

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND AUDIENCE OF SINHALESE LYRICAL THEATRE

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Sinhalese lyrical theatre is a special theatre genre which is harmonized with dance, music, acting and the other art forms. The other theatrical productions, often dramatically and completely different from the genre of lyrical theatre, but popular at the same time in Sri Lanka, especially in Colombo, may help us place the lyrical theatre productions in relation to the audience, Financial management and the social environment of the country at the same time.

During the research related to this article I have collected data on many peoples' perspectives on lyrical theatre during the last three years. These helped me make many observations on music, dancing, script writing, presenting, directing, producing¹ and the other creative processes of a lyrical theatre are more difficult than those of other ordinary dialogue driven plays like Manaratna's '*Sellam Nirindu*'. Also, people lead busy lives and cannot make the time to go to the theatre as there are other easier options such as watching television. Because of the less audience, theatre directors also have no much enthusiasm to direct and perform theatre in every day.

“..... In the past three or four years, during my visits to Sri Lanka, I was amazed at the sheer number of Sinhala plays, I saw advertised in the city of Colombo, and that almost entirely by means of posters stuck on city walls, along major roads, or banners hung at intersections. I could have, if I had the time and energy, seen a different play every evening during my three-month stay. Since there is no theatre season in Sri Lanka, unlike in the West, one can assume that such performances are a year-round phenomenon.” (Ranjani Obesekara, '*The Sinhala Theatre of Sri Lanka: A form of Political Discourse, Art Sri Lanka*)

<www.artsrilanka.org/essays/theatre/index.html>

Interesting and important parts of lyrical theatre are also telecast sometimes on TV programs. Examples: '*Nugasewana*', and '*Ayobowan*' on *Rupavahini*. (www.vimeo.com/Naladamayanti). Televising a play with a video camera can offer better results from an audience point of view than a live stage performance. For example the backdrop of the above play was created very beautifully than the actual performance of *Naladamayanti* on the stage.

But here too, the traditional style lyrical theatre pieces are generally picked for TV where music plays a pre-eminent role. The reason for this is that musical portions consisting of songs appeal to the TV audience as those songs are famous among the people rather than the play. Therefore, program directors select those kinds of theatrical piece to telecast to attract a good viewership.

The most interesting part of lyrical theatre is its songs. Those songs are always harmonized with dance. The story is also important. At the same time, the audience enjoys much visual displays of entertainment over the story. If someone knows the story, he/she just wants to see something on lyrics, music and dance. Also the story is related to the past always. Everyone knows what the story was. Songs are always appealing because of its music and lyrics.²

Also, the stories of lyrical theatre are not much related to day to day life. Those are based on *Buddha Charita* and the faults and predilections of a sinful woman. Therefore, stories are old enough and nothing to get in new to the audience.

“Do people go to theatre to get a new idea?” this is one of the research questions that I have attempted to analyze. There are many people who want to see the old ideas, old stories, and old fantasy in lyrical theatre with a new way of choreography. The Buddhist *Jāthaka* stories' main theme is the old idea in the contemporary

¹ Theatre producer who is responsible for the overall financial and managerial functions of a play.

² See the diagram below - Question. 02

time. Not only women doom to sin. Who ever do wrong thing in this life it is going to be sin according to Buddhist doctrine as the author mentioned above it is related to *karma sankalpa* or merit concept.³

All the stories which have been taken to the lyrical theatre are old folk tales or myths. For instance, the play *Maname* is based on *Chulla Dhanuddara Jātaka* while *Sandakinduru* is based on *Channakinnara Jāthakaya*. Those are not much related to day to day life and the contemporary time, but all the stories discuss universal human problems and behavior – often dealing with issues of psycho-social as well as philosophical realms in human society. Due to these reasons, lyrical theatre has never gone to a complete decline – even with the changing times and the immense change in Sri Lankan Society. There are many people who have responded to my survey by clearly stating that they go to see lyrical theatre time and again to see how the known theme has been portrayed through new choreography.⁴

Some other people expect to come and relax, recall the history and see the beauty of a composition of dance and music in lyrical theatre. Nostalgia and reliving of memories therefore, become two crucial connections between the audience and the performances.⁵

One notable aspect of lyrical theatre audience is that the youth⁶ are very rarely seen in theatre hall. This can be attributed to their different tastes as well as their lack of knowledge about classical creations. Not only the audience, are young directors also not interested in directing classical plays. It is all about the problem of their aesthetic taste. Ideally experienced directors have a role to play in trying to get young directors motivated through workshop processes to create awareness about possibilities of using this particular form of theatre to do new plays and to experiment.

Also there are problems of introducing, giving publicity and specially approaching the young audience. Public awareness of lyrical theatre is often very minimal. Publicity to a play is often attached to its name, such as '*Pemato Jāyati Soko*' or '*Ratnāvali*'. It has not mentioned anywhere as it is a lyrical play.



(www.google.lk/search?q=Ratnāvali+Sri+Lankan+theatre+poster+images&tbm)

A poster from Lalitha Sarachchandra's play '*Ratnāvali*'.



(ibid.)

A poster from Ediriweera Sarachchandra's play '*Sinhābahu*'

Therefore, no one knows what kind of theatre it is; especially the young generation has no idea. Hence, producers also have some responsibility to win the audience by making attractive publicity. Some negative remarks were expressed by young people who have never seen any kind of lyrical theatre. Therefore, one of my

³ See the diagram below, Question no. 01

⁴ See the diagrams below, Question no. 02 and 09

⁵ See the diagrams below, Question No. 03, 04, 05 and 09.)

⁶ The age between 16 to 20 years

observations is that, in order to get the exact amount of audience, proper publicity is also needed. Theatre communication groups can be organized to publicize the lyrical theatre productions.

Lyrical theatre is not performed all over the island. Most of the other dialog plays never travel to rural areas in the island due to lack of facilities and the problems of poor attendance. Producers can not manage the cost of production if a sufficient number of tickets are not sold.

When the lyrical theatre travels out of Colombo to rural areas, the age of the audience is not relevant in villages. Everyone who likes to enjoy theatre goes and does so. This taste of mind had been shaped by the legend or history of lyrical theatre. Most of the rural folk like to see Buddha *Charitha* in different performances and they don't consider it as a great creation, but they want to see the play out of their great respect for Buddha *Charitha*. It is not a religious compulsion but works as a catalyst in watching performances. Its totally depend on the taste of Sinhala-Buddhist, folk people. (See here, the question No. 07, diagram).

