ABSTRACT

This research work attempts an analytical study of Rama Sarma's six novels, and three plays - to discuss the theme of the affirmation of life, as embedded in his works.

Chapter I traces the existing criticism on Rama Sarma's works by various critics and scholars. The novels of Rama Sarma have been discussed in a chronological order explaining the various critical approaches by critics. *The Stream*, *The Farewell Party*, *Look Homeward*, *The Bliss of Life*, *Pastures New* and *Height of Noon* are the six novels taken for study. Critics have shown Rama Sarma as a myth-maker in *The Stream*. We find a teacher with reminiscence and stream of thoughts in *The Farewell Party*. *Look Homeward* brings out a straightforward story with inter-continental background. There is an idealistic Indianess torn between Indian and western civilization. The brain-drain, on the academic side and the need for a responsibility towards one's country are discussed by critics.

In *The Bliss of Life*, devotional love that attains its height from the physical plane is the core of discussion. Critics show *Pastures New* in a socio-religious background where Indian tradition shapes
the Indian outlook. The *Height of Noon* is shown as the “justification of the ways of God to men.” In another angle the protagonist is shown as a ‘Karma Yogi’ finally reaching the point of willing submission to God’s will. Criticisms on his plays, *Sakuntala*, *Towards Marriage* and *The Carnival* focus on love from the physical to the spiritual plane through the sacredness of marriage in the Indian milieu.

There is a need for a new and different approach on Rama Sarma’s works of art. He is a versatile writer who needs a serious study and the existing approaches are valid but a comprehensive approach to his creative works is essential. This research is to critically look into a new angle left untouched by other critics. This research shows that the theme of affirmation of life is interwoven in the works of Rama Sarma and what marks and vitalises his works are a strong undercurrent of the ‘affirmation of life’ in his creative works.

Each chapter is divided according to the themes in each work. Novels that present the autobiographical element, the transformation of characters and the spiritual attainment of mar through various stages, getting into the marriage system for such changes are the themes discussed in this work. These elements
form the basic factors for the affirmation of life as found by Rama Sarma in his creative works.

Chapter II brings into focus the novels that take the form of an autobiographical style. The two novels taken for discussion are *The Farewell Party* (1971) and *Height of Noon* (1994) that expose the author's experiences as a professor and a loving husband. The characters of both the novels bring out the truth about academic life and their experiences form the truth to affirm that life has the scenario for the different aspects of man's life. The autobiographical technique helps touch every corner of man's life. This method used by the author shows how his explanations of life are true and are firmly brought out to affirm life's dispensation in one's life span.

The author's realized life is more than anything, needed for the culmination of characters into realizing their life in this world. This realization of life is the main thread that is taken for study, to affirm that every line of Rama Sarma's work brings out the affirmation of life. These novels attain the status of being autobiographical because of the author's depth in pouring out his experiences through his imaginative characters.

Chapter III has two novels for study and discusses life through transforming Man from his fictitional world to his true
sensible world. *The Stream (1956)* and *Look Homeward (1976)* are the two well defined novels of Rama Sarma for clarifying the mental growth of man from a dream like world into a realization of his sensible place in this mundane world. Life moves on to give a transformation to everyman as time drifts on and he gets time to realize himself through changes within and without himself. This change in life is felt by the characters of these two novels. The characters undergo different changes as they realize the slow movement from their life's beginning to their final stage of life. Life gives them enough to learn and realize and they come to a stage where they affirm that life brings a whole picture into their stay in this world.

Chapter IV takes up *The Bliss of Life (1979)* and *Pastures New* for a study of Man's quest for spiritual enlightenment. Life that starts with the ego of a man, transforms itself and finally tries to reach the zenith of spirituality. This spiritual attainment of every man is brought out from the characters of these two novels. The chapter helps find a world enriched with higher values of life. This philosophy of life that is the thread that links all the other chapters into the realization of the affirmation of life is the foundation of Rama Sarma's works.
Chapter V takes us for study of Rama Sarma’s plays, to give a conclusive study of the elementary emotions and feelings and the understanding of life that emerges itself from marriage. *Sakuntala* (1945), *Towards Marriage* (1949) and *The Carnival* (1958) are the three, three-act plays taken for discussing the Indian way of marriages from early days to the present day. This chapter expresses the three types of marriages that help the transformation and spiritual enlightenment of man from the various ups and downs in a married life. This chapter also treats the relationship between man and woman. It also throws light on the three forms of marriages – that of Gandharva marriage, Arranged marriage and Love marriage. The problems of marriage systems and the realization after facing the problems to attain the true affirmation of life are the base of this chapter. The difficulty in understanding each other, however ultimately realizing that their relationship is based on understanding each other for a better life is the affirmation of life, truly necessary in finding fullness in life.

Chapter VI deals with the findings discussed within each chapter and affirms the theme of affirmation of life in Rama Sarma’s works. It is summed up that the treatment of themes in Rama Sarma’s novels and plays are based on the affirmation of life. The techniques used by Rama Sarma are discussed in detail in this chapter. Every chapter has a conscious movement that reaches the
final stage of understanding. Rama Srama's characters feel the totality of life and this forms the leading factor for each character to affirm their life. Society, academic background, man-woman relationship, love and sex and the author's background stand as a backdrop for study.

There are other writers of Rama Srama's period who have written novels and plays. This chapter takes a look into the group of writers who are contemporaries and Rama Srama's uniqueness of writing is reviewed to give him a status among this group of writers. By and large this study helps place Rama Sarna as a writer of life in its totality.