

A Critical Analysis of Gender Roles Discussed in Ediriweera Sarachchandra's Sinhala Play 'Maname' and Jaishankar Prasad's Hindi Play 'Dhruvsvamini'

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Traditional gender roles were strongly upheld in South Asian society. In ancient India, women were discriminated against by means of religion and culture. Similarly, Sri Lankan society considered women as treacherous, fickle and short sighted beings who should always keep under the patriarchal dominance. Ediriweera Sarachchandra is a significant Sri Lankan dramatist who wrote '*Maname*' (1956) to critique gender related issues in Sri Lankan society. Sri Lankan drama was influenced by folk dramas such as *Nāḍagam* and *Jathaka stories* which emphasize the capriciousness of women. Jaishankar Prasad is an Indian writer who belongs to the Romantic period (1920-1936) of Hindi Literature. He was critical of the way women were treated during that period. He wrote '*Dhruvsvamini*' (1933) to criticize deferent gender roles of that society. This paper attempts to examine how gender issues were discussed by Sarachchandra and Prasad through their plays: '*Maname*' and '*Dhruvsvamini*'. The study is in the form of a literature survey and the primary sources are '*Dhruvasvamini*' and '*Maname*'. Sri Lankan scholars such as Jayanetti, D., Kumarasinghe, K. and Jayasinghe, S. have worked on '*Maname*' before. Though Jayasinghe, S., (2013) mentions in '*Maname In Retrospect 1956-2013*' that Sarachchandra tries to discuss the psychology of men towards women, this paper emphasizes that Sarachchandra goes beyond that and tries to discuss the psychology of men towards men and also their masculinity. The Indian scholars Narayana, B., Nagendra (1981) in their scholarly work '*Hindi drama and Stage*' mention that '*Dhruvasvamini*' has been influenced by the realistic stage presentation of Ibsen and that the author moves towards a deeper probe between the relations of a husband and wife. But this research paper emphasizes that Prasad also paid his keen attention to the psychology of women: those who have been used by men to fulfill their desires without getting married. This paper also highlights that both of these play writers were influenced by the teachings of Buddhist Philosophy such as; *Five Precepts*, '*Parabhava Sutta*', '*Mahaparinibbana Sutta*' and '*Dasa Raja Dhamma*'. The above outcome of this research contributes to a better understanding of both Sinhala and Hindi dramas and gender roles discussed in them.

Keywords: Gender roles, Sinhala drama, Hindi drama, Buddhist Philosophy, patriarchy

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