Therefore, audience reception is greater in rural areas outside of Colombo for lyrical theatre⁷. Sometimes, production runs for free on a special day for Buddhists such as the *Poya day*⁸ (*Dinamina Wesak Kalapaya*, p.07, 2013). That particular lyrical play may not be a great production of a famous person. Someone who likes to direct plays, he/she does this kind of free show lyrical theatre on *Poya days*. This helps to develop the aesthetic beauty of the people. Lyrical theatre receives different kinds of audiences according to peoples' education, social and religious background, language, money and the availability of free time.

Most of the seats in the auditorium are occupied by old generation⁹, rather than the young. Nowadays, all the fine arts are not concerned about aesthetic beauty and *rasa*. Many private media channels have created alternate understanding and aesthetics choices in the minds of children and the youth replacing the traditional structure of aesthetic understanding that used to be part of transmitted knowledge. Mass media plays a huge role in the contemporary time, on the way people relate to myths and folk tales.

“The media were well developed, were credited with considerate power to shape opinion and belief, to change habits of life and to mould behavior actively more or less according to the will of those who could control the media and their contents. Such views were based not on scientific investigation but on observation of the enormous popularity of the press and of the new media-film and radio which intruded into many aspects of everyday life as well as public affairs.” (Baran and Davis, *Mass Communication Theory*, p.03)

If we discuss the price of tickets and the number of spectators in the audience, it's about 1000 with balcony in Elphinstone, and Lionel Wendt in Colombo. Other theatre in Colombo is Jhon De Silva which will be full with 500 spectators. If we turn to the villages, it is not more than 300 people. However it is very difficult to get a full audience, because of some problematic situations associated with the audience reception in lyrical theatre.



(A ticket for Sinhabahu play.)

www.google.lk/search?q=Sinhabahu+-=ticket+-+images&tbm=isch&imgil

Sri Lanka is a developing country, but, people spend money for their entertainment like films, musical shows and other things. Therefore, the high price of tickets is not a problem in towns, although it is problematic in rural areas. However, those who are interested in lyrical theatre go to see plays. There is a very poor audience compared to other ordinary plays for lyrical theatre.

⁷ See the below all the diagrams.

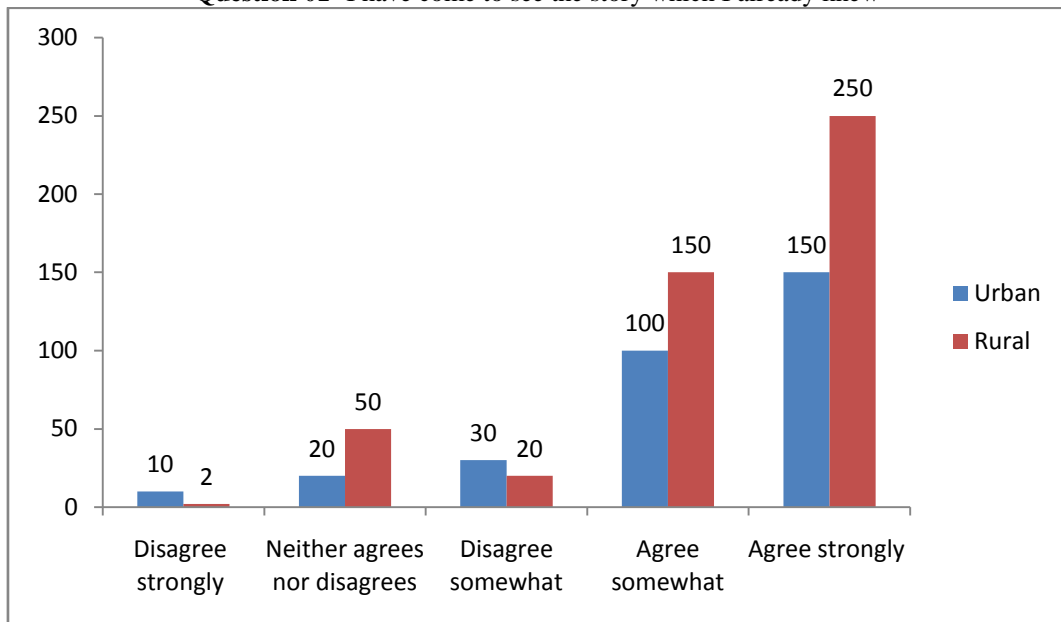
⁸ *Purnima* - ex. *Buddha Purnima* in May

⁹ The age between 45 - 70 years

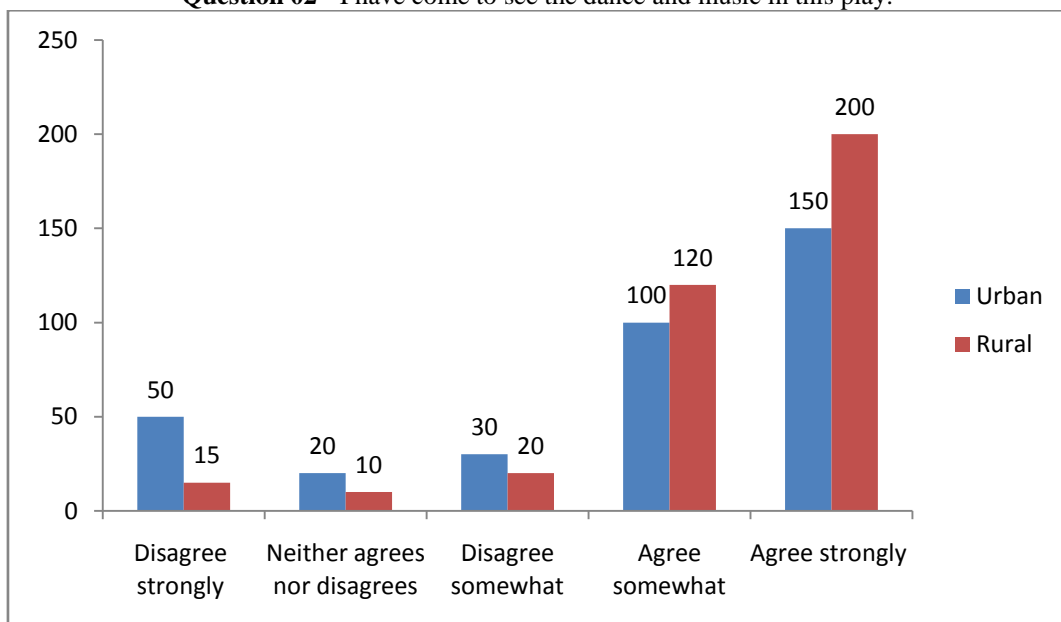
SURVEY ON AUDIENCE RECEPTION IN LYRICAL THEATRE

