



An Investigate Study of the Victorian Influence on the Social Status of Sri Lankan Woman. (Special Reference in few Sinhala Novels)

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ABSTRACT

There are number of ideas, influences, and values of the Victorian era included in this broad concept which is defined as Victorian morality. The Victorian age can be known as the era of British rule during the Colonial period of Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 to 1901. Therefore, the concise meaning of Victorian morality can be considered as a set of moral principles that have been collectively accepted by the British people in the Victorian age. The ideas about sexual relationships and sexuality existing today in Sri Lanka were influenced from Victorian morality. The Sri Lankan Sinhalese female lived in a male dominant society Sri Lankan women such as education, marriage, sexuality, language, and religion directly or indirectly was created by the Victorian influence. Nowadays, it's well implied by modern Sri Lankan women. When investigating how the Victorian influence affected Sri Lankan Sinhalese women, the importance of a novel as a literary language enters this subject field. There are few novels used in this research. Those are, "Jayatissa saha Rosalin" (1906), "Aadaraneeya Victoriya" (2014) and "Siya Siya Path Siya" (2016). Through this research, identifying the Victorian era which affected the social status of Sri Lankan women, defining feminism and the nature of the transformational change that occurred to the ancient female due to the Victorian influence can be used to inquire and investigate the success and failure of the character representation of the



selected novels Qualitative data analysis was used in this research. Also, after observing the Victorian influence which affected the social status of Sri Lankan women, a content analysis was done specially for the selected novels by using the method of critical analysis.

Introduction

Even though it has been 70 years since Sri Lanka gained independence it's not entirely free from the ethics of Victorian. There are many different ideas, influences, and values of the Victorian age included in this broad concept which is defined as Victorian morality.

The Victorian age can be known as the era of British rule during the Colonial period, especially during Queen Victoria's reign. It is the period from 1837 to 1901. According to this, the concise meaning of Victorian morality can be considered as a set of moral principles that have been collectively accepted by the British people in the Victorian age. This includes content such as sexual control, intolerance of crime (such as robbery and fraud), appreciation of the proper knowledge and intelligence, and respect for a tough social-ethical system.

When it comes to introduction of the Victorian Queen, she is a famous woman known as the queen of England and Ireland between 1837 and 1901, and the empress in both countries and India between 1836 and 1901. She is the granddaughter of King George the third. Her husband was a German prince known as the Albert of Saxe-Coburg (1819-1861). This marriage was done in the year 1840. The honor of the longest reign in English history belongs to the Victorians. (Queen Elizabeth may break this record). During the long reign of the Victorian, the English sovereignty became an honorable symbol out of direct control, and even though there is no executive power became a spreadable prestigious kingdom indirectly.

After the death of her husband in the year 1861, she became very helpless and lonely and stayed away from her duties and social services for a long time. Again she became famous around 1887 after India become a part of the British Empire. The reign of her, the leader of a great empire that owns 30% of the world is known as the Victorian age. British became a rich country through the development of factories, business, and agriculture and also can be known as a golden age due to the huge improvement of literature and arts. Queen Victoria was named one of the greatest women in history.



In the 19th century due to the British political and sociocultural power, these values were spread to the colonies and other countries beyond Britain. That's how the Victorian morality system entered countries like ours. In the first half of the 19th and 20th centuries in Sri Lanka, the main objective of Colonial Education was to establish these values in the Lankan folk society.

A system of ideas should not be directly objected to just as it's foreign and imperialist, or old. If there is an immediate benefit from that, what is the consequence of abandonment? The ideas about sexual relationships and sexuality existing today in Sri Lanka were absorbed from Victorian morality. But, those are justified as the ideas which accepted in our society since ancient times. When considering sources such as remaining historical reports and folk songs (Pal kavi), people about the upland era, there was a more free value system that prevailed regarding sexuality.

