorical Approach (TMA) and the *Kuweni* Folklore Characteristics Onion

(FCO). The TMA served as a framework for identifying themes related to folklore characters, while the FCO refined these themes for translation into fashion product development. This dual-model strategy combined deductive reasoning with inductive exploration, ensuring that the study was both anchored in theory and responsive to emergent insights from empirical data (Evans, 2017).

Two themes derived from the FCO, place legend and handloom weaving proved central to the design development process. The place legend theme informed a series of dyeing experiments based on Thambapanni soil, while the handloom theme prompted the integration of natural dyeing with woven textiles. These experiments progressed from initial trials in solar dyeing and on-site applications to more advanced scouring, bleaching, and dyeing techniques using leaves, barks, and flowers, many of which are also central to Ayurvedic practices. The researcher's engagement with traditional dye practitioners and reliance on observation and experimentation align with the practice-led research (PLR) approach (Candy, 2011), where practice and inquiry advance parallel to each other.

The researcher's cultural and social positioning was crucial at this stage. As Candy (2019) and Simonsen et al. (2010) suggest, immersion in the cultural environment fosters critical self-reflection for practitioners. Having grown up in Anuradhapura with lived experiences and social learnings, provided the researcher with deep familiarity with rural lifeways, community values, and traditional material practices. This insider perspective enhanced her sensitivity in engaging with communities and facilitated a more nuanced selection of techniques and materials. Moreover, the researcher's familiarity with Ayurvedic traditions further enriched her interpretations of natural dyes and their symbolic and practical roles in Sri Lankan society.

Design Realization

The Design Realization stage consolidated these insights into final textile production. A young weaving artisan was selected for her adaptability, technical expertise, and ability to work with intricate pick-up motifs that conveyed the narrative of Kuweni. The collaborative process demonstrated Kane and Philpott's (2013) concept of craftsmanship as a dialogue between thought and practice. Here, the artisan's capacity to balance creative experimentation with technical feasibility was crucial to success. Her familiarity with digital communication tools such as WhatsApp also facilitated remote collaboration, which helped to overcome a common barrier when working with traditional craft communities.

At this stage, the researcher assumed a coordinating role, balancing the demands of artisanship with the practicalities of research management. This required continuous monitoring of the weaving process while also liaising with research team, proofreader, photographers, and videographers. The process highlighted the complexity of

integrating traditional crafts with contemporary research methodologies and creative outputs.

Critical Reflection

During the course of the research, several strengths and limitations emerged. The strengths of this research mainly lie in the researcher's insider positionality, which provided privileged access to communities, folklore knowledge, and cultural practices, thereby minimizing barriers in data collection and rapport-building. The integration of Practice Led Research (PLR) methods with traditional craft practices created a contextually grounded framework for innovation in fashion design. Furthermore, collaboration with adaptable artisans highlighted the potential of blending traditional skills with modern communication technologies, demonstrating how practice-based research can remain feasible while embracing contemporary modes of exchange.

While insider knowledge enriched the research process, it also carried the risk of bias in the interpretation and selection of themes, making critical distance difficult to sustain. Reliance on a single artisan in the realization phase restricted the diversity of craft interpretations and potentially narrowed the range of design outcomes. Additionally, the experimental dyeing processes employed were highly context-specific, raising questions of scalability and reproducibility, particularly when applied to different geographical or industrial settings.

Overall, this study highlighted how cultural familiarity, practice-led experimentation, and collaborative craftsmanship can converge to create innovative outcomes in fashion design. By situating folklore within both theoretical analysis and material practice, the research promotes an approach that is contextually grounded, critically reflective, and creatively generative.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

As highlighted in the study, folklore plays a vital role in characterizing and symbolizing concepts while revealing historical and cultural values. This study explored the central question: “*How can folklore be used to materialize new fashion products?*”. Based on an extensive literature review and data analysis related to the narrative of Kuweni, the study addressed this question through qualitative exploration and a creative PLR approach.

The TMA and the Kuweni-FCO emerged as the key outcomes of the qualitative inquiry. These frameworks were developed using both scientific and social scientific approaches, incorporating inductive and deductive thematic analyses to interpret folklore. The creative PLR approach applied in design development was based on selected themes from the Kuweni FCO, and this demonstrated how folklore can be embodied in fashion and textile outcomes.

During the Concept Development phase, the Kuweni FCO helped to identify a range of themes that informed the creative PLR process. These themes guided the exploration of both tangible aspects such as craft culture and intangible dimensions like the emotions and narratives embedded in folklore. These research findings, including the methodology of developing the TMA, FCO, and translating the themes into the creative fashion practices, can be identified as new knowledge contributions to both folklore and fashion practices. In this study, the researcher played a unique role connecting and converging multiple disciplines to achieve a fashion outcome by exploring the folklore character, Kuweni. Although many designers as well as practitioners have worked with different craftsmen and artisans on developing creative outcomes, they have not come up with a systematic methodology to generate outcomes. Because of this, even though they come up with new methods, these methods may not be shared with the design and scholarly communities. Designers often work with inspirations drawn from folklore, but these do not usually have a deeper conceptual or design development framework. Hence, the present research can be identified as a pioneer study where a unique systematic methodology was developed to explore folklore in order to develop tangible fashion outcomes. Another significant aspect of this study is how it explored the influence of intangible heritage (ex: folklore) on creating tangible fashion outcomes guided by well-established methodology rather than coming up with random or mythological ideas, which is often seen in the creative discipline.

Furthermore, although many designers have worked with handloom artisans, their attention was limited to weaving structures, patterns, motifs or colors. This is because their sole focus was on coming up with vibrant color combinations and intricate design ideas. However, the present study shows novel avenues by highlighting and demonstrating healthy designer-artisan relationships as they co-create products. A good designer-artisan relationship makes it easier to embed socio-emotional values

into a fabric as intangible themes are converted into tangibles ones, particularly in the methodology used in this study. In the creative PLR approach, apart from the written evidence, the multi-media approach (audio and video presentation) has also been significant in the dissemination of the findings, so that the audience can better understand practice. As such the final outcome of this study, the woven textile, which embodies diverse themes has been shared with the public through the “Folklore in Fashion” YouTube channel. Apart from this, the research process (from concept development to realization) was shared in many academic contexts at different stages of the study. These include presentations and publications in seven international conferences, journal articles, newspapers, and workshops.

Moreover, this study explored many traditional dyeing, scouring, and bleaching techniques from the inherited knowledge repository of Sri Lankan crafts communities. Preserving this knowledge in scholarly literature, even though some of these techniques are deemed as tacit knowledge among artisans, can be identified as an important step realized in this study. It should also be noted that all these creative PLR findings which emerged through researcher observations, self-reflections, and experimentations are related to the responsible color development and localism, and that they can be further explored for more successful outcomes.

Limitations of the Study:

- The Kuweni FCO is an extensive model encompassing diverse themes. This study focused only on those most suitable for fashion product development. Future research can explore other themes in relation to different creative disciplines.
- Although the concept development phase indicated potential for more complex handloom designs, time constraints limited the research scope to pickup motifs and a limited number of patterns in the final textile.
- Public dissemination of the research findings was restricted to the YouTube channel of the study due to time and budget limitations. Nevertheless, showcasing the textile in an exhibition or fashion show could enhance the emotive and visual impact of *Narrative Vogue – Kuweni*, enriching the storytelling element.
- Photoshoots and videography were limited to controlled environments. Ideally, outdoor settings such as Thambapanni beach, which is directly linked to the legend, would have been used to evoke deeper emotional resonance. However, time and ethical considerations restricted this aspect.