According to the researcher’s observation on audience reception and financial management in lyrical theatre, the audience experience is framed as in different ways. Question framing and rating scale is mentioned below. I did not ask the extent to which they agree or disagree with a single statement. I wanted to get mentioned that of two opposing statement is closer to their own experience. This is one of the survey methods I have used with Colombo audience, with respect to the plays *Sinhabahu* and *Maname* by Ediriweera Sarachchandra. (*The Island* Newspaper: Mid week review:2013)

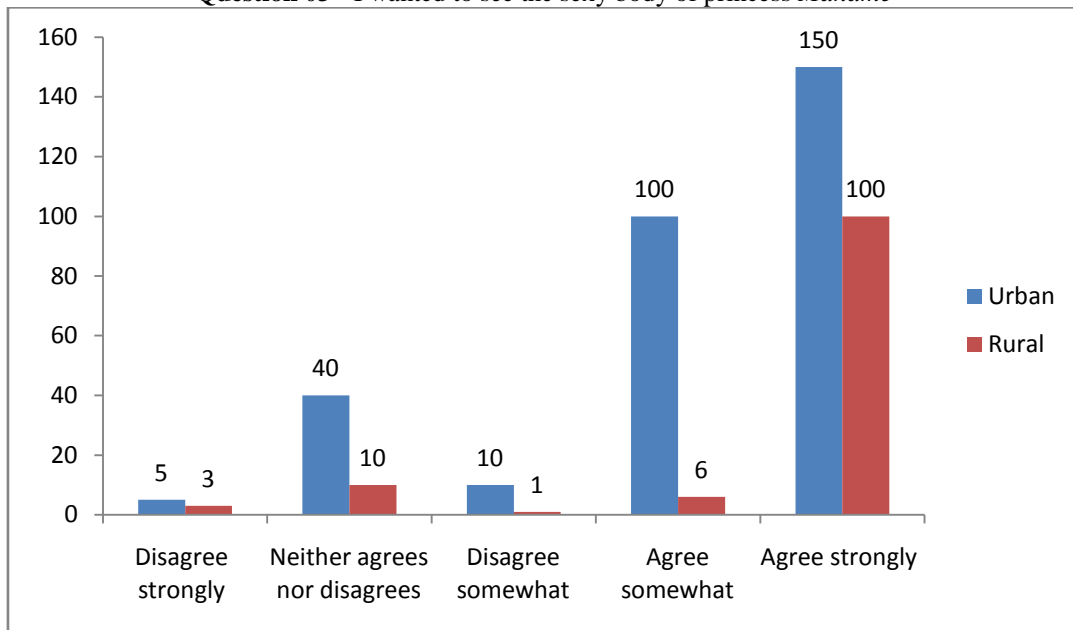
Question 01- I have come to see the story which I already knew



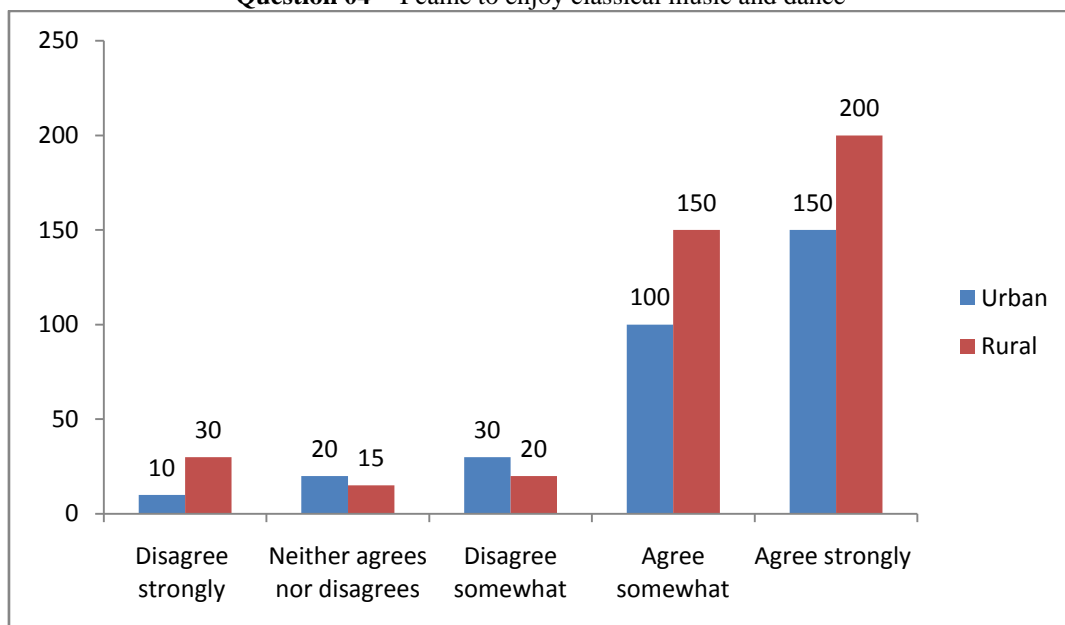
Question 02 - I have come to see the dance and music in this play.



