



“BEAUTY OF UNEVENNESS”: CASUAL WEAR COLLECTION FOR SRI LANKAN YOUNG LADIES, INSPIRING GREEN STRIPED MUSHROOM CORAL

S. U. K. Wijesiriwardena, D. R. A. B. M. M. W. T. D. Madahapola, D. S. Wijerathne* and M. J. F. Rifadha

*Department of Textile & Apparel Technology, Faculty of Engineering Technology,
The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka*

This project investigates the impact of clothing on emotional well-being and self-confidence in young women with scoliosis in Sri Lanka. Through an online case study and survey, it explores how fashion can respond to both functional and emotional needs. Findings revealed that clothing plays a vital role in making individuals feel comfortable, unique, and confident. Inspired by the Green-striped mushroom coral, renowned for its asymmetry, vibrant colours, and rich textures, the collection embraces irregularity as a symbol of natural beauty. Just as the coral grows in unbalanced yet harmonious forms, scoliosis is reinterpreted as an organic structural variation rather than a flaw. The coral serves as a metaphor to challenge traditional beauty standards and celebrate asymmetry, individuality, and diversity. The resulting casual wear collection, Beauty of Unevenness, is designed specifically for young Sri Lankan women with scoliosis. It features asymmetrical silhouettes, innovative use of appliqué, frills, and pleating techniques, and vibrant colour combinations to distract from unevenness while highlighting uniqueness. Easy closures and adaptable fits ensure comfort and practicality without compromising style. This project aims to shift the narrative around scoliosis from concealment to confidence. By integrating both aesthetic and functional elements, the collection empowers wearers to express their individuality and feel confidently beautiful in their bodies. It positions fashion not only as a visual art but as a tool for self-expression, emotional support, and empowerment.

Keywords: empowering, ladies with scoliosis, casual wear, green-striped mushroom coral

**Corresponding Author: dswij@ou.ac.lk*



“BEAUTY OF UNEVENNESS”- CASUAL WEAR COLLECTION FOR SRI LANKAN YOUNG LADIES, INSPIRING GREEN STRIPED MUSHROOM CORAL

***S. U. K. Wijesiriwardena, D. R. A. B. M. M. W. T. D. Madahapola, D.S.
Wijerathne*, M.J.F. Rifadha***

*Department of Textile & Apparel Technology, Faculty of Engineering Technology,
The Open University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka*

INTRODUCTION

This project focuses on designing and developing a casual wear collection specifically tailored for young women in Sri Lanka, aged 25–30, who live with scoliosis. Scoliosis, characterized by abnormal lateral curvature and rotation of the spine, commonly emerges during adolescence and often results in lasting physical asymmetry and psychological challenges. In Sri Lanka, women with scoliosis frequently struggle to find fashionable, well-fitting garments that accommodate body irregularities without sacrificing comfort or aesthetic appeal. This project seeks to address this gap by creating a fashion collection that thoughtfully integrates both functional and emotional design elements. The collection is inspired by the Green Striped Mushroom Coral (*Actinodiscus sp.*), a marine species celebrated for its vivid green coloration, violet-hued mouth, and subtle blue highlights. Its surface displays a captivating mix of natural textures, including stripe-like patterns and scattered spots across its cap. These organic irregularities serve as a metaphor for the project's core design philosophy, celebrating asymmetry rather than concealing it. The coral's intricate patterns and harmonious colour contrasts are used as visual cues to emphasize balance, rhythm, and aesthetic harmony within the designs (Kaiser, 2012). Scoliosis manifests in various physical forms, including uneven shoulders, a prominent hip or shoulder blade, a tilted posture, and a visibly curved spine, all of which complicate the process of finding clothing that fits well. Conventional garments often fail to address these needs, resulting in discomfort and diminished confidence for those affected. This project intentionally focuses on scoliosis types that exhibit asymmetry in the shoulders and hips, particularly where one side leans, and develops garments that adapt to and flatter these natural forms. By drawing inspiration from the Green Striped Mushroom Coral, this project reimagines scoliosis not as a flaw but as an organic structural variation to the coral's natural growth. The collection uses texture, pattern, and colour to draw parallels between the body's asymmetry and the coral's unique aesthetic, promoting the idea that beauty exists within irregularity. Rather than masking unevenness, the designs aim to highlight it gracefully, empowering wearers to embrace their bodies with confidence (Gibson, 2020).

