

Innovative Fashions: Foreign influenced Sri Lankan Dress Characteristics to the World Fashion Trends

Ranathunga, GM*

Abstract

'Fashion' has been playing a pivotal role in the human society from time immemorial. Thus, today fashion makes a massive contribution to world economy. As the industry is largely comprised of ready-made garment productions, fashion designing, the essential component that plays a vital role in the industry, deserves a careful and comprehensive study. Creating new fashions is the key to the product development in the industry. A new creation would not simply incubate unless it conforms to some underlying concepts which are expected to be brought to light through this research. The objective of the research is asserting new fashion concepts from identified fashion characteristic of the Kandyan King's costume to the future. The study began with observational study of temple paintings, sculptures, sketchers of the period. Original written sources and true pictorial evidences were used for the research. Besides, the Kandyan tradition has a living culture as well. Therefore, when the characteristics of Sri Lankan attire are examined the Kandyan period is remarkably noteworthy with very significant signs and ample visual evidences. Reliability of the data which was incorporated in the research is of much concern. Therefore, pictorial data were cross checked with different literary sources. Foreign influences were the key tool in incubating new trends in fashion during the Kandyan era of Sri Lanka. During the Kandyan era (16th century AD to 1815) many Western and Eastern foreign influences spread over the Kingdom namely South Indian, western (Portuguese, Dutch, British) and Siamese. Kandyan King's costume was developed and modified as a hybrid dress of Western and Eastern cultural influences. They neither obeyed Western constructed dresses nor Eastern draperies but made their own original exotic one by mixing all dress types. Hybrid dress was the epitome of their fashion attitude. Besides, these influences caused a huge impact on introducing novel dress items and patterns, silhouette, accessories, headdresses, dress materials, colours and even fabric manipulating methods.

Key words: Foreign Influences, The King, The Kandyan Era, Hybrid Fashions, Innovative Fabric Manipulations

To whom correspondence should be addressed: gayathrir@uom.lk

*Senior Lecturer, Department of Textile and Clothing Technology, University of Moratuwa.