Future Research Avenues Arising from the Study

The framework of TMA and Kuweni FCO developed in this study can be effectively applied to interpret and characterize various folklore and craft traditions, offering reliable and meaningful themes for the creation of culturally inspired design outcomes. However, this study did not examine the potential of folklore in consumer-oriented fashion product development and marketing. Therefore, TMA and FCO outcomes can be better used for commercial fashion products development, bridging the gap between cultural heritage and market-driven innovation. Though the present study is primarily focused on fashion outcomes, the TMA and FCO can be applied in other creative disciplines as well.

Concluding Remarks

The present study, structured in three key phases— Concept Development, Design Development, and Design Realization— contributes to both theoretical and practice-based knowledge in fashion and textile design. Notably, it also engages in ethical explorations involving sensitive communities, including traditional artisans and indigenous groups, thereby enriching the impact of the study.

In a creative practice-led research (PLR) context, the researcher actively engages in creative production while formulating a suitable methodology. In this process, both successful and unsuccessful outcomes are valued as contributions to new knowledge. As an interdisciplinary investigation, the present research brings together folklore and fashion, utilizing a phased methodology that begins with qualitative inquiry and progresses through a creative, practice-led approach. Through this framework, the study has effectively met its objectives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A- Ethics Approval Letter



University Ethics Review Committee
Faculty of Graduate Studies,
University of Moratuwa, Katubedda

11.05.2021

E.R.S.J.Thilakarathne (208083V)
Department of Textile and Apparel Engineering
University of Moratuwa

Dear Mr.Thilakarathne,

Ethics Approval Reference: **EDN/2021/001**

Title: **Folk-lore in Fashion: A systematic design-led approach in bringing life to folklore through fashion products**

Investigators: **Dr.Sumith Gopura,Dr.Ayesha Wickramasinghe,\ and Dr.Alice Payne**

Thank you for submitting the Ethics Application Form A in relation to the research project referred to above. I am pleased to inform you that the committee, at its 31st meeting on 29th April 2021 has granted approval to proceed with above study.

This Approval is applicable to the following documents:

	English		Sinhala		Tamil	
	Version	Date	Version	Date	Version	Date
Research Proposal	01	07.04.2021				
Information Sheets	01	07.04.2021				
Consent Forms	01	07.04.2021				
Data Collection Forms	01	07.04.2021				
Other	01	07.04.2021				

Address all correspondence to: Convener, Assistant Registrar, Faculty of Graduate Studies,
University of Moratuwa, Katubedda, Sri Lanka
Telephone: 011-2651602 / Extension: 6802
Email: ar-fgs@uom.lk

The project complies with the General Guidelines on Ethical Conduct of Research in University of Moratuwa.

The following standard conditions will also apply to your project:

- **Limit of Approval.** Approval is limited strictly to the research proposal as submitted in your application while taking into account any additional conditions advised by the UERC. The approval is valid for one year from the date of issue of this letter and the committee requires that you furnish a final report once the study is concluded. If the study is continued for a period beyond one year you are required to obtain an approval for the extension with the relevant documents.
- **Variation to Project.** Any subsequent variations or modifications you wish to make to your project must be formally notified to the UERC for approval in advance of these modifications being introduced into the project. In order to do this, you are advised to send a revised application. If the UERC considers that the proposed changes are significant, you may be required to submit a new application form A or B for approval of the revised project.
- **Withdrawal of Project.** If you decide to discontinue your research before its planned completion, you must advise the UERC and clarify the circumstances.
- **Monitoring.** All projects are subject to monitoring at any time by the University Ethics Review Committee.

On behalf of the University Ethics Review Committee, best wishes with your research!

This is subject to the confirmation of the Senate.

Kind regards,



Prof. G.R. Ratnayake
Chairman, University Ethics Review Committee
PhD (La Trobe University, Australia)
Faculty of Architecture
University of Moratuwa, Katubedda, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
T: +94 112 650921 E: rangajeewar@gmail.com | rangajeewar@uom.lk

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Telephone: 011-2651602 / Extension: 6802
Email: ar-fgs@uom.lk

Appendix B- Questionnaires

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROFESSIONALS RELATED TO HISTORY, FOLK-LORE, ARCHIOLOGY AND ARTS IN SRILANKA		
ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ඉතිහාසය, ජනකතා, පුරාවිද්‍යාව සහ කලා කටයුතු වලට අදාළ වෘත්තිකයන් සඳහා වන ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය		
Folk-lore in Fashion: A systematic design led approach in bringing life to folk lore through fashion products		
Province/පළාත:	Area/ප්‍රදේශය	
Name/නම:	Age/වයස	Gender/ස්ත්‍රී/පුරුෂ භාවය M F
Contact Details/ඇමතුම් විස්තර:	Date/දිනය	Time/වේලාව

Brief Description about myself

“First of all, I will give a brief introduction about myself. I am Shashiprabha. I came to meet you to have valuable information for my PhD research. It is regarding Folk-lore, Fashion practices and performing arts. Studying about our cultural values and folk-culture can be identified as an important element of the research. My passion towards history, archeology, Sri Lankan folk culture and fashion practices were the main reason to choose this study area. I completed my Bachelor’s Degree in 2017 specialized in Fashion and Life style Design from University of Moratuwa. Thereafter I worked as a Temporary Instructor for one year. During that time, I participated with many craft projects related to local weaving projects inter connected with the culture and lifestyle of local people. Thereafter I wanted to extend my knowledge so started doing my masters in Polytechnic of Milan on Brand and Product Development. It enhanced my fashion knowledge on International fashion and brands and regarding Italian fashion system.

Therefore, I hope to conduct this interview/ discussion by following all the ethics as a researcher and we already got the ethical clearance from University of Moratuwa. Therefore, Data will be used in a legitimate manner and information will be preserved, with all the protective measures we follow during this research.”

මා ගැන කෙටි විස්තරයක්...

“පළමුව, මම මා ගැන කෙටි හැඳින්වීමක් කරන්නම්. මම ශෂිප්‍රභා. මම ඔබතුමා/ ඔබතුමිය හමුවීමට ආවේ මගේ ආචාර්ය උපාධි පර්යේෂණ සඳහා වටිනා තොරතුරු ලබා ගැනීමටයි. එය ජන කතා, විලාසිතා භාවිතයන් සහ රංග කලාව සම්බන්ධයෙන් කරනු ලබන ආචාර්ය උපාධියක්. ජන සංස්කෘතිය පිළිබඳව අධ්‍යයනය කිරීම පර්යේෂණයේ වැදගත් අංගයක් ලෙස හඳුනාගත පුලුවන්. ඉතිහාසය, පුරාවිද්‍යාව, ශ්‍රී ලාංකික ජන සංස්කෘතිය සහ විලාසිතා භාවිතයන් පිළිබඳ මගේ විශේෂ ඇල්ම මෙම අධ්‍යයන ක්ෂේත්‍රය තෝරා ගැනීමට ප්‍රධාන හේතුවක් වුණා. මම 2017 දී උපාධිය සම්පූර්ණ කළේ මොරටුව විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයෙන් විලාසිතා සහ ජීවන රටා නිර්මාණය පිළිබඳවයි. ඉන්පසු මම තාවකාලික උපදේශකයෙකු ලෙස වසරක කාලයක් සේවය කළා. එම කාලය තුළ, දේශීය ජනතාවගේ සංස්කෘතිය හා ජීවන රටාව හා බැඳී ඇති දේශීය රෙදි විවීම හා සම්බන්ධ ව්‍යාපෘතිවලට මම සහභාගී වුණා. ඉන්පසුව මට මගේ දැනුම පුළුල් කිරීමට අවශ්‍ය වූ නිසා වෙළඳ නාම සහ නිෂ්පාදන සංවර්ධනය පිළිබඳ මිලාන්හි පොලිටෙක්නික් විශ්ව විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයෙන් මගේ ශාස්ත්‍රපති උපාධිය හැදෑරීමට පටන් ගත්ත. එය ජාත්‍යන්තර විලාසිතා සහ වෙළඳ

හාම සහ ඉතාලි විලාසිතා පද්ධතිය පිළිබඳ මගේ විලාසිතා දැනුම වැඩි දියුණු කර ගැනීමට උපකාරී වුණා.