Feminism can be known as an interpretive visualism and a collection of business that confirms and provides equal rights politically, economically, socially, and provide equal opportunities for education as a profession. It is quite a comprehensive definition and it gives an idea about the future trends of feminism.

Feminism though was born in the 19th century as a vision as well as a social and political business based in Europe. Specially, it can be known as A fighting campaign to get equal opportunities for women in Social, Political, and economical relations in society based on the concepts such as Democracy, Equality, and individual freedom related to the French revolution

It rose against the patriarchy and later the fields such as society, culture, politics, and education could not get rid of this influence of philosophy. It didn't take long for feminism to acquire the literature as well.

Virginia Woolf, a famous writer once posted an idea about the history of a woman in one family lineage as follows,

“We know something or some fact to specify our fathers. They were soldiers or sailors. They held a rank or created a law. But, there is only a tradition related to our mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers. One was beautiful, one had red hair, and one was kissed by the queen. We knew nothing about them other than their name, married date, and the number of kids they had.”

- (Woolf, V. 1996, P.78)

According to Jun Hanam's idea about the above phrase, there is a very important message in the background of Woolf's idea of ancient women. It is, about the facts known as “Historically important”



regarding women over a while. Hanam indicates that the facts that are considered important are nothing but only the name, married date, and the number of kids. But, what could be more important is that there are not even any records of how, when, and what the roles performed by women in the development of foreign affairs, political departments, and industrial and commercial sectors. Hanam points out that this situation has been a reason to prove that women played a “Secondary role” when creating the world we live in. She accuses historians had been easily using this “Victorian type” for their research. From that, furthermore, she conveys that the contribution of women to historical development has been minimized.

The meaning of the term “Woman’s Status” is different from a woman’s freedom or emancipation. freedom or emancipation means an escape from a bond or oppression. Using this kind of term shows an oppressed situation of a woman. Dr. Kiran Devendra has rejected using terms such as woman’s freedom or emancipation in his studies explaining that those terms could be meant the concept of distortion or being defiled.

When furthermore inquire, the opinion of Dr. Kiran Devendra is, that the status of women in one society can be considered as a main measurement of the social development level. Not only when measuring development, but also in the study of social transformation, the changes in women’s status can be considered as an indicator of changes in the entire society. This means, that the relevant social profile study goes on either way a study about a woman’s divisions such as her social, economic, political, or else traditional role. So, a woman is used as an indicator for this research to explain social change.

The Sri Lankan Sinhalese female lived in a male dominant society. So does today. The Sri Lankan women have an outstanding feature not only among Asian females but also among the whole world. That is because of her responsibilities containing the benefits. Those free privileges were received from the Buddhist heritage. Considering their heritage, her status in society is not less than a male. A woman is accepted as a strength who acts in full with the man. She works like that according to her own special abilities and talents. In Sri Lankan society the responsibility and the rank of women, the ancient female can be taken as a view of independent status. But, this can be broadly understood from the transformational changes in Victorian Influence. The ancient female enjoyed a high position in terms of importance and compared to other countries Sri Lankan women did not have to face bad social customs such as sathi ritual, face cover, child marriage, and prohibition of widow remarriage. Modern Sri Lankan women enjoy a better life than women in other Asian countries. That means, from the ancient time a cultural social system for the social status of Sri Lankan women such as education, marriage, sexuality,



language, and religion directly or indirectly created by the Victorian influence. Nowadays, it's well implied by modern Sri Lankan women.

Does the woman have a conscious knowledge about such an influence? Does the modern woman suffer from such a Victorian conversion or perversion? It is appropriate to investigate in deep and research these kinds of facts. This research opens a way to think about how intelligible to reject all that disagrees with this by subsuming under the Victorian moral label. When investigating how the Victorian influence affected the Sri Lankan Sinhalese women? It's studied how important a novel is as a literary language to enter this subject field. There are a few novels which hope to use in this research.

