

**THE INFLUENCE OF CINEMA ON FASHION:  
FILM COSTUME IN 1960S AND 1970S SRI LANKAN CINEMA**

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This study intends to explore the influence of cinema on popular fashion in Sri Lanka in 1960s and 1970s – which is considered as the ‘golden era’ of Sri Lankan cinema - arguing that both cinema and fashion are significant aspects of culture and society.

The main objective of this study is to analyse historical, cultural and aesthetic significance of film costume and its significance within the film industry. The discussion centres on costumes produced by professional costume designers for the two-dimensional format of the film frame for a specific narrative and aesthetic expression.

While the film industry continued to be a big industry in Sri Lanka from late 1940s, film played an important role in everyday life of people as films and film stars had staked their place in Sri Lankan society. More than any other decade, the 1960s and 1970s underwent the most stylistic transformation in film costume as well as popular fashion in Sri Lanka. Identifying the 1950s a decade as the peak of Indian influence, it can be argued that the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the emergence of a class of film makers whose avant-garde creations laid a foundation for a local film industry, in which both commercial and art cinema. Films in this period took their subject matter from major social and moral issues of the era: industrialization, urbanization, unemployment, new patterns of living, political corruptions, poverty, rise of consumerism and women’s suffrage and power movements. The young film goers started ‘dreaming’ of a way of life which was ‘patriotic’ and ‘heroic’ in its approach. Looking at films and fashion on the pages of local cinema magazines which emerged enormously during this period, it can be seen a dramatic shift from conservative classic styles to ‘modernized’ fashion.

The main argument of the study is organized around some relevant sub themes of ‘fashion in film’ devoted to: *spectacle and masquerade, stardom and beauty idol, ideologies and cultural discourses* as well as *fashion consumption* during the period.

The study is based on qualitative research methods. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with subject related respondents and film viewing. The secondary information was collected from existing literature. Drawing mainly on Sociological Theories of Fashion, the data was analyzed.