එම නිසා පර්යේෂකයෙකු ලෙස සියලු ආචාර ධර්ම අනුගමනය කරමින් මෙම සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණය / සාකච්ඡාව පැවැත්වීමට මම බලාපොරොත්තු වන අතර අපට දැනටමත් මොරටුවා විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයෙන් ආචාර ධර්ම නිෂ්කාශනය ලැබී තිබෙනවා. මෙම පර්යේෂණය අතරතුර අප විසින් අනුගමනය කරනු ලබන සියලු ආරක්ෂණ පියවරයන් සමඟ දත්ත නිතරානුකූල ආකාරයකින් භාවිතා කිරීමට මම, ඔබට බැඳී සිටිනවා. ”

1. What is your field of specialization and how long have you been working in that field?

පළමුවෙන්ම ඔබේ විෂයය ක්ෂේත්‍රය හා එම ක්ෂේත්‍රයේ කොපමණ කාලයක් ඔබ සේවය කරනවාදැයි මට දැන ගැනීමට පුළුවන්ද?

- Follow up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

2. What is the most favorite work or the project you did during your career?

එම කාලය තුළ ඔබ වඩාත්ම ප්‍රියතාවයක් දැක්වූ ක්‍රියාකාරකමක්, සේවාවක් හෝ ව්‍යාපෘතිය කුමක්ද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

3. What is your idea about folk-lore?

ජන ප්‍රබන්ධ පිළිබඳ ඔබේ අදහස කුමක්ද සහ ජන ප්‍රබන්ධ පිළිබඳ වැදගත්කම ඔබ දකින්නේ කෙසේද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

4. Do you have specific research or study on folk-lore/community? What is the specialty?

ඔබ විශේෂයෙන් කැමැත්තක් දක්වන ජන ප්‍රබන්ධයක් තිබේද? එවැනිත් තිබේ නම්, ඔබ වියට විශේෂයෙන් කැමති වීමට හේතුව කුමක්ද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

How do you see the importance about folk-lore for communities?

සමාජයට, ජන කතා වැදගත් වන්නේ ඇයි?

5. Have you heard the story of *Kuweni* ? Do you think do you see an significance behind that story?

කුවේනියගේ කතාව ඔබ අසා තිබේද? එම කතාව පිටුපස ඇති යම් වැදගත්කමක් ඔබට පෙනේද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

Do you see any relevance in-between story of *Kuweni* from your subject area?

ඔබේ විෂය ක්ෂේත්‍රයත් කුවේනියගේ කතාව අතරත් කිසියම් සම්බන්ධතාවයක් ඔබට පෙනේද?

6. Are there any literature, historical or archaeological sources related to the story Kuweni?

කුවේනියේ කතාවට අදාළ කලාත්මක, සාහිත්‍යමය, චේතනාසික හෝ පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක මූලාශ්‍ර පිළිබඳ ඔබ දැනුවත්ද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

7. Do you know any place legends or other narratives related to the folk-lore of *Kuweni*?

කුවේනියේ ජන ප්‍රබන්ධයට අදාළ චේතනාසික හෝ පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක ස්ථාන හෝ ඒ ආශ්‍රිත වෙනත් කතා ඔබ දන්නවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

8. Do you know anyone whom we can contact to get the information regarding our research area?

මේ ජනශූන්‍ය හා සම්බන්ධ තොරතුරු දැන ගත හැකි පුද්ගලයන් හෝ ජන කණ්ඩායම් පිළිබඳ තොරතුරු ඔබ දන්නවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INDIGENIOUS / LOCAL COMMUNITY OF SRI LANKA		
ස්වදේශික/දේශීය ප්‍රජාව සඳහා වන ප්‍රශ්නාවලිය		
Folk-lore in Fashion: A systematic design led approach in bringing life to folk lore through fashion products		
Province/පළාත:	Area/ප්‍රදේශය	
Name/නම:	Age/වයස	Gender/ස්ත්‍රී/පුරුෂ භාවය M F
Contact Details/ඇමතුම් විස්තර:	Date/දිනය	Time/වේලාව

Question no 4, 9,10,11 will be asked only from the Indigenous (*Vedda*) community of Sri Lanka.

අංක 4,9,10,11 ප්‍රශ්න අසනු ලබන්නේ ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ආදිවාසී (වැද්ද) ප්‍රජාවෙන් පමණි.

(Brief Introduction about myself...)

I am Shashiprabha. I came from University of Moratuwa, Colombo to do a research about Folk-lore and Fashion. This is for my PhD research. This research is a practice-based research where I should go and find about our historical, archeological evidences to build a relationship between our clothing culture, dyes, printing techniques that they used, body adornments etc. To find those things, stories and narratives regarding folk-lore will be helpful. Therefore, I like to explore about your life style, how you live, old stories about your ancestors and all. There is no specific structure where you should answer my questions, we can talk relax and share your ideas. At the same time this will be helpful to explore the things in unwritten history and to develop a good relationship with our ancestors. Therefore, your support and ideas are truly valuable to make this research a success. So first let's meet each other.)

(මා ගැන කෙටි විස්තරයක්...)

මම ශෂිප්‍රභා. මම කොළඹ මොරටුව විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයේ සිට මෙහි පැමිණියේ ජන කතා හා විලාසිතා පිළිබඳ පර්යේෂණයක් සිදු කිරීමටයි. ඒ මගේ ආචාර්ය උපාධි පර්යේෂණ සඳහායි. මෙම පර්යේෂණය, ක්‍රියාකරකම් මත පදනම් වූ පර්යේෂණයක් වන අතර අපගේ ඇඳුම් සංස්කෘතිය, සායම්, ඔවුන් භාවිතා කළ මුද්‍රණ ශිල්ප ක්‍රම, ශරීර අලංකාර කිරීම් ආදිය අතර සම්බන්ධතාවයක් ගොඩනගා ගැනීම සඳහා වේගිභාසික, පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක සාක්ෂි සොයා ගත යුතුය.

ඒ සඳහා ජන ප්‍රශ්නවලට ප්‍රයෝජනවත් වනු ඇත. විමනිසා, ඔබේ ජීවන රටාව, ඔබ ජීවත් වන ආකාරය, ඔබේ මුතුන් මිත්තන් පිළිබඳ පැරණි කතා ආදී සියල්ල ගවේෂණය කිරීමට මම කැමතියි. ඔබ මගේ ප්‍රශ්නවලට පිළිතුරු දිය යුතු නිශ්චිත ව්‍යුහයක් නොමැත අතර අපට විවේකීව කතා කරමින් ඔබේ අදහස් බෙදා ගත හැකිය. ඒ සමඟම මෙය අලිඛිත ඉතිහාසයේ දේවල් ගවේෂණය කිරීමට සහ ඔබේ, අපේ මුතුන් මිත්තන් සමඟ හොඳ සම්බන්ධතාවයක් ගොඩනගා ගැනීමට උපකාරී වනු ඇත. විමනිසා, මෙම පර්යේෂණය සාර්ථක කර ගැනීම සඳහා ඔබේ සහාය සහ අදහස් සැබවින්ම වටී. විඛේන පළමුව අපි එකිනෙකා හඳුනා ගනිමු.