Ultimately, this fashion collection seeks to go beyond functionality. It aspires to shift perceptions, challenge conventional beauty norms, and promote diversity and self-expression. By aligning design with empathy, it supports Sri Lankan women with



scoliosis in living confidently and stylishly, proving that fashion can be both inclusive and transformative

METHODOLOGY

To develop a fashion collection tailored for urban Sri Lankan women aged 25–30 affected by scoliosis, a comprehensive mixed-method approach was employed. The project began with an in-depth analysis of the target group's lifestyle, preferences, and clothing-related challenges. A structured questionnaire was disseminated online via Google Forms to 250 individuals, yielding 175 valid responses from scoliosis-affected women. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure urban representation. The survey explored various dimensions, including garment preferences, lifestyle requirements, comfort concerns, and expected spending behaviour for designer wear. The collected data were critical in shaping the concept development, design approach, and material selection process. Complementing this quantitative research, extensive market analysis was conducted to assess the availability and limitations of adaptive casual wear for scoliosis patients within the Sri Lankan context.

Findings revealed a significant gap in the local fashion industry, with no existing brands catering specifically to this demographic. Product analysis of existing scoliosis-oriented garments, both local and global, highlighted essential functional elements such as soft, breathable fabrics, adjustable and flexible fits, and the integration of accessible closures like invisible zippers and soft tags. These features are particularly important to reduce discomfort around areas of spinal curvature and promote ease of movement.

In parallel, global trend analysis was conducted using forecasting platforms such as WGSN and Pop Fashion Info to align the proposed collection with international developments in adaptive and therapeutic fashion. This ensured the designs were not only locally relevant but also globally informed and innovative. Casual wear, as a category, inherently prioritizes everyday comfort and expressive style qualities that are especially crucial for individuals navigating physical asymmetry. The collection's material selection focused on natural, breathable fibers such as linen and cotton, which are gentle on sensitive skin and ideal for Sri Lanka's tropical climate (Hudson, The sustainable fashion handbook, 2012). Loose-fitting silhouettes, asymmetric cuts, and soft-touch finishes were employed to accommodate body unevenness while maintaining visual appeal. Functional trims such as invisible zippers, padded bra cups, soft labels, and pearl shank buttons were selected to enhance comfort and wearability (Gale, 2002).

Design inspiration drawn from the Green Striped Mushroom Coral (*Actinodiscus sp.*) played a central role in concept development. This marine organism, known for its irregular textures, stripe-like patterns, and harmonious colour blends, served as both a visual and philosophical metaphor for the collection. This organic aesthetics were translated into garment features such as pleats, frills, and appliqué work, which add layered texture, fluid movement, and aesthetic depth to the pieces. Ultimately, this project addresses an urgent and overlooked need in Sri Lanka's fashion landscape. By bridging functionality with beauty, and empathy with design, the collection empowers women with scoliosis to embrace their natural form and express their

identity confidently through fashion. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual interpretations inspired by the Green Striped Mushroom Coral, while Figure 2 presents the front and back views of the six final garments, highlighting the thoughtfully curated colour palette and design elements.

(a)

(b)



Figure 1: Concept & design experiments: (a) Inspiration Green Striped Mushroom Coral & (b) Concept & design development boards

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The customer survey revealed that scoliosis patients are confidently embracing their new normal, actively engaging in fashion, photography, jewellery, travel, and social activities. Their dynamic and expressive lifestyles served as a core inspiration for the final designs, where silhouettes and details were thoughtfully crafted to merge modern aesthetics with the functional needs of scoliosis. Each look integrates distinctive shapes and flowing lines inspired by the Green Striped Mushroom Coral, symbolizing resilience, balance, and organic beauty. The collection emphasizes comfort, adaptability, and body diversity through asymmetrical silhouettes, contour-adjusted patterns, and innovative pleat alignments tailored for non-uniform body shapes. Practical design elements such as easy closures are enhanced by vibrant colours, artistic appliqués, and sculptural details.