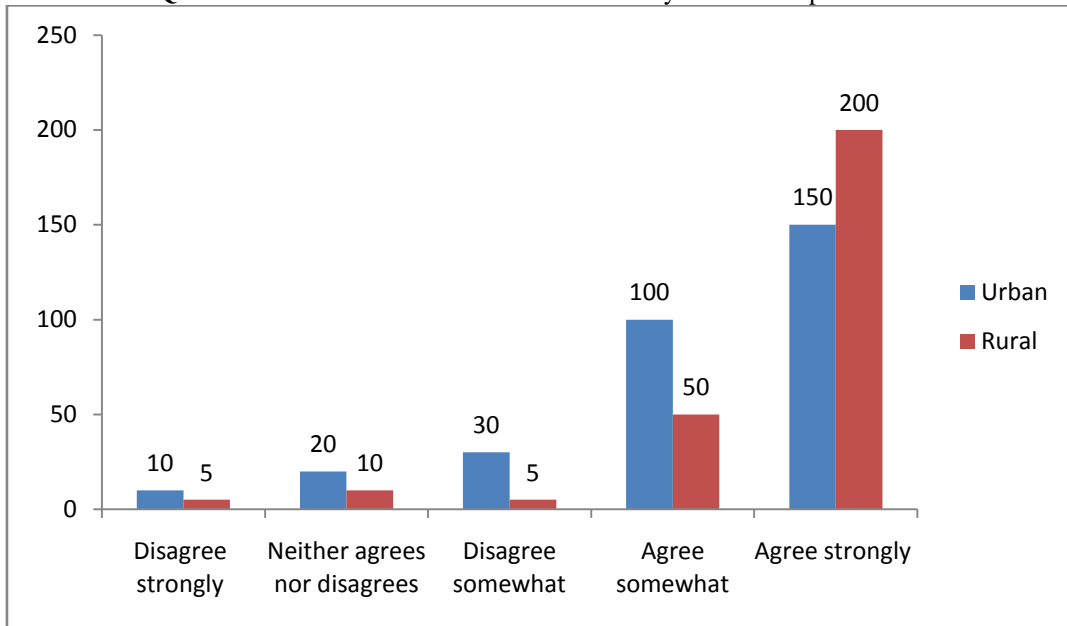
Question 03 - I wanted to see the sexy body of princess Maname



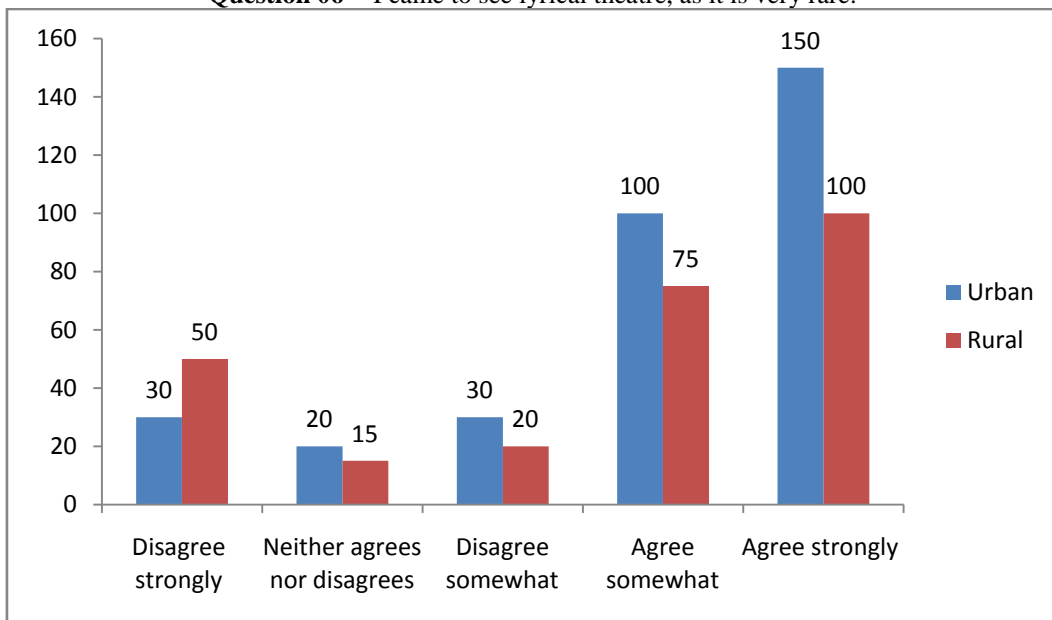
Question 04 - I came to enjoy classical music and dance



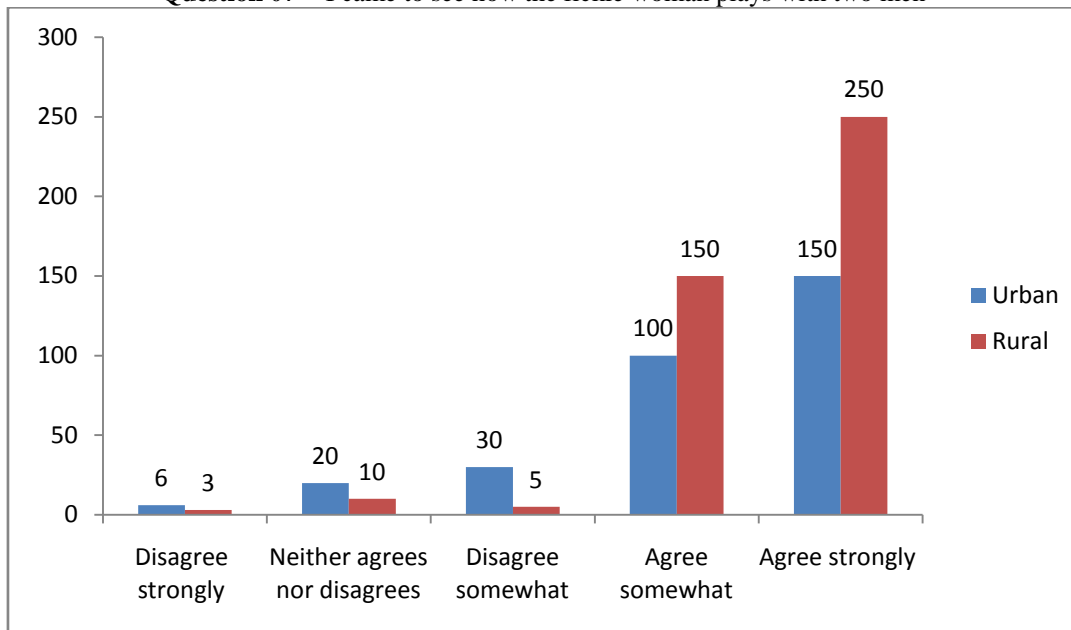
Question 05 - I came to see the theatrical beauty of this new production