1. We shall talk about you and your family first?

ඔබ සහ ඔබගේ පවුලේ සාමාජිකයන් ගැන අපි මුලින්ම කතා කරමුද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

2. What is your daily routine and what do you do for living?

ඔබ උදෑසන පටන් ගන්නේ කොහොමද (ඔබේ දෛනික චර්යාව කුමක්ද?)
ජීවත් වීම සඳහා කරන රැකියාව කුමක්ද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

3. How long have you been living in this area?

ඔබ මෙම ප්‍රදේශයේ කොපමණ කාලයක් ජීවත් වනවාද සහ ඔබේ මුතුන් මිත්තන් ජීවත්වීම සඳහා කළේ කුමක්ද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

Tell me little bit more about your ancestors? What have they been doing for living? මට ඔබේ මුතුන් මිත්තන් ගැන තව ටිකක් තොරතුරු කියනවාද? ඔවුන් ජීවත් වීමට කර තිබෙන්නේ මොනවාද?

4. Do you have relatives or community within other areas of Sri Lanka?

ඔබට ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ වෙනත් ප්‍රදේශ සමඟ සම්බන්ධ ප්‍රජාවක් හෝ ඥාතීන් සිටීද ?
ඔවුන්ගේ සම්භවය පිළිබඳව ඔබ දන්නේ මොනවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

What is their origin? ඔවුන්ගේ ආරම්භය සිඳු වී ඇත්තේ කෙසේද?

5. Do you know folk-lore related to your community or this area?

ඔබේ ප්‍රජාවට හෝ මෙම ප්‍රදේශය හා සම්බන්ධ ජන කතා ඔබ දන්නවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

6. What is your favorite story among them?

ඒ අතර ඔබේ ප්‍රියතම ජන කතාව කුමක්ද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion. Why do you like it? ඔබ වියට විශේෂයෙන් කැමති ඇයි?

7. Have you heard about the story of Kuweni?

“කුවේනි” පිලිබඳ කතාව ඔබ අසා තිබේද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

8. What are the other stories related to Kuweni within your community?

ඔබගේ ප්‍රජාව හෝ මෙම ප්‍රදේශය තුළ “කුවේනි” හා සම්බන්ධ වෙනත් කතා මොනවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion.

9. Are there any clothing and/or draping styles, printing or dyeing techniques used by your community/ancestors to make clothes?

ඇඳුම් සාදා ගැනීම සඳහා ජන සංස්කෘතිය ඇසුරින් ඔබේ ප්‍රජාව විසින් භාවිතා කරන ඇඳුම් විලාසිතාවන්, මුද්‍රණ ක්‍රම හෝ සායම් ශිල්ප ක්‍රම තිබේද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion

If there are any special techniques are there any special reasons for those colors/ Embellishments?

විශේෂ ශිල්පීය ක්‍රම තිබේ නම් එම වර්ණ/සැරසිලි සඳහා විශේෂ හේතු සාධක තිබේද?

10. Are there any special (occasional) clothes used by your community?

ඔබේ ප්‍රජාවට අදාළ උත්සව සඳහා විශේෂ ඇඳුම්/ පැළඳුම් තිබේද? ඔබ සමරන උත්සව මොනවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion

What are the occasions that you wear special clothes / draping styles?

විශේෂයෙන් ඇඳුම් නිර්මාණය කරන හෝ ඇඳුම් ඇඳීමේ ශිල්පීය ක්‍රම ආදිය භාවිතා කරන අවස්ථා මොනවාද?



11. How do you feel about your community and what are the things that you are proud about your culture?

ඔබේ ප්‍රජාව ගැන ඔබට දැනෙන්නේ කෙසේද? ඔබේ සංස්කෘතිය ගැන ඔබ ආඩම්බර වන දේවල් මොනවාද?

- Follow-up questions will be based on the nature of the flow of discussion

There might be little changes in the follow up questions with the answers that they provide to the main questions. But follow up questions will be used as a guideline to narrow down the questionnaire in to the objectives that we want from the participant without getting distracted by their narratives.

Appendix C - Permission Letter from Department of Wildlife Conservation

වනජීවී සංරක්ෂණ දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව
வன சீவராசிகள் பாதுகாப்புத் திணைக்களம்
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

ප්‍රධාන කාර්යාලය, අංක 382, නව නුවර පාර, මාලටුවේ
 பிரதான அலுவலகம், இலக்கம் 382, புதிய கண்டி வீதி, மாலபே
Head Office, No. 382, New Kandy Road, Malabe

මගේ අංකය எனது இல. My No. } WL/3/2/4/2023	ඔබේ අංකය உமது இல. Your No. }	දිනය திகதி Date } 10.02.2023
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Dr. Sumith Gopura
 Senior Lecturer
 Department of Textile and Apparel Engineering
 University of Moratuwa

Dear Dr. Gopura ,

Folklore in Fashion: A systematic Design Led Approach in Bringing Life to Folklore of Kuweni through Fashion Products

This refers to your research application dated 19th January 2023 on the above.

02. Permission is hereby granted for the following team to carry out the above research in Wilpattu National Park for a period of one year (01) from the date of this letter under the supervision of Park Warden in Wilpattu National Park subject to following conditions.

03. You are permitted to collect 3 samples from one species of Cotton flowers, Cotton leaves, soil and sand samples in Kudiramalei area in Wilpattu National.

<u>Team</u>		
	Name	NIC/ PP No.
i.	Dr. Sumith Gopura	800721458V
ii.	Dr. Ayesha Wickramasinghe	197876503600
iii.	E.R.S.J. Thilakarathne	937151845V
iv.	E.R. Thilakarathne	591491113 V
v.	Ravindu Devapriya Jacob	199213101761

<u>Conditions</u>	
i.	All field works should be conducted during the approved period of the research. To obtain the permission to enter Wilpattu National Park area you are required to inform Park Warden of Wilpattu National Park regarding the dates that you wish to enter the WNP in advance to enable him to appoint suitable officer to supervise field work.
ii.	All field works within wildlife protected areas should be conducted only from 6.00 am to 6.00 pm.
iii.	Natural habitats and natural behavior of wild animals should not be disturbed due to this activity.

කාර්යාලය அலுவலகம் Office } 011-2560380	ෆැක්ස් தொலைபேசி Fax } 011-2744299	ඊ-මේල් மின்-அஞ்சல் E-mail } director@dwc.gov.lk
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- iv. All the samples collected from area can only be used for research activities mentioned in the research proposal.
- v. A copy of final report and publications made from the research study should be submitted to the department after completion of the study.
- vi. Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) will not consider any changes of research team & research activities.
- vii. The permission cannot be transferred to any of others.

04. This approval is made subject to the provisions of Fauna & Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO) of Sri Lanka and you should strictly comply with the provisions of the said ordinance.

05. Kindly note that you are working in a protected area at your own risk The Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) does not accept any liability or responsibility for any loss, damage, accident or injury whether fatal or otherwise of whatsoever nature arising as a result of working/ travelling within a Wildlife Protected Area.

