

## **Challenges Due To Modernization Away From Traditional Mask Art (Based On Olaboduwa Mask Village)**

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Low country dance tradition holds a prominent place among the dance traditions of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, this dance tradition is still alive in the Raigam Korale and the village of Olaboduwa, which belongs to it, has been famous for its mask art and low country dance since ancient times. However, the art of mask, which occupies a special place among the cultural identities of Sri Lanka, has become a mere commodity in the tourism industry and its tradition is being lost over time. The main objective of this study is to identify the challenges posed by the modernization of traditional masks and the sub-objectives of studying, innovating and identifying challenges in the design of traditional masks. The Olaboduwa Mask Village was selected as the study area and its overall population was taken into consideration. Questionnaire interviews and observations were used as primary data sources, and research reports were used as secondary data sources. The data were analyzed using software such as EXCEL, SPSS and GIS and the results were presented using tables, charts and maps. According to the results of the research, there are currently eighteen families creating traditional masks in the village itself, and very few people are still in the industry after the death of an older generation. Due to the environmental policies of the government, obtaining timber for the mask industry has become a problem. Also, people live in the village who do not even know how to create a traditional mask. More than 95% of the Questionnaires and interviews confirmed that the art was now extinct and difficult to practice. Due to the high cost of masks, they are no longer a commodity that the general public buys. It was also revealed that the desire to buy an innovative mask rather than a traditional one has led to the creation of masks to suit it. The research also concludes that the traditional mask artist has not been able to cope with these challenges and has left his job to pursue other careers and that the traditional mask art is on the verge of extinction.

**Key Words :** Traditional mask art, Low country dance tradition, Modernization, Challenges, Mask Villages

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