

Koombiyo (The Ants) and Deweni Inima (The Second Innings): an Insight to the Preference of University Undergraduates for Sri Lankan Popular Culture Teledramas

H. I. A. Caldera

Department of English Language Teaching, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

The purpose of this comparative study was to examine the type of teledrama genre predominantly preferred by university undergraduates in Sri Lanka, out of the two teledrama genres: romance and realistic teledramas and the rationale behind its popularity. During the past two decades, Mega teledrama cult centered on romance fiction subverted Sri Lankan teledrama culture, appealing to a wide range of spectators. However, with novel and innovative approaches in teledrama direction, realistic teledramas are being produced at present. Both these genres of teledrama have gained notable popularity in modern Sri Lankan society, in comparison to other previously popular Indian and Korean teledrama series. Thus, this research was conducted based on two popular Sri Lankan teledramas: *Koombiyo* and *Deweni Inima* that premiered in 2017, belonging to two teledrama genres; realistic and romance drama, respectively. Semi-structured questionnaires were used as the research method to collect data from the research participants to conduct a qualitative study. By using simple random sampling, fifty undergraduates in different faculties from the University of Kelaniya were thus provided with the questionnaires. The study presented an insight into the preference of university undergraduates for Sri Lankan popular culture teledramas regarding Stuart Hall's Audiences and Reception theory (1993) and Raymond Williams' (1961) theoretical frameworks on popular culture. The primary finding revealed the most popular teledrama as *Koombiyo* with a 68% voting as it is identified as an atypical, realistic teledrama. The research also identified various factors influencing university undergraduates' inclination towards Sri Lankan teledramas. The outcome of this interdisciplinary research disseminated new information and knowledge in media and cultural studies while proposing dimensions for teledrama direction to produce atypical works to retain the audience of the youth for Sri Lankan teledramas.

Keywords: Popular culture, *Koombiyo*, *Deweni Inima*, Sri Lankan teledramas, University undergraduates