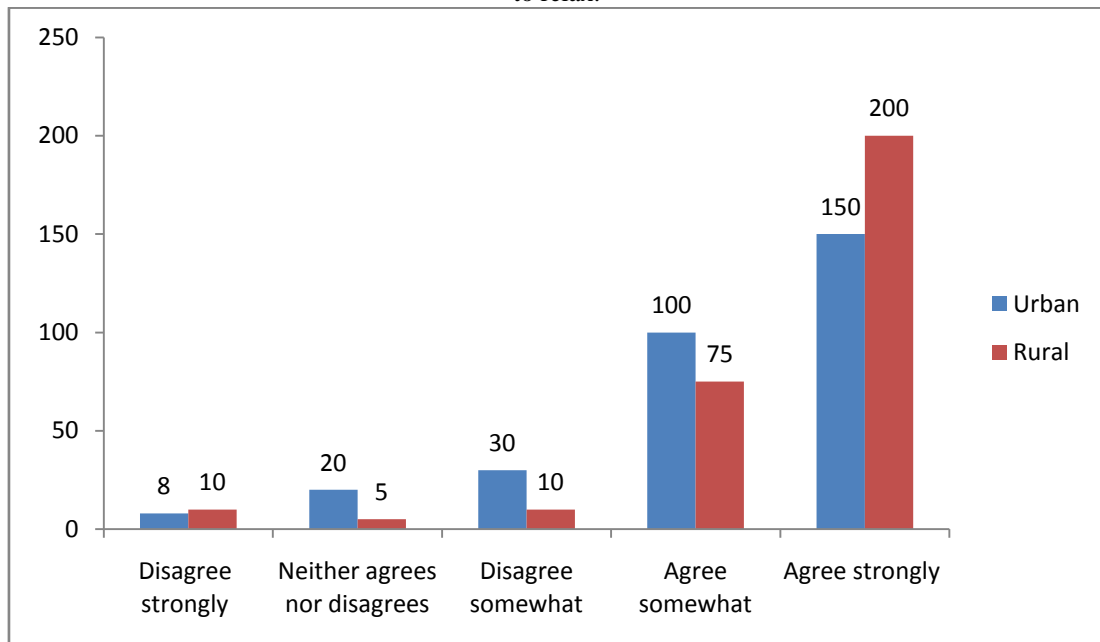
Question 06 - I came to see lyrical theatre, as it is very rare.



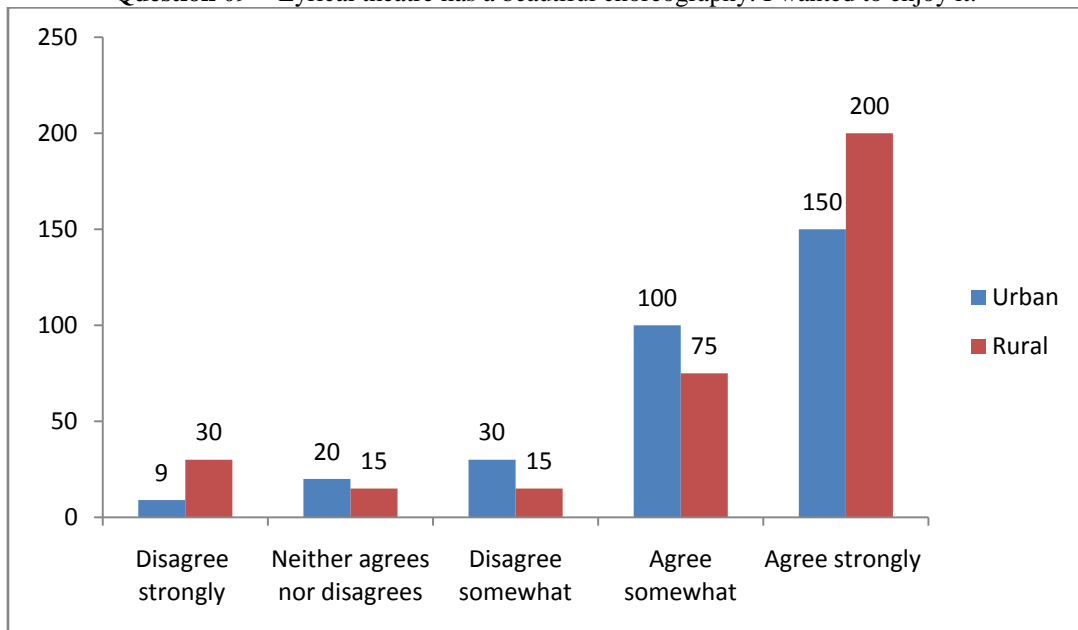
Question 07 - I came to see how the fickle woman plays with two men



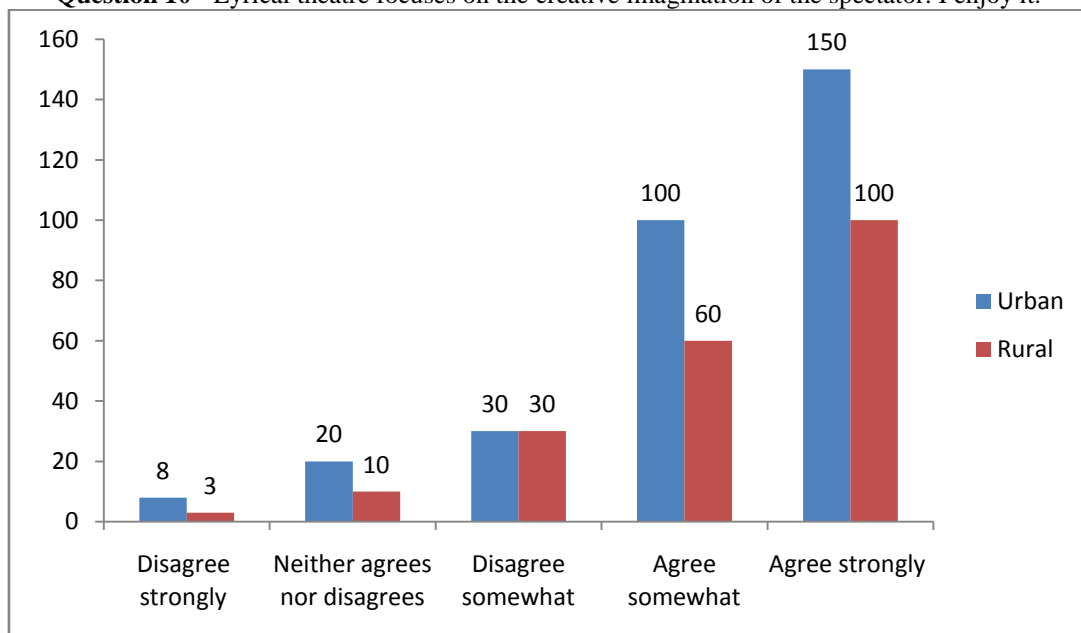
Question 08 - Lyrical theatre is charming and there is no tension, quite unlike in other ordinary plays. I wanted to relax.