1. "Jayatissa saha Rosalin" (1906)
2. "Aadaraneeya Victoriya" (2014)
3. "Siya Siya Path Siya" (2016)

A novel can be known as a fictional prose narrative or a story of some length. The characters are represented through that or else the reality of the present, it is clear that the stories with more or less complexity in life are presented in configuration.

A vision of the life of a novel is prepared based on the social experience that is built through each writer's visions of life and the commentary on life. At present every writer in the tradition of the realistic novel, try commentary on life in their novel. It's one of their main targets. A story is always built by keeping with the life of that society regardless of the theme based on any society.

The reader always tries to think about the characters who meet in the novel and compare it to their own real life. In each novel, the way that the characters act to various problems, the effect of the character or the problem in each other's minds finds when studying a good novel. To share an amazing experience with the reader, the writer gets an important or new vision of life through subtle observations of society and life.

The strong resentment of the high classes who unlimitedly followed the western culture culminated in the time of Mr. Piyadasa Sirisena (1875-1946). Mr. Sirisena does not write novels for the reader's enjoyment or to examine human characters. He was against the belief of Christianity and the civilization of Christianity. Most of the high-class people were Christians at that age. They embraced another devotion and gave up all the native customs.



The first novel of Mr. Piyadasa Sirisena was “Jayatissa saha Rosalin” also called “Waasanaawantha Vivaahaya”. It was printed in the year 1906. This novel was written against novels written by Christian writers. A Christian family is emphasized as a “Lucky family”. In the novel “Jayatissa saha Rosalin”, Jayathissa who was a Buddhist was in love with a Roman Catholic girl. It includes the way he tried and succeeded in converting her and her family into Buddhists through letters and discussions.

“Aadaraneeya Victoriya” can be identified as the third novel by Mohan Raj Madawalage. Can Victoria in the novel be known only as Andiris’s daughter? No.

Victorian Andris, Victorian Leena, Victorian Alfred, and Victorian Victoria are fictionalized roles in creating a class in Lankan social-political history. The fictional character, Victoria In Mohan Raj Madawala’s book, because of naming her “Victoria” the distorted nature of the above-mentioned historical political role became a mockery. When summarized, it's mocking the under-developed capitalist's disortness in the present. Although it seems like a story about arrack it internally appears a very complex revelation about the English reign.

The British Rule affected the native woman’s thinking and lifestyle behavior. With the good and bad in this change, the novel “Aadaraneeya Victoriya” includes a sensitive story about love, sexuality, marriage life, and the relationship between parents and children. When observed further this is a very complex story that describes the Kundarian humor.

But, while being addicted to his writing style, a person who tries to represent as a commentator might say that this is writing which exaggerates incidents in terms of Magic realism, Mystery, and superhuman. But, the final writing signs as a novel that controls the imagination according to the transformational western influence through aiming and understanding on faulting a cross-section in Lankan politics. (Madawala, 2014)

Sumithra Rahubaddha is a writer who involves in the creation of feminist thinking. Among her books, how positive is the ideology described in the novel “Siya Siya Path Siya”?, How appropriate is the language style used in commentary on ideology, describing characters and the plot? Is important in discussing in deep. Rathnawali is the main character in this novel. The story starts with her marriage. Piyarathna is the cousin of Rathnawali.

Rathnawali was married to a youngster called Sirilalitha due to the reluctance for the marriage of Rathnawali and Piyarathna by Rathnawali’s father who is also known as Ali Ralahami. Amidst all the blames from her mother-in-law and even after finding an affair between Sirilalitha and Selesthina the



maiden, she tolerated everything as she wanted to protect the dignity of her family. She gave birth to eight children during the first 10 years of her married life.

Some people define the Sri Lankan feminist discourse as new access to study and westernization. It's clear that the writer covers every aspect of the ideology of feminism through the novel "Siya Siya Path Siya" (Rahubaddha,2016). It's important to understand the meaning one by one. It's important to study the transformational changes in the Victorian morality system which affected the social status of Sri Lankan women based on these novels.