Thanking you,
Yours sincerely,



M.S.L.R.P. Marasinghe
Director (Operations)

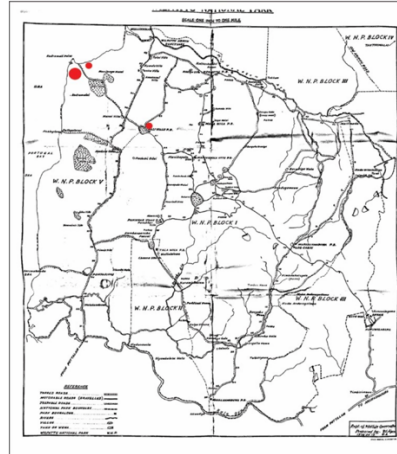
Signed by:
M.G.C. Sooriyabandara
Director General of Wildlife Conservation

Copies:

1. Assistant Director (Anuradhapura region) - For information supervision pls.
2. Park Warden (Wilpattu National Park)- For information supervision pls.

Appendix D - Other Experiments related to Design Development

Initial Practice Led Research (PLR) activities were started with the Wilpattu visit on 10/12/2022. In that visit I was able to identify interesting details related to the PhD research on Folklore in Fashion: A systematic Design Led Approach in Bringing Life to Folklore of Kuweni Through Fashion Products.



Wilpattu National Park Map

As shown in the above map, the Kudiramalei is the area famous the Thambapanni, where it is believed that Vijaya landed in to the country. One of the interesting facts was the sand in Thambapanni area. Therefore, I collected those sand samples to do experiments in future.



The color of soil in Kudiramalei inside Wilpattu national park

Domestic Experiments on Sand Dyeing using Fabrics

The following domestic experiment was done to understand the dyeing quality of different fabrics

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
02	10/01/2023	Morning	Experiments done at home	<p>First, I collected some fabric pieces</p> <p>Next, I mordent one handloom cotton with alum, and other with copper sulphate.</p> <p>Used 5 g of alum/ copper sulphate to 4 liters of water</p> <p>I used an old rice cooker pot for that boiled them in gas cooker under low heat for 20 minutes.</p> <p>Let the fabric in the liquid for around 2 hours and rinsed it off</p> <p>Let the fabric dry in shade dry for one day.</p> <p>Next day sand was heated with 4 liters in a normal hearth</p> <p>Then soaked the fabric samples in the dye bath and kept it in the hearth for around 30 minutes</p> <p>Let the fabric absorb all the colors for around 5 hours in the dye bath (without heat)</p> <p>Rinsed it off and let it shade dry for one day</p> <p>Did not wash the samples in water Let it shade dry for one day</p> <p>Ironed the fabrics after getting dry</p>

	Outcomes	<p>The colors were well fixed to the fabrics.</p> <p>When copper sulphate was using as a mordant there was a strong smell and purple color in the water bath</p> <p>It was difficult to remove that purple color from the rice cooker pot.</p> <p>There was no comparable difference between the alum mordant or copper sulphate mordant</p> <p>Both can be identified as good mordants for handloom fabric</p>		



Mordant – Copper Sulphate
(Palmanikkam)



Mordant – Alum
(Seenakkaran)

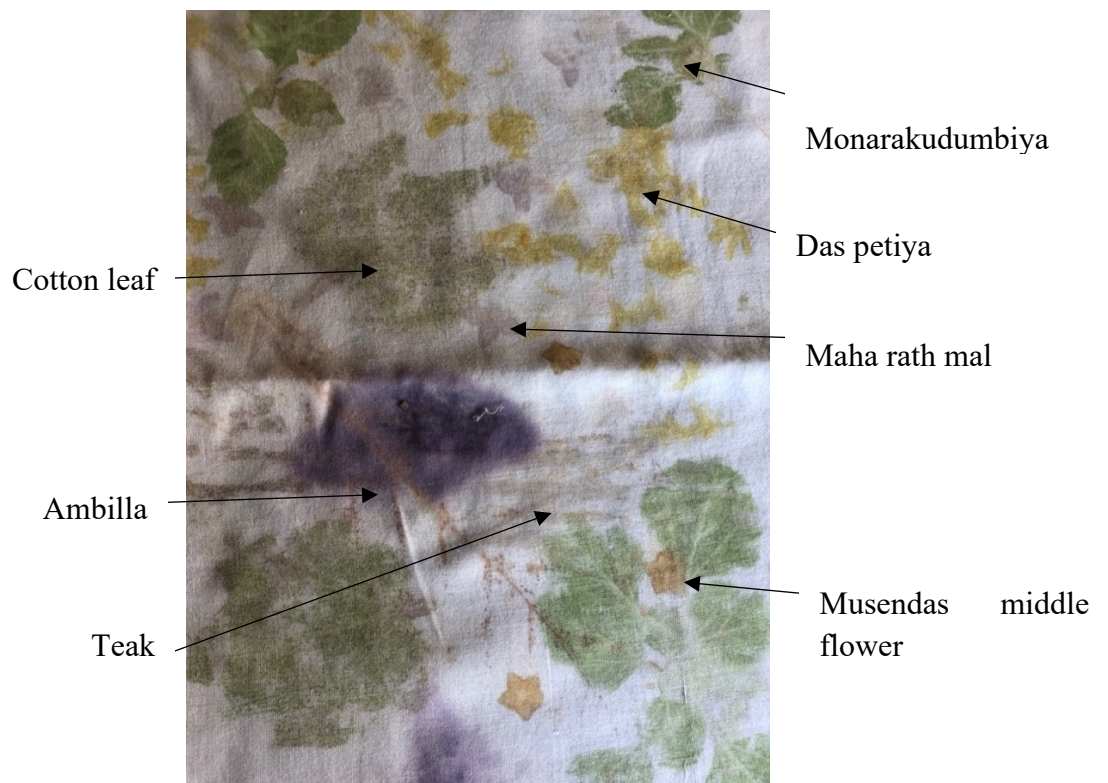


Fabrics after ironing

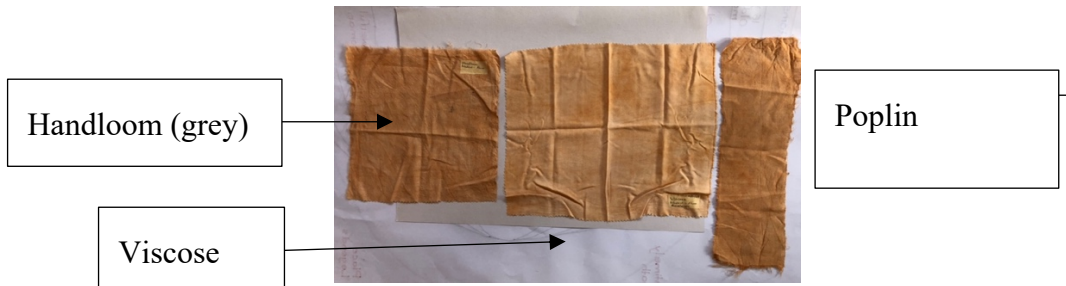
Hammering or Pressing Technique on Pre Mordanted-Fabrics

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
03	11/01/2023	Morning	Experiment done at home Step 01	<p>A white handloom fabric was taken as the sample.</p> <p>It was not scoured since I used a fabric piece from a saree used by my mother, therefore it has been washed several times before this experiment.</p> <p>The fabric was mordant in Alum for around 20 minutes in a rice cooker pot with 5 liters of water and >5 g of alum (Seenakkaran)</p> <p>It was kept in the solution for some time, rinsed off and let it dry in shade dry</p> <p>When the fabric is fully dried, it was taken to do the experiment.</p>
		Evening	Step 02	<p>Few leaves, flowers and nuts were selected from the garden to do this experiment. Before doing the experiment some you tube videos were followed.</p> <p>Leaves – Monarakudumbiya Kuppameniya, Cotton, Teak, Kubuk</p> <p>Flowers – Rathmal, Das petiya, musendas</p> <p>Fruits – Abilla (Ripped ones)</p> <p>These were placed on the fabric and covered with a</p>