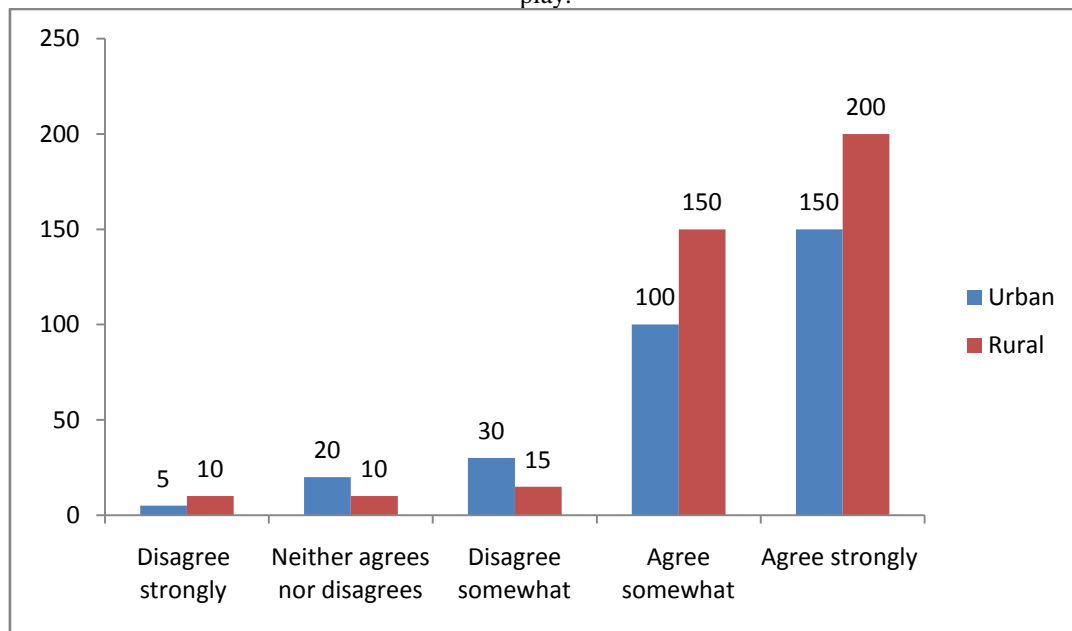
Question 09 - Lyrical theatre has a beautiful choreography. I wanted to enjoy it.



Question 10 - Lyrical theatre focuses on the creative imagination of the spectator. I enjoy it.



Question 11 - Imagination is so difficult, cannot understand the poetical words, classical dance and music in the play.



According to the above response analysis, in rural areas, people come to see lyrical theatre because of the famous story based on Buddha *Charitha*. Spectators in urban areas have different perceptions. They simply want to see whatever the theatre comes, but, enjoy lyrical theatre because of its music and dance choreography. These creations give the necessary relaxation they seek.

Audience in Colombo is quite different from that of other parts of the island. They have money, and they are rich in cultural backgrounds. Some people really want to see the new production of lyrical plays, which they have already seen. Other category of the audience is educated. They have connections with lyrical theatre directors. So, they have been especially invited as special guests. School children's perception is shaped by the script as they are preparing for exams on those texts. Examination papers do not usually ask questions about any kind of theatricality, but rather focus on criticism of the text in questions such as: 'Princess Maname is symbolized as sin collectors'; give your view on this.'

There is another survey related to their understanding and reaction of the actual performance. Expression of *bhāva* and *rasa* are needed to be created by the actors, and understood by the audience if they want to enjoy the production. In order to address the issue of the obvious disconnect that results in less audience, it is also important to analyze their perceptions. The research questions gave me these kinds of answers from the audience in different places in Sri Lanka.

This research is concerned with different states of spectator's mind. Engagement and concentration, learning and challenge, energy and tension, shared experience and atmosphere, personal resonance and emotional connection are some aspects of the spectator's perception focused here.

According to all the details of my survey, there are many things to consider about the reception and participation in the lyrical theatre. It gives some reasons as to why the audience is lesser for the lyrical theatre than for the other ordinary plays.

There are two parts of the research I have done to get to draw the framework about the audience reception.

1. Audience
2. Series of interviews were held with lyrical theatre actors, directors, musicians, dance choreographers and producers. This helped me to focus on how they took audience receptions according to the audience' experiences in both rural and urban areas in Sri Lanka. Based on this field research, I have made five dimensions or scales to measure audience experience. It is as below.

Statement - 01- Engagement and concentration

Urban areas -70%		Rural areas -70%
I was wondering, about what was going on	←→	I was completely absorbed by what was happening.
The performances really didn't hold my attention	←→	I completely enjoyed as they took my attention.
I was tired to see the same dance movements in each character.	←→	I was happy to see their dance movements

Spectator's attention is found to be the strongest part of the theatre, because, it is totally connected to the positive feelings of happiness and fulfillment of evoking *rasa*. Especially in lyrical theatre, this is what the director needs. Therefore, interview has been used in the course of this particular research. Spectators in rural areas are almost lost in the moment of the play, as if their feelings were the actual part of the play. The senses of total engagement and the concentration of spectators are very high in rural areas when compared to the urban. This is evident in their responses as shown above.

Lyrical theatre needs much concentration to understand the play. If anyone is not fully engaged, the play will be obviously boring. The first question has focused on this important fact for both the areas in the Island.

Engagement and concentration of audience in lyrical theatre is interesting. People mostly come to see theatre on weekends. Therefore, I collected my data from the weekend audience in both rural and urban areas. Also, it was helpful to do my survey and see how many people were around for lyrical theatre. In week days, school children, teachers and some other young couples participate. I have focused on them in the other categories of questions.

Statement -2 - Learning and Challenge.

A theatre production can be challenging to an audience, due to spectator's knowledge, experiences, attitudes, cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the same production may affect different audiences in different ways. Due to all the circumstances of spectator's mind, challenge and learning will be not hard for them. Sometimes, it will be unpleasant if the production is not properly choreographed or presented. However, my research highlighted that, spectators who are relaxed, and maintaining a good knowledge are always mentally active for any kind of creation. This is a trend I could see in the spectators of Colombo and those in rural areas. They always like to open their minds for new experiences. The results of the survey are indicated below.

