

## **YOUTH PROBLEMS IN MODERN SINHALA POETRY FROM 1970 TO 2000: A MARXIST STUDY**

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The generation of present-day modern Sinhala poetry has originated through the Sinhala poems of 1970. The prominent social issues that occurred during this era comprise the subject matter of these poems. Thus, the revolt in 1971 and the open economic policies of 1977 influenced it significantly. Youth suppression, unemployment, the life struggle of labourers, educational inequalities, open economic policies, youth abuse and the ethnic conflict can be identified as some of the significant concerns during that era. The objective of the present study analyses qualitatively the references to youth problems in Sinhala poetry of the modern era in this context, the types of youth issues in the contemporary era and the factors that influenced them. The study also attempts to illustrate poetic techniques used by the poets of this period from a literary and sociological perspective. The “Conflict Theory” which was introduced by Karl Marx has been used in this regard as a major tool. In addition, the analysis involves the fields of sociology, psychology and biology as well. For example, in identifying biological differences, the study focuses on the mental background of the youth from childhood using Freudian psychology. The results show that the youth problems were initiated at the point where interaction between the youth and the society occurs. Also, the poets appear to have been sensitive towards the suppressed class in the society when illustrating youth problems in their poetry. It is obvious that the economy has influenced youth problems in the contemporary era. It can, therefore, be concluded that the class difference and class conflict have mainly affected youth problems. Such economic factors have been highlighted as major determinants in making a difference as interpreted in the works of many poets such as Monika Ruwanpathirana, Parakkrama Kodithuwakku, Buddhadasa Galappaththi, Rathna Sri Wijesinghe and Kumara Hettiarachchi during the 1970 -2000 period. Amongst them, poems written by Kumara Hettiarachchi exhibit the highest aesthetic value.

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