			<p>polythene cover. Then a hammer was used to press the materials to the fabric. When the materials are pressed the polythene was removed and</p> <p>The remaining petals and leave particles were removed from the fabric.</p> <p>Let it dry in shade dry and washed the fabric in clean water.</p> <p>Again, let it dry in shade dry</p> <p>Then ironed it well</p> <p>Then the print was visible as follows.</p>
	Step 03		
Outcomes	<p>This hammering/ pressing technique was highly successful with some leaves, flowers and fruits.</p> <p>Monarakudumbiya, Kuppamenia have a pleasing green color and color was well absorbed to the fabric</p>		

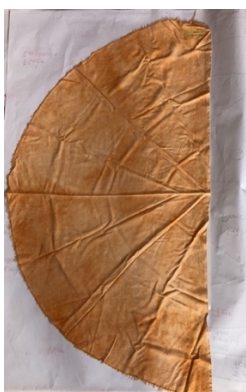


		Much darker color can be seen in poplin fabric and evenly dye is fix to the fabric After the washing in Viscose fabric color became bit lighter
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Thambapanni Soil Dyeing without Scouring or Pre Mordanting

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
05	10/01/2023	Morning	Experiments done at home	<p>A viscose fabric was taken for this experiment</p> <p>Fabric sample was not scoured or mordant with any mordanting material.</p> <p>Directly the sample was heated in the sand dye bath for around 30 minutes in the normal hearth</p> <p>Staired well time to time</p> <p>Then it was in the dye bath for around 1 hour</p> <p>Taken out and rinsed off the excess water</p> <p>Let it shade dry</p> <p>Did not wash the fabric</p> <p>The sample can be seen as in the following picture</p>
	Outcome	<p>Without mordant also dye has been fixed well</p> <p>But un evenly dye has been fixed</p> <p>A tie and dye kind of an effect can be seen</p>		



Non-Scoured and non-mordant viscose fabric sample dyed with sand



Closer look of the texture of the fabric sample



The difference between the non-mordant sample and the mordant sample

Eco Printing Experiments on Soil Dyed Fabrics

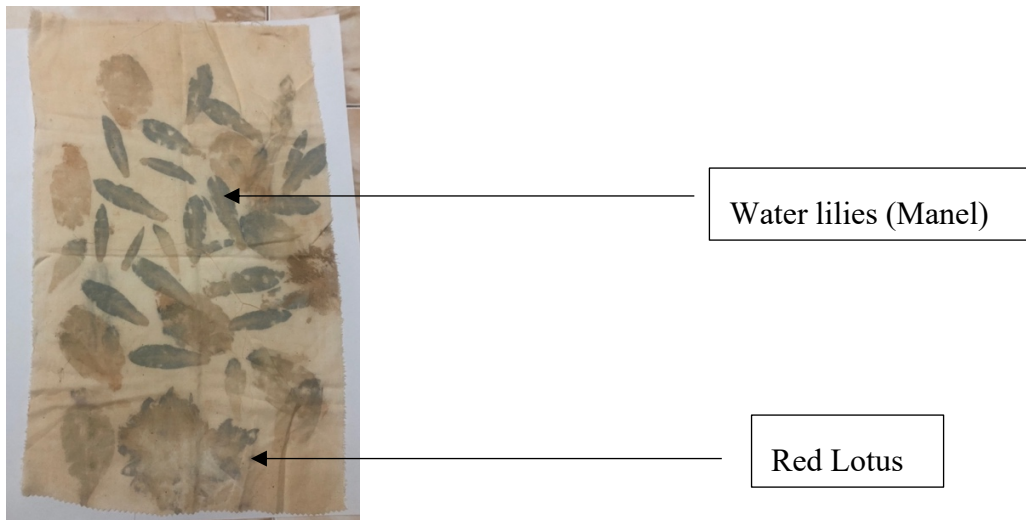
	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
06	12/01/2023	Morning	Experiments done at home	<p>First, I took a small fabric sample from the Viscose mordant with Alum</p> <p>Then I collected some flowers, leaves and flowers from surrounded environment</p> <p>Most of them were collected from road sides and some of them were unknown</p> <p>I placed all the material on the fabric and covered it with a polythene</p> <p>Then I hammered and pressed the materials to the fabric</p> <p>As soon as the hammering finished, I removed the polythene and removed all the pressed leaves and flowers</p> <p>Let the fabric dry in shade dry</p> <p>Next day I washed the fabric well to remove the excess materials stuck to the fabric</p> <p>Then again let it dry in shade dry</p> <p>Ironed it well and can be seen as follows</p>
	Outcomes	<p>The leaves retained its color well</p> <p>I used some pink color flowers but they gave a brownish color</p> <p>There can be purple dots that can be seen from cotton leaves when they are pressed</p>		



The fabric after washing and ironing

The purple color dots of cotton leaf

A fabric sample was taken from the handloom piece mordant with alum. Then some flower Patels such as lotus and water lilies (Manel) were placed on the fabric and it was covered by a polythene sheet. It was hammered by a hammer. Then the colors of Water lilies were highly absorbed to the fabric. But lotus was slightly absorbed. The sample let into dry and washed well to remove the petals stuck to the fabric. Then the color fades off.



	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	13/01/2023	Evening	Experiments done at home	<p>A white handloom fabric sample was mordant from copper sulphate and let it shade dry</p> <p>Then it was put into the dye bath and dyed as mention in the experiment No</p> <p>Then this fabric sample was taken to bundle dye</p> <p>Some jack leaves were placed on the fabric and covered it with a polythene and wrapped tightly to a stick.</p> <p>This was steamed in the rice cooker for around 15 minutes and after cooling it down the stick was unwrapped.</p> <p>But there was no any color printed on the fabric</p>
	Outcomes	<p>No positive outcome on the fabric.</p> <p>This seems like the colors of the leaves are not fixed on the sand dye</p>		