Urban audience -

Rural Audience

I didn't learn like I was learning anything new.	←→	My mind was open to get some new ideas.
I was mostly on my comfort zone.	←→	I felt challenged and provoked
There was nothing much new for me. We cant think any	←→	I started to think in a new way and got things differently.

The social fabric forms the essential framework or context in which a creative arts endeavor such as theatre can be examined. Spectators who come to see lyrical theatre from Colombo and rural areas have had

many experiences in their lives. *Maname*, *Sinhabahu*, and the other *Jāthaka* stories are rather simplistic in nature especially to urban audiences who are more sophisticated as compared to their rural counterparts. The man-woman equation in urban areas is a lot more complex than among rural communities. The concept of a woman's fickleness as depicted in the iconic *Maname* for instance would seem absurd to the urban woman spectator who has a far more equal relationship with her husband/partner. Compared to rural audiences, urban mindsets would find traditional constructs handed down from the *Jāthaka* stories or Buddha *Charitha* much too alien. In the course of interviewing urban and rural spectators I discovered that a story like *Maname* is too simple for urban women to accept and like. Therefore, it is very natural that most of the urban area spectators have said, "I have nothing new to learn."

But, in rural areas people are very much devoted to Buddha and Sinhala culture. They follow teachings of Buddhism. Therefore, mostly lyrical theatre is popular among the Buddhist practitioners in the country as the stories are relevant to the way of life which is taught in Buddhism. '*Pativata Rekima*' or very honest and respectable way of behaving for a husband by a wife is a very good and important practice in Sinhala Buddhist culture. (Nandasena Ratnapala, *Sinhala Janasrutiya, Jana Agama saha Jana Jivithaya*, p.63)

Therefore, they come to see the lyrical theatre to see the story which they already know, but still they learn something new from each performance. It totally depends on their devotional mind.

Whereas the urban people said that they didn't learn anything new, spectators of rural area said that their mind was open to get some new ideas. The reason for this discrepancy in view is that simple complication and historical life of some ancient people are not important to urban audience anymore because they face more complicated things in their day to day life and the society related to many cultures. Therefore, most of the spectators in Colombo and other urban areas are less satisfied than those in the rural areas. (ibid.)

The other reason for the urban audience not receiving anything new from the lyrical theatre is that classical type of choreography is now out of date for Colombo spectators. They are westernized due to social backgrounds.

The rural audience comes to see their experiences in a new way of thinking. Lord Buddha preached, '*everything depends on Karma.*' (Gunapala Malalasekara, *Dhamma Padaya, Piya Waggagya*, Vol. 16, 01.01, p.02) Peasants who have kinds of experiences related to lyrical theatre, they make their heart according to Buddha Dharma. For example, the play *Gajaman Puwatha* is about a famous, beautiful real lady named *Gajaman*. Her life story is true. She had many lovers. She got divorced twice; but whatever the sorrow in her life was, she was extremely talented as a poet and wrote very beautiful poems. That is why she became famous at that time. People too loved *Gajaman Nona*. Buddhism teaches that in spite of the great wealth and the talent who ever has bad *Karma* the results have to be faced (ibid.). *Gajaman Nona* also had great talents but in spite of that finally she had to face *Karma*. According to that her life was very sorrowful.

Statement - 03 - Energy and Tension

What is meant by energy and tension is the physiological reaction to the performances. Some lyrical theatre gives a palpable sense of energy and excitement. For example, Buddhist stories, historical legends, music, and dance choreography might aim to keep their spectators' minds engaged. In the same situation, some spectators who do not like lyrical theatre slowly move away whereas some really find the musical and dance performance exciting. This last category of the audience is found in rural areas. Their energy and tension was higher than those of the spectators in urban areas.

Some spectators show their psychological reaction. It is naturally handled by the emotional states of the spectator's mind. Sometimes, they feel nervous, anxious, joy. Lyrical theatre is a special theatre genre which is not going to be similar with alienation. Ediriweera Sarachchandra who is the pioneer theatre director of the Sinhalese lyrical theatre specially mentioned that it is for 'Universal human problems and evoking '*Rasa*' (Ediriweera Sarachchandra, *Pabavati*, p.32). As my survey is an experiment about the contemporary audience, it can be observed that the modern spectators in urban areas are unaffected and unmoved by the production. Analytical concepts given below provide proof for that.

Urban areas		Rural areas
I didn't feel like going back to see it.	←————→	Wherever Buddha's life or our history is depicted, I am going there.
I felt bored and uninterested	←————→	How wonderful choreography it is!
It is totally boring	←————→	I was exited

According to this third statement, sixty percent of spectators in Colombo and other urban areas felt bored to see lyrical theatre. Every performances, styles, creations depend on the capital of the country. It influences other urban areas too. As I found, this is also one of the reasons for the lesser audience in lyrical theatre. When they think that lyrical theatre is too boring, spectators in rural areas really enjoy the choreography of both dance and music. The percentage was more than eighty.

Statement - (dimension) 04- Shared experiences and atmosphere.

Collection of good experiences is related to good theatre and films. This element has been strongly made after interweaving many spectators in both rural and urban areas. Theatre brings many communities together in the same auditorium. After the play, spectators usually come back stage to find their favorite artists and congratulate them. Talking to them at those times has really enriched the research as they shared many things. It was easy to get me something as a spectator

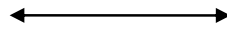
Poetical text mostly stimulates the spectators' mind to share their thoughts and experiences. Poetic text makes wider sense of comments on the play. However, sharing experiences with other spectators in theatre hall is common and it helps to share the experience and previous memories of the same plays seen before in other locations and times. This happens naturally in rural areas, as the audience starts discussing, sharing their knowledge and opinion about the production and the story.

However, sharing experiences after any kind of performance is quite common, but artificial, in Colombo. It is not in the true spirit of sharing the lyrical theatre experiences. After the lyrical play *Ratnavali*, directed by Lalitha Sarachchandra, spectators, who were from the friend circle went backstage and showered praises on her, saying that 'it was a very good and successful production', but, behind her, they criticized the play as a very bad and unsuccessful production. (It's my own experience after the play *Ratnavali* in 2009 at Elphinstan theatre, Colombo).