Through this research, identifying the Victorian era which affected the social status of Sri Lankan women, defining feminism and the nature of the transformational change that occurred to the ancient female due to the Victorian influence can be used to Inquire and investigate the success and failure of the character representation of the selected novels.

Research Title (Question)

- Is there a Victorian influence on the social status of Sri Lankan women?

Research Goal

- Investigate the Victorian influence on the social status of the Sri Lankan women

Main outcomes

- Identify and study the Victorian age
- Defining what feminism is
- An investigation study on the social status of the ancient Sri Lankan woman
- Investigate the nature of the differences that occurred in the conversion of the Sri Lankan woman to the Victorian woman
- Analyze the way of representing the Victorian influence occurred on Sri Lankan women in selected novels
- Discuss how far the representation of "Victorian morality" has affected the success and failures of the novels



Methodology

This research has been done based on the fact, that Victorian influence has occurred the social status of Sri Lankan women. Different sources are used to solve the question created according to this research title. The primary sources used for this research are a few Sinhala novels as follows,

1. “Jayatissa saha Rosalin” (1906)
2. “Aadaraneeya Victoriya” (2014)
3. “Siya Siya Path Siya” (2016)

The non-written sources used for this research are, interview records with people with good knowledge in the above-mentioned field. The data gathered from the above resources are verified by a content analysis and a critical analysis focusing on the written sources as well as by the interview records with the scholars, experts, and writers related to the field during the research methodology

Discussion

Colonialism can be simply described as a policy of surrendering and maintaining states. The English dictionary describes this as an economic and political process of finding, capturing areas, and exploiting resources after settling on a large scale by various European nations in 1500AD. Colonialism can be described as a process by which parent status takes over the subordinate territories or else a relationship pattern between the ruling nation and the people of subordinate territories. It was defined by various analysts, commentators, and political viewers.

The opinion of the Liberals is that “Colonialism means, the theoretical concept of selling the own ingredients to a place with a higher price, getting the own needs from a place with the lowest price.” Lenin who is a socialist shows that colonialism is the primary stage of territorial monopoly and financial capital control. As a third possibility of this system due to the export capital, the world being divided among the colonial states and finally among the great capitalist powers. The beginning of colonialism emerges in the middle ages. The foundation was laid by Portugal which initiated the expeditions. With the discovery of the new sea route across the southern African beach, the expedition process spread, and the new lands discovered through that caught the attention of the Europeans. On 17th April 1492, Christopher Columbus received benefits of investigation and subjugation from Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand. After that, an ancient paper was found on 04th May 1493 by Alexander the 6th and named 100 leagues supposed to discover. According to that, until the Christmas of 1492, the islands which are not under the rule of any king, main lands were gifted to the Castile of Isabella and Ferdinand of Aragon.



With the expansion of their explorations and with the discovery of America by John Camet in 1492, Europe states were widened.

During the reign of Elizabeth the 1st, around the early stage of the 15th and 16th centuries, the exploration process got succeeded. John Hawkins, Francis Drake, and Walter Raleigh were the pioneers of this exploration process. The British East Indian company which was formed in 1600 initiated the British Colonies. This company which was led by Robert Clive was able to take over the whole of India. In the early stage of the 17th century, the British paid attention to America. As a result in 1607 James town which is known as present Virginia and in 1620, Plymouth areas which are known as present Massachusetts of North America were subjugated to the British empire.

The uniqueness of British colonization is, that while the other western countries colonized through state sponsorship the British were sponsored by few powerful private companies and few individuals.

It was common in the 19th century that almost all Asian countries were colonized under the western empire. There were anti-imperialist struggles continued and they were led by middle-class people. This was the time that started the feminist business which was led, by middle-class females. These women fought for the female who suffered inside the political, social, and economic frame of their countries due to the result of colonialism.

