

Ethnic Issue in Sri Lankan Cinema: A Study of *Saroja*, *Purahanda Kaluwara*, *Me Mage Sandai*

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The Sri Lankan Film Industry goes far back in its history and various strengths as well as weaknesses have been identified throughout its journey towards the modern period. Meanwhile, it is apparent that the '70s (1970-1980) mark the golden era of Sri Lankan cinema, and some significant elements authenticating the Sri Lankan fingerprint are still evident in some of the films produced during the particular period. As a result, the decade is considered the turning point of Sri Lankan cinema. However, with all the technological devices and a vast volume of thematic approaches our producers have been able to streamline the Sri Lankan cinema industry though a novel direction: addressing the societal needs. Research problem of this paper is to identify and examine how the Sri Lankan cinema producers envisaged ethnic issues through Sri Lankan cinema. In order to examine the particular research question, three films namely *Saroja* (2000), *Purahanda Kaluwara* (2001) and *Me Mage Sandai* (2001) were selected as the sample. DVDs of the above films were used as primary source, and subsequent secondary sources regarding cinema were used. In addition, Internet sources and discussion with the particular producers and directors are used to collect more information. The film '*Saroja*' (by Somarathna Dissanayaka) discusses the children who suffered by war whereas *Purahanda Kaluwara* (by Prasanna Vithanage) focuses on the war between LTTE and Government forces that started in 1980. The third film is *Me Mage Sadai* (by Asoka Handagama) highlights the lost hopes and poverty as a result of war. The study reveals the gradual change of traditional social values due to the ethnic conflict that has been portrayed in the human life for a period untimely. Therefore, the present study focuses on critically evaluating the portrayal of ethnic conflict through the Sri Lankan modern cinema.

Key words: *Film, Saroja, Purahanda Kaluwara, Me Mage Sandai, Ethnic conflict.*