Thambapanni Soil Dyeing with Wool Materials

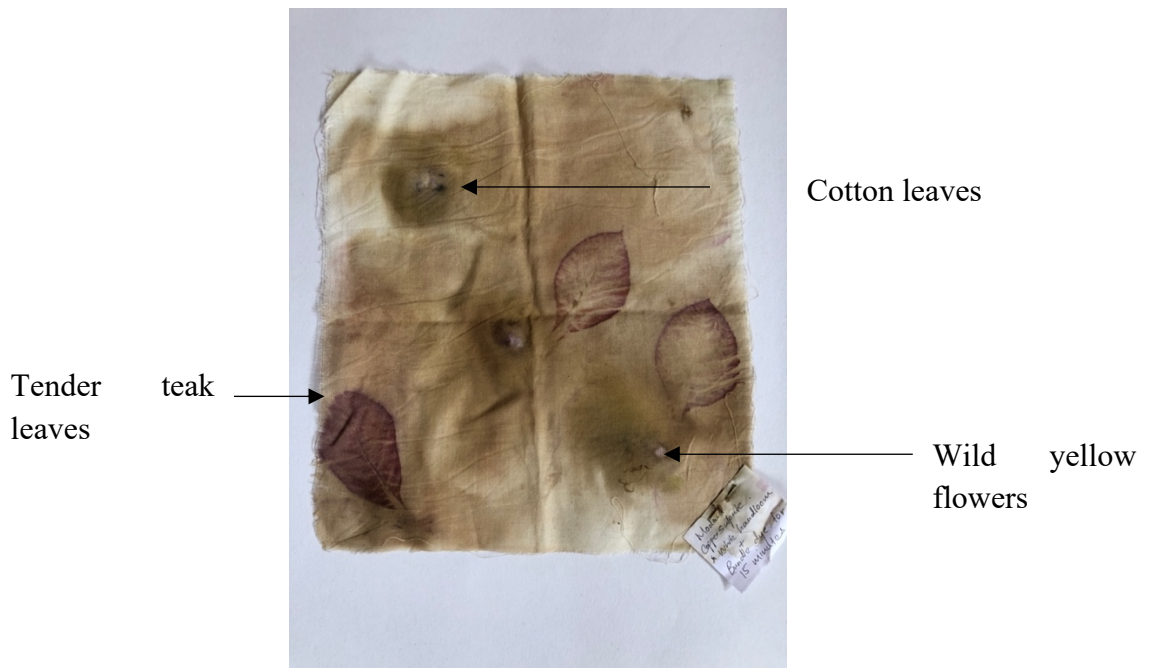
	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
07	10/01/2023	Morning	Experiments done at home	<p>Since I tested all the dyeing experiments with cellulose materials, I wanted to check the dyeing with protein fibers.</p> <p>For that I used some pure wool that were available (white)</p> <p>First, I wash the wool with pure water and made it wet</p> <p>Without scouring or mordanting I put the wool yarns into the hot sand dye bath and let it the dye bath for 30 minutes.</p> <p>Then it was cooled inside the dye bath for around 2 hours</p> <p>Then it was rinsed well and let it to shade dry</p> <p>The colors were well absorbed to the wool yarns as follows</p>
	Outcome	It was very easy to dye wool yarns in this process. Dye absorbed very well to the yarn and it has a very pleasant orange color		

				<p>minutes the wrapped stick was placed in the steamer and closed the lid well. Steamed for around 15 minutes. Then Let it cool for around 30 minutes and unwrapped the cloth.</p> <p>The flowers and leaves were removed</p> <p>Finally, it was kept in shade dry for one day and did not wash</p> <p>Ironed and the final sample can be seen in the following pictures</p>
	Outcomes	<p>Teak is nicely absorbed to the fabric with a nice purple color</p> <p>The colors of the cotton and yellow flowers can be seen as a yellow brownish color dye absorbed to the fabric</p>		



The wrapped fabric piece (after steaming)

Color absorption to the fabric from the bundle dye technique



	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	13/01/2023	Evening	Experiments done at home	<p>I used a cotton fabric sample which was not scoured, but mordant with copper sulphate</p> <p>Then it was rinsed well and let them dry in shade dry.</p> <p>When it was totally dry, it was taken to do the bundle dye technique</p> <p>I used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teak leaves (grown ones) • Jack leaves <p>Then a polythene cover should be place above the materials</p> <p>Then the fabric is rolled with a stick. For that I used albesia sticks from the garden. Then it was tightly wrapped with some cotton cloth pieces</p> <p>A rice cooker was used with a steamer. First the pot was filled with water and let boil well with a steamer. After around 10 minutes the wrapped</p>

			<p>stick was placed in the steamer and closed the lid well. Steamed for around 10 minutes.</p> <p>I steamed only a part of the stick.</p> <p>Then Let it cool for around 30 minutes and unwrapped the cloth.</p> <p>The leaves were removed</p> <p>Finally, it was kept in shade dry for one day and did not wash</p> <p>Ironed and the final sample can be seen in the following pictures</p>
	Outcomes	<p>Since I steamed only a part of the stick only a part of the fabric was dyed nicely with teak print</p> <p>Nice purple color and light green color can be seen in the fabric</p>	



Edges and colors can be clearly seen with details (veins of the leaf

Indigo (*Nil Awariya*) Dye Experiments

Next, I did some research about the natural colors that I can extracted from plants. Then I got to know about the Nil Awariya plant which is very common in Anuradhapura area. It is believed that Nil awariya has a very strong green and blue color. According to the way we are extracting it, the color can vary.

Following are some images that I took collecting Nil awariya from in and around lake areas in Anuradhapura



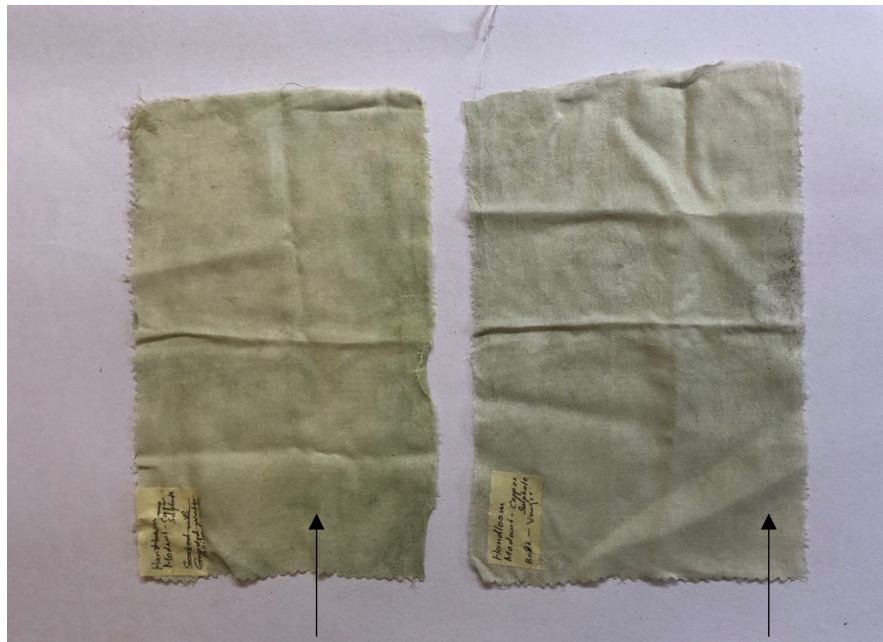
Nil Awariya harvest in and around lake sides

Then these leaves were picked and washed well. Rest, I kept in the refrigerator for further experiments

****Disclaimer - Later it was identified that these were not correct *Nilawariya plants***

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	12/01/2023	Morning	Experiments done at home	First, I took some fabric samples from handloom cotton-mordant in copper sulphate. I took some nil awariya leaves and put some water to grind it in grinder. Then I squeezed the pulp from the liquid and extract the liquid out of that.

				<p>Next I let it boil in gas cooker and put fabric sample into the pot and stir it time to time.</p> <p>Boiled the pot for around 15 minutes let the fabric in the liquid for around 30 minutes.</p> <p>Rinsed it off</p> <p>Then I cut half of that fabric piece and soaked it in a vinegar solution for around 30 minutes.</p> <p>Rinsed it off and let it shade dry</p> <p>Next day I washed both fabric samples to remove the remaining pulpy material from the fabric</p>
	Outcomes	<p>Both fabrics seems light green in color</p> <p>The one in viniger seems more lighter than the boiled one</p>		



Handloom cotton
Mordant – copper sulfat
Boiled in the liquid

Handloom cotton
Mordant – copper sulfat
Boiled in the liquid and soaked in vinegar

Next, I watched some you-tube videos regarding indigo extraction in other countries.