(a)

(b)

Figure 2: Fashion illustration of six looks of the fashion range: (a) six front looks (b) Six back looks.



(a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (f)

Figure 3: Six final design outfits with live modelling (a-f)

Figure 3 presents photographs of the six final designs from the developed casual wear fashion collection. Images (a) to (f) showcase the diverse looks within the collection along with key design details, as described below:

- **Look (a):** Women's fancy pants paired with a pleated crop top featuring a flared sleeve. The asymmetrical crop top includes structured pleats and a single dramatic flared sleeve. The pants feature an uneven waistband and asymmetric pleated patterns at the hem on each leg.
- **Look (b):** Pleated single-sleeved dress with a coral-inspired neckline and front frills. This design features cascading frills with distinctive appliqué on the front. One sleeve has pleats at the cuff, while the asymmetric neckline mimics coral shapes. Decorative straps accentuate the back opening.
- **Look (c):** Fancy women's jumpsuit with a single puff sleeve. A pleated frill crosses over the bust, adding movement and dimension. The pants are detailed with asymmetric pleats on one side, and the puff sleeve includes a cuff. The silhouette flows asymmetrically, echoing organic coral forms.
- **Look (d):** Curved neckline mini dress with signature appliqué. This body-hugging dress with a curved neckline and padded asymmetric detail to balance and subtly conceal hip unevenness. accented by front buttons and coral-shaped appliques on the sleeves, bodice, and skirt, enhance the visual appeal.
- **Look (e):** Midi-length dress with pleated long sleeves and an asymmetric hem. The hemline features layered frills, and the bodice is detailed with pintucks for texture. A wide neckline and back opening add elegance, while pleated sleeves contribute to the garment's softness and movement.
- **Look (f):** One-shoulder crop top paired with a fitted mini skirt. The top features a distinctive asymmetric neckline with coral-inspired appliques, a single sleeve, and a hem frill. The skirt is designed with two-layered, pleated panels on one side,



adding dimension and a dynamic silhouette.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The project overcame key challenges in fit, sizing, and thread coordination during development. Fit and sizing discrepancies were effectively resolved by creating actual-size muslin prototypes before final garment production, ensuring accuracy in pattern adjustments and garment fitting. To maintain quality and efficiency, multiple sewing machines were pre-threaded with different colours, allowing smooth transitions and consistent visual appeal throughout production. Techniques such as unique appliqué, frills, and pleating were thoughtfully applied to manage body unevenness, especially for scoliosis patients. Despite the complexity of the project, the successful development of six final designs aligned well with the original objectives. The outcomes demonstrated not only functional suitability for scoliosis patients but also reflected the intended design aesthetics. Furthermore, this project provided significant personal and professional growth. Valuable skills were gained in customer communication, market research, range planning, and collaboration with industry professionals such as tailors, material suppliers, printers, photographers, models, and makeup artists. The challenges encountered throughout the project fostered problem-solving skills and encouraged innovative thinking. These experiences have deepened my understanding of adaptive fashion design and provided a strong foundation for future research and development in inclusive and therapeutic fashion solutions.

REFERENCES

- Gibson, P. (2020). *Disability, fashion and the body*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.
- Gale, C., & Kaur, J. (2002). *The textile book*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Pisut, G., & Connell, L. J. (2007). Fit preferences of female consumers in the USA. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, 11(3), 366–379.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13612020710763112>
- Branson, D. H., & Sweeney, M. (1991). Concepts of fit: The line between comfort and discomfort. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 9(1), 10–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0887302X9100900102>
- Horton's Orthotics & Prosthetics. (n.d.). Fashion guide to shopping with a scoliosis brace. <https://www.hortonsoandp.com/fashion-guide-to-shopping-with-a-scoliosis-brace>
- WGSN. (2023, May 18). 5 key colors for S/S 25.
<https://www.wgsn.com/en/blogs/5-key-colors-ss-25>
- Blue Zoo Aquatics. (n.d.). Green striped mushroom, mushroom anemone – *Actinodiscus* spp.
<https://www.bluezooaquatics.com/productDetail.asp?cid=56&pid=1521&di=3>