

**An Investigative Study on Sri Lankan Women in Down South in Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century through the Perspective of a British Imperialist. (Based on the novel 'The Village in The Jungle' by Leonard Woolf)**

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The Village in the Jungle, a novel written by Leonard Sydney Woolf (1880-1969) was first published in 1913 in England, based on a couple of isolated poor peasants who lived in a hamlet in arid zone surrounded by the thick scrub jungle in Hambantota in the South Eastern part of Ceylon. One reason for the extreme popularity of the novel The Village in the Jungle as an excellent work of literature is due to its inclusion of the contemporary rural life styles and the pathetic situation of woman, along with the social, cultural, economic and political aspects during the British Colonial period of the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Woolf has made use of his experience gained through the close association of peasants of Hambantota, in drafting this novel. He has successfully highlighted the attitudes and imaginations of villagers, their beliefs in spirituality, difficulties in poverty stricken life styles, low grade diet, semi-civilized behaviours, use of colloquial language, vicious circle of indebtedness, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and the fear of the jungle etc. Only very few authors have discussed these subject matters upto now. Therefore attention has been focused on this novel, The Village in the Jungle. In this study we attempted to reveal the Sri Lankan women in down south in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through the female characterization of the novel The Village in the Jungle by Leonard Woolf.

Woman plays her role as a daughter, a wife and as a mother who is encircled within the family. Further Woolf has characterized the woman's responsibilities, duties and obligations which connects her into the family forever. He had fully and correctly learnt about the village woman, the attitudes of general society towards her and the position she holds in society. Woolf is successful in setting the attention and sympathy of the readers towards women by this timely inclusion of the female characters of Punchi Menika, Hinnihami, Dingihami, Karlinahami, Nanchohami and Angohami. Armed with all the above facts, Woolf successfully created the story of The Village in the Jungle.

**Keywords:** chastity; domestic violence; exploitation of women; male dominance; Sri Lankan Down South Women