It is very important to share the atmosphere and experience at the end of the play. Sometimes this happens while the play is going on. The following are the comments I received from spectators, after *Sinhabahu* was over.

Urban areas		Rural Areas
They were not much knowledgeable people to share any thing.	←————→	I had many people to share the story and emotions.

Most of the people in the auditorium were aware of the play. So, I didn't have anybody to share anything.



I was sharing many things with other people in the audience

I did not feel the need to discuss anything.



I was very happy at the end of the play. I had many things to discuss about Buddha's life.

This statement also has been made on the basis of the spectators' comments.

On the other hand, there are more than seventy percent of spectators who don't know anything about choreography and all the art forms in lyrical theatre. Therefore, simply they have nothing to share.

Statement - 05 - Personal reasons and emotional connection.

This totally depends on personal experiences and interest. The audience sometimes relates to what they see, on the basis of their own life experiences. They see reflections of themselves and their lives in the play. These kinds of spectators understand the play very well and they really enjoy the lyrical theatre rather than the other ordinary plays.

'A stage in a process of communication, that is an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code. In a sense, one can say that the capacity to see (vigor) is a function of the knowledge (savior), or concepts, that are the words, that are available to name visible things and which are as it were programs for perception. A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence that is the code, into which it is encoded. The conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes.' (Richard Nice (trans.), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, p. 02)

Theatre is a live performance. Other creations, such as lyrics, poems, novels have space to communicate some personal thoughts and experiences. Therefore, theatre directors always aspire to win the approval of the audience.

Urban

I didn't feel connected with characters and the story.



Rural

I felt characters and the story are very similar to our personal lives and thinking patterns around of, and about women.

I found the performances very slow and they didn't touch me.



Performances are wonderful and very much classic. I really enjoyed.

It doesn't match my life experience.



All the incidents of the play are really similar to my life experience.

The above comments depict the mind sets of two categories as spectators of urban and rural areas. Therefore, spectators of Colombo and the other urban areas don't feel that the experience offered by lyrical theatre is that much closer to their lives.

According to my research, the problem of audience's reception and their participation lies in their understanding of choreography of classical dance and music. Most of the urban people are critical viewers of the lyrical theatre, as they have extensive experience of viewing different performances of classical dance and music and also different kinds of theatre. It doesn't mean that spectators of rural areas really understand classical music and dance. The truth is that they don't go through a deep sense of analysis. They connect to the content of the play through the common thread of the Buddhist ideology and they enjoy the beauty of notes and dance, and lyrics. This can be attributed to the fact that they have been influenced by their family and cultural backgrounds.

These responses gave me some kinds of problems and solutions. Everyone who comes to see the lyrical theatre has different kinds of experiences due to many reasons. Specially, in a small country like Sri Lanka, I can categorize the spectators only into two as urban and rural. It is also connecting to the class system as high, middle and low classes. People from middle and high economic categories are usually living in urban areas in the country. Colombo is the centre for it. Whereas, mostly people from lower economic strata live in rural areas. However, the audience's responses to lyrical theatre have been shaped by different things. Sometimes it is quite natural because each spectator has a different taste, memories, knowledge, and experiences and so on. But, calculating all the responses together, I could come to a common conclusion.

While one person's interest in one part of lyrical theatre may be quite different from that of another person in the same auditorium, here I have identified dimensions of experience which are common to both. Therefore, I have possibly identified that a set of dimensions on which different people's experiences of lyrical theatre have been experienced and compared. This is the aim of audience reception.

It is difficult to get emotional contact according to Bharata's theory as most of the people are educated after the colonial period. Especially in 21st century, spectators have sound critical faculties and therefore, they criticize. I could see this trend in Colombo and the suburbs. These spectators will never cry when princess *Maname* is crying. Therefore, it is time to change the production as the way people think. This is also one of the reasons why lyrical theatre does not have a sufficient audience in cities.

Except Ediriweera Sarachchandra's lyrical plays *Maname*, *Sinhabahu*, Gunasena Galappatti's *Sandakinduru*, and Chitrasena's *Nala Damayanti*, other lyrical theatre directors have not followed any kind of dramaturgy. The problem is related to their lack of knowledge of dramaturgy or theatre genres. They just perform as they like. The ultimate result is an unsuccessful play.

Ediriweera Sarachchandra was a pioneer in drama and theatre. He had a thorough knowledge of many theatre genres. Chitrasena is a good dance choreographer. Amaradeva, Premasiri Kemadasa, Jayantha Aravinda are very good musicians. In the new generation of musicians, dance choreographers do not possess sufficient knowledge and those who have some knowledge also do not apply it. This situation has affected the lyrical theatre very much.

In the new productions, they do what the director needs. If they have creative knowledge of doing something beautiful and attractive, effective to the audience, there will never be a dearth of spectators.

If we talk about dance choreography, there are knowledgeable exponents of Sri Lankan dance. Channa Vijewardhena, Budhavatta are perfect examples in the field. The problem is that the theatre directors have not got any support from them. It is also connected with politics. One main factor is that Channa and Budhavatta's dance choreography charges are very high. They dance for TV, outdoor shows, events of the government and most of the time they dance for foreign events. They receive patronage at the highest levels. Obviously lyrical theatre producers can't spend that much money for the production.

In rural areas, there are some lyrical plays performed by amateur theatre groups.

“There are fellow artistes who strive very hard to share their knowledge and experience of the stage, at the rural level. But they need more patronage and support to make it a sustainable process. ... There has to be a concrete national policy to enhance this talent. It is a pity that sometimes, a very strong medium such as TV exploits this talent. Sometimes young talent may go in the wrong direction as a result.”(Randima Attygalle, ‘The Stage is my passion’, *The Nation*, Sunday 05th April, 2009)

They have followed exactly what Sarachchandra did. Therefore, patronage of the spectators in rural areas is different.

According to all the circumstances lyrical theatre will never be as a good production as earlier till some research is done to assess and steps are taken to improve many areas of performances. For the many artistic elements that make up lyrical theatre such as music composition, dance choreography, stage props, acting, directing, producing, lighting, sounds to come together successfully, and the resources needed for all of these much work needs to be done. This is logistically possible only in cities. In terms of audiences too, it is only in

cities that people have the time and leisure at weekends, the money to spend on tickets, the facilities to travel and theatre halls to watch plays. Cities offer the opportunity to develop essential skills and talents as well as much needed audiences for lyrical theatre to thrive and to survive.

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