Next, I followed it

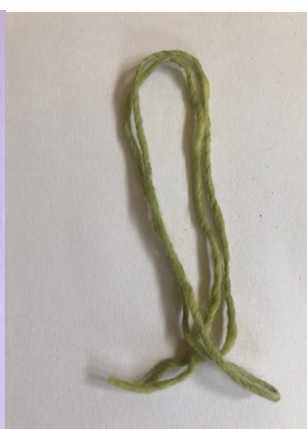
	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	12/01/2022	Night	Experiment done at home	<p>I used a mordant handloom cotton fabric for this experiment.</p> <p>I put the liquid extracted from Nil Awariya to a tray and soaked the fabric in it.</p> <p>Keep the fabric in the liquid over night</p> <p>Next day I put in to shade dry</p> <p>Did not wash the sample so far</p> <p>I put a wool yarn also into this solution and it became green color as follows</p>
	Methodology	<p>There can be little particles (leaves tiny particles in green) that can be seen in the fabric.</p> <p>The dye has been well absorbed into the fabric</p> <p>Pleasant green color can be seen</p> <p>There is a pleasant smell coming out of the fabric</p>		



Soaking the fabric in dye bath overnight



The appearance of the fabric after drying



The wool yarn after soaking in the dye bath overnight

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	13/01/2023	Morning	Experiment done at home	<p>I went through a you tube video in Japan regarding their Indigo extraction process.</p> <p>But their indigo leaves were quite different from this Nil Awariya</p> <p>They were big and juicy when they are squeezed</p> <p>I put some indigo leaves in to a aluminum bowl and add salt into the leaves. Then I squeezed the leaves in the bowl continuously</p> <p>When some juice came, I put the fabric piece into the bowl and rubbed it with the leaves</p> <p>This was a bit hard task</p> <p>Did this for around 30 minutes</p> <p>Then the fabric had a nice green color</p> <p>Then I let it dry in shade by rinsing off the excess dye</p>
	Outcome			



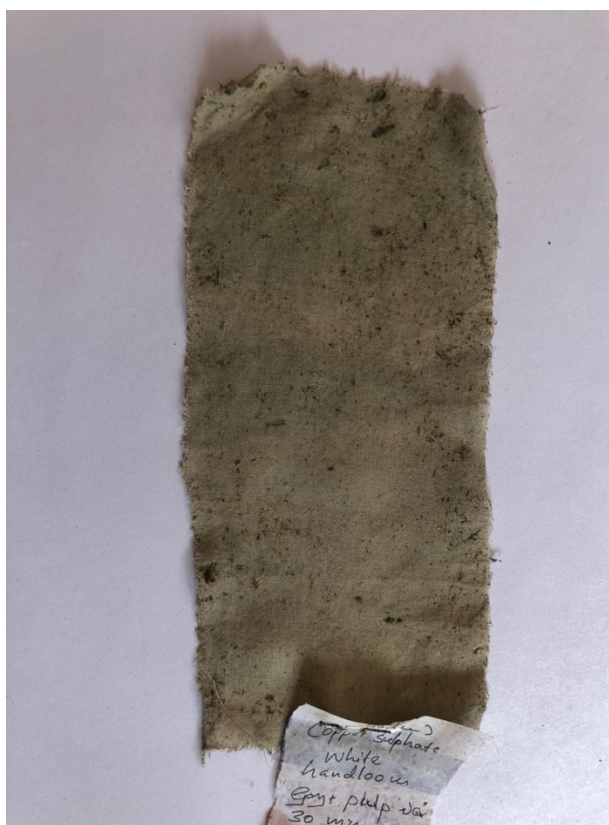
	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	13/01/2023	Night	Experiment done at home	<p>In this experiment I took a handloom fabric sample which is dyed in sand bath (mordant with copper sulphate)</p> <p>Then I rubbed it in the salt+ Nil awariya leaves bowl for around 30 minutes.</p> <p>Then it was left to get dry in shade</p> <p>Then I cut the fabric sample into two and one part did not wash</p> <p>The other sample was washed to remove the impurities and to see the color after washing.</p> <p>The two samples can be seen below</p>
	Outcome	The orange color was dominant even though it is rubbed with green leaves. Therefore, the color slightly changed in to a brownish color.		



Un washed sample with the soaked materials on the fabric

Washed sample – Washed on 08/02/2023

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	13/01/2023	Night	Experiment done at home	<p>I got a small sample from the handloom fabric (This was mordant with copper sulphate) which was rubbed in nil awariya + Salt for 30 minutes.</p> <p>Then the sample is soaked in a lime solution for about 30 minutes.</p> <p>Then rinsed it off and let it shade dry</p> <p>This was not cleaned with water.</p> <p>The picture of the original sample can be seen below</p>
	Outcome	The green color disappeared and a light green color can be seen		



Mat Craft related Field Visits and Experiments

I used to do experiments with craft activities such as mat weaving and rush and reed since they are highly connected with traditional craft techniques with natural materials. Therefore, I visited some talented craftsmen who are making mats and other rush and reed crafts. She used to do craft from coconut, hemp, thala and palmyra.

These are the crafts I identified during that visit



Traditionally these craftsmen used to have natural colors extracted from nature to dye these leaves used for creating patterns. But later with the social changes they used to have shop bought dye (kukul Sayam) which is less expensive and easy to use. Now they use this kukul sayam as the dye for the patterns. There are very limited colors in kukul sayam such as reddish pink, purple and green. I visited her place on 3rd of August 2022 and I scheduled a next visit on to practice some weaving techniques that can be used for my practice led research work on 12th December 2022. Here are some of the works I did with her to get an idea about the mat weaving techniques



Then I tried to take the print in the mat weaving to the fabric and did some experiments as follows

Experiments with Mat Weaving and Bundle Dyeing

	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	25/01/2023	Morning	Experiment done at home	<p>First I collected some fresh coconut leaves and arecanut leaves (matured ones)</p> <p>Then I weaved the normal basket weave from the leaves</p> <p>Then I got a handloom cotton white fabric which was mordant with copper sulphate.</p> <p>I placed the two weaving on the fabric and covered it with a polythene sheet and wrapped it with an Albesia stick.</p> <p>Wrapped it tightly with some cotton cloths.</p> <p>Keep it in the steamer for 30 minutes.</p> <p>Did not unwrap it until the next day</p>
	26/01/2023			<p>Next day I unwrap the stick and the following pattern can be seen</p> <p>Did not wash the fabrics and let it in the shade dry</p> <p>After getting dry they were ironed well</p>
	Outcome	<p>Arecanut pattern could not be seen. But the colors have been fixed to the fabric in a light green color</p> <p>The pattern of the coconut leaves can be slightly seen</p> <p>When ironing the fabrics there was a pleasant aroma coming from the fabric</p>		



	Date	Time	Experiment type	Methodology
	25/01/2023	Morning	Experiment done at home	<p>Collected some fresh coconut leaves and Wetakeiya leaves (matured ones)</p> <p>Then I weaved the normal basket weave from the leaves</p> <p>Then I got a handloom cotton white fabric which was mordant with copper sulphate.</p> <p>I placed the two weaving on the fabric and covered it with a polythene sheet and wrapped it with an Albesia stick.</p> <p>Wrapped it tightly with some cotton cloths.</p> <p>Keep it in the steamer for 30 minutes.</p> <p>Did not unwrap it until the next day</p> <p>Next day I unwrap the stick and the following pattern can be seen</p>

			<p>Did not wash the fabrics and let it in the shade dry</p> <p>After getting dry they were ironed well</p>
	Outcome	Both patterns can be slightly seen	

