

**Sound without Fury:  
The Decline of an Isolated Community of Drum-Makers in Central Sri Lanka**

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*Kuragala* is identified a 'low caste' village situated in the Udunuwara Divisional Secretariat of the Kandy district. All the residents of this village belong to the Rodi caste which is recognized as the lowest caste group according to the Sinhalese caste hierarchy. Currently 16 families are engaged in manufacturing traditional local drums such as Getabera, Daul, Tammattam, low country drum, Udakki, and Bummadi, as well as internationally-used classical and popular drums such as Tabla, Mridangam, Maddala, and various other kinds of instruments at present. Initially these drums were entirely hand-crafted, but soon the villagers were granted electronically powered lathe machines by the government to facilitate the faster carving of drum logs. Apart from this occupation they have become involved in different types of "traveling businesses" such as selling mats, carpets and mattresses since they are unable to make ends meet by selling drums. Three men and one woman have obtained employment in the government sector such as hospital attendants. The objectives of this study are to analyze the changes of these people, their traditional craftsmanship and other social and cultural practices pertaining to this community. Viewing them as a Discourse Community, I shall focus on how they are able to sustain a specific cultural identity, even though the Sinhala Buddhist mainstream have classed them as "Rodiyas" at the same time assimilated into the society of Upcountry Kandyan Buddhists of *Kuragala*. This study will be framed as a development of John Swales' pioneering work on discourse communities through incorporating Arjuna Parakrama's insights on subalternity to better understand the survival, coping and resistance strategies of marginalized caste-based artisan communities that are fighting mechanization and the capitalization of such specialized niche markets.