The Victorian age can be known as the era of British rule during the Colonial period, especially during Queen Victoria's reign(1837-1901). The meaning of Victorian morality can be considered as a set of moral principles that have been collectively accepted by the British people in the Victorian age.

Victorians are known as a kind of civilized people with strict laws, tough behaviors, sharp attitudes toward pride, unchangeable social status, unavoidable responsibilities, and shameful sexuality. These customs and laws are being changed in present.

The honor of the longest reign in English history belongs to the Victorians. During the long reign of the Victorian, the English sovereignty became an honorable symbol out of direct control, and even though there is no executive power became a spreadable prestigious kingdom indirectly. Her reign lasted for 63 years, 7 months, and 2 days.

Victorian morality system entered countries like ours with the colonization. In the first half of the 19th and 20th centuries in Sri Lanka, the main objective of Colonial Education was to establish these values in the Lankan folk society. The ideas about sexual relationships and sexuality existing today in Sri Lanka



were absorbed from Victorian morality. Due to the male dominant society, the female was stratified into the high class by being wives of the rich people and the rest became low-class workers. The high-class female was able to get rid of some traditional barriers.

In the colonial period, the educated female count increased. The high-class women were able to educate in different languages as well as to get employed as doctors and other intelligent jobs while the highest job the low-class women could get was teaching.

Not only in Sinhalese literature but also the global literature, women were symbolized as a tasteful and sensual medium by the ancient writers.

In the novels created between 1900-1944, feminism was displayed as under the control of the male. With the creation of “Gamperaliya” in 1944, the writers tried to pop up the real image of Sri Lankan women with the facts of love, marriage, social issues as well as differences in society...

A role of a middle-class mother is described in a sympathetic vision in “Yashorawaya” by the character called Sudu Hamine. A role of an old isolated mother separated from her children with the generation gap and the present economical pattern has been well shown in “Mawakage Geethaya”. The responsibility of a mother in Asian countries is to maintain the family background and educate her children. Novels such as Yashorawaya, Mawakage Geethaya, Ge Kurullo, Punchi Raala well describe the sufferings and hardships of a mother.

Novels written in the 70th decade such as Loku Duwa, Rathu Rosa, Dhona Kamalawathi describe women out of the traditional frame.

The women such as Mathara Hamine in “Gamperaliya”, Sudu Hamine in “Yashorawaya”, Emma Bovari, Anna Caranina, Powel’s mother are brought to life by the power of the imagination of the writers. A writer always was a few steps ahead of society.

Conclusions

- The social status of the Sri Lankan woman has undergone a transformational change with Victorian idealism.
- Even though Victorian culture has died out in western society it’s still rooted in eastern countries.
- The modern female understanding of the Victorian culture that occurred in Sri Lanka with the colonization is at a low level.
- Victorian conservative morals affected Sri Lankan women in both good and bad ways.



- The strict sexual censorship of Victorian idealism still affects the Sri Lankan woman.
- With the influence of Victorian rape of women, abuses and cruelty has been increased to a high level due to female oppression and sexual pressure.
- There were free sex models in Sri Lankan culture before the appearance of Victorian morality.
- Modern women in the 21st century have been drawn into a distorted condition by Victorian culture.

Suggestions

- As the written resources about Victorian culture in Sri Lanka such as research, books, and articles are at a minimum level, it is important to pay attention to that.
- As there's a misunderstanding among the modern generation about Victorian morality, it is important to use different media other than novels (Tele dramas, Movies) to provide an understanding of that.
- Social facts which were limited by Victorian idealism should be constructed in social discourses as an open topic
- Should pay attention to social facts related to females in Sri Lankan society and should take them to a high level.
- Starting conversations in schools and universities about social facts related to females, the critical thinking ability of students and scholars can be taken to a higher level.
- Organizing programs to motivate the readers to refer the Novels